



CFB ESQUIMALT NAVAL & MILITARY MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

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CFB Esquimalt Naval & Military Museum is located at Naden on Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt, in the city of Victoria, which is situated on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, province of British Columbia, Canada.

The museum's goal is to collect, preserve, interpret and display the history and heritage of the naval presence on Canada's West Coast and of the military on Southern Vancouver Island.



Justice Served?

The Untimely Death of a Navy Cook

This is the story of a Navy cook who was buried with high honours and ceremony by the Royal Canadian Navy for no apparent reason, other than to possibly make amends for a perceived wrong.

FULL STORY PAGE 4-5

The museum has been fortunate to be able to hire two University of Victoria students for a summer work term as tour guides/programmers at CFB Esquimalt Naval and Military Museum. For student Erin Spence, it is her second summer at the museum. We wish both Bavneet and Erin a happy and productive summer and we're delighted to have them join the museum team.

Bavneet Mand

I am currently studying political science at the University of Victoria, and I will be a tour programmer at the CFB Esquimalt Naval and Military Museum until late August, 2018. Apart from political science, I also enjoy taking various history classes when I am at UVic. I was fortunate that I was able to become a tour programmer this summer at the Naval and Military Museum, as there is no doubt that it will be a wonderful opportunity to learn and share the history of the naval presence on Vancouver Island. Some of my other interests include being an avid badminton player, and even though I may not be the best player I try to play as much as I can.

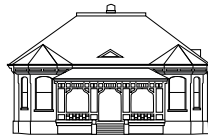
Erin Spence

I am looking forward to spending another wonderful summer with the museum staff and volunteers! This will be my second term working here – helping archive documents, running the Museum Open House, and leading tours about Canadian military history. I have also worked on artifact cleaning at the Emily Carr House this spring. Entering into my fourth year of Honours Political Science, I hope to write my undergraduate thesis on European politics and historical institutional development. In my spare time, I enjoy swimming, biking, and sitting in the bomb shelter exhibit in the museum. We hope to see you in the museum soon.



THE MUSEUM *Team*

Museum Team



Debbie Towell – Curator
 Joseph Lenarcik – Assistant Curator
 Clare Sharpe – Museum Exhibit Designer/Webmaster / Volunteer Coordinator/ Newsletter Editor
 Tatiana Robinson – Archival Assistant
 Selena Gillespie – Special Projects
 LS Robbie Loveless – Museum Workshop staff
 Museum summer student tour guides/programmers – Bavneet Mand & Erin Spence

Our Active Volunteers

Cecil Baker	Paul O'Reilly
Don Bendall	Tom Pound
Valerie Chatten	Zoila B. Proud
Janet Kay Curley	Greg Sharpe
Chris Fraser	Sarah Taylor
Dave Freeman	Don Thomas
Michael Harrison	Norm Truswell
Bob Hewitt	Victoria-Esquimalt Military Reenactors Association members
Gerry Kennedy	Ed Widenmaier
Clarence Lockyer	Bryan Wilde
Brian McGregor-Foxcroft	
Florence McGregor-Foxcroft	

The Canadian Navy List Project Online

The Museum's Canadian Navy List Project Online is well on its way to being a 'one-stop shop' for genealogists and others interested in tracking the leadership of the Royal Canadian Navy.

The Canadian Navy List, published from 1910 into the 1960s, is a source of key information about which ships and/or shore establishments individual officers served in, and when, tracking not only their postings over time but also their career advancements and promotions. (Enlisted personnel, however, are only to be found in either Crew or Nominal Lists). These publications are invaluable for researchers trying to follow the careers of officers in the Canadian Navy.

Although a variety of museums, including our own, the Canadian War Museum, and the Naval Museum of Halifax, keep hard copies of the Navy List for reference in their collections and archives, up until now, it hasn't always been easy or feasible to access this important resource.

