



This is what the Duc d' Orleans cruise ship looked like during the Second World War, when it was a Royal Canadian Navy sub chaser known as the Q105. A local volunteer group plans to restore the vessel, which carried generations of local residents on pleasure trips up and down the St. Clair River, to its former glory as a warship.  
Submitted photo

## Duc d' Orleans to be restored as warship

By DAN McCAFFERY

### The Observer

Sarnia may soon be the home port of the only seaworthy Canadian fighting ship left from the Second World War.

Paul Woolley, president of a group that plans to restore the old Duc d' Orleans cruise ship to its former appearance as the Q105, a Royal Canadian Navy sub chaser, made that announcement in an interview Monday with The Observer.

Woolley said the 112-foot craft will be lifted from the St. Clair River on Dec. 8 and stored on property near the end of Exmouth Street owned by Central Machine and Marine.

Over the next two years it will be restored to its original appearance as a combat vessel at a cost of \$200,000 to \$500,000.

"We've got a crew of volunteers, most of them ironworkers, coming in" to help with the restoration, Woolley said. "This is going to be an amazing project."

Canada had the third largest navy in the world when the war ended in 1945, but only four of its 400 ships are still in existence. The other three, all made of steel, are no longer seaworthy.

The Duc is made of wood but is in surprisingly good condition, Woolley said.

Nor does he think restoration will be a major problem, provided financing can be found. "The Duc actually hasn't been altered that much," he said. "The passenger cabin is on top of the original deck."

Once it's removed and the wheel house restored, volunteers will outfit it with gun turrets and depth charge launchers. It will also be painted the colours of the Royal Canadian Navy.

Federal officials have been contacted about the possibility of the restoration becoming an official project to help mark the 100th anniversary of the Canadian navy, which takes place in 2010. If that happens, it's expected Ottawa will help foot the bill for restoration.

Local fundraising events will also be held.

The Q105, which was built at the Sarnia docks in 1943, was used to escort convoys between Newfoundland and the mainland, perform rescue operations and clear enemy mines out of Canadian waters. After the war, McGill University used it to conduct experiments on the St. Lawrence River. After that, it became a cruise ship operating out of Quebec City. Because it cruised the Isle of Orleans, it was dubbed the Duc d' Orleans.

In 1978, Ken Bracewell and former partner Jacques Beauchamp purchased the Duc and brought it to Sarnia.

After Bracewell bought a new cruise ship earlier this year, he donated the Duc to Woolley's group, which is known as the 'Friends of Q105.'

If all goes well, the restored ship will be rechristened in 2010 before going on a tour of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

Plans call for Queen Elizabeth to be in Halifax for the navy centennial and Woolley is hoping the restored vessel will be used by the monarch when she inspects the Canadian fleet.

After that, it will be brought back to Sarnia to serve as a training vessel for sea cadets and a floating museum.

Anyone interested in helping with the project can contact Woolley at 519-344-7660.

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Interesting Web Page worth viewing (Web Master)

<http://www.pg17.eclipse.co.uk/index.html>

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