But thanks to a project to digitize these hard copy publications to make them widely and easily available and also preserve them, we can now offer a total of 165 Navy List copies on our website at the following link:

www.navalandmilitarymuseum.org/archives/projects/the-navy-list

The digitization project was initiated in 2011 by CFB

Esquimalt Naval & Military Museum and Dr. Richard Gimblett, who was at that time the acting Director of Navy History & Heritage and Command Historian of the Canadian Navy. Since then, we've made considerable progress towards the goal of having ALL the Navy Lists available on our website, thanks to some determined efforts by a number of individuals, including Dean Boettger, Assistant Royal Canadian Navy Heritage Officer, Lauren Butler from the Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH), and Honours and Recognition Clerk Cory Baldwin (formerly Assistant to the Command Historian). This has involved considerable expenditures of time, effort and money to ensure Navy List publications were scanned correctly in order to make them

word searchable – a very necessary feature for anyone seeking the name of a specific officer, or using other detailed search terms. In some cases, because partner museums and institutions did not have facilities for scanning them in-house, the Navy List publications had to be sent off-site for scanning, which is

a nervous proposition for organizations which are dedicated to preserving and protecting original documents.

We're still working on making some Navy List publications from our project partners available, but the number of unscanned lists is rapidly dwindling, and it will not be very long before the online resource is comprehensive.

~ Clare Sharpe, Museum Navy List Project coordinator/webmaster

This really is an incredible resource; I can't tell you how many amateur genealogists I've already directed to this site.

Cory Baldwin, Royal Canadian Navy Honours & Recognition Clerk

To Our Readers

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Justice Served?

The Untimely Death of a Navy Cook

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER COOK NORMAN GEORGE STEVENS died on 05 July 1947 and was interred at God's Acre, the veterans' cemetery in Esquimalt, on 08 July 1947. Orders for colours to be half-masted on the day of the funeral came in a Naval Message. Dress of the day for personnel attending was No 5's for officers (with swords) and No 2's for the men. The casket was transported to God's Acre accompanied by a large procession including the naval band, and at Stevens' gravesite there was a gun salute.

To judge from photos of the occasion, it was a day of grandeur and high tradition. What is not obvious from the photographic records is why Stevens was accorded such an elaborate burial, like those associated with high-ranking figures in the naval leadership or individuals who have distinguished themselves through acts of heroism.

Before his untimely and sudden death at age 26 at the Royal Canadian Naval Hospital, in Esquimalt, BC, Stevens had served the Navy for close to 7 years, as a cook in HMCS Ontario and aboard one of the Prince vessels. He and his wife Joyce had two sons, a newborn, Alan, and a four-year-old, Norman. The young family lived in a house owned by Joyce's parents at 933 Green Street in Victoria.

Norman Stevens' demise soon became a subject of debate and contention, the focus of a Board of Enquiry, and, decades later, an appeal by one of his sons on behalf of the Stevens family. In fact, on the same day his funeral took place, an enquiry into his death was held to learn the circumstances, and to decide whether anyone was at fault. The enquiry was presided over by Lieutenant Commander F.E. Grubb, R.C.N., at that time Officer in Charge of the Discharge Treatment

Centre at HMCS Naden.

The facts of the matter appeared straightforward. The enquiry heard that Stevens had been on short leave (expiring 0745 Sat 05 July 1947) when he sustained a wound from a meat cleaver. The accident was therefore deemed to have occurred while he was off duty. As he was required to do, Stevens reported for treatment of his injury to the naval hospital at Naden, where he was given an anaesthetic by hospital staff, without first being tested for allergic reaction, a treatment that proved to be fatal.



In the report of his death, the cause was "believed to be allergic or idiosyncratic reaction to procaine hydrochloride". In his evidence, Surgeon Lieutenant D.C. Smith stated that "he (Stevens) had cut his middle finger, left hand, with a meat cleaver about a half hour previous to the time I saw him".

Questions soon arose as to whether Stevens had sustained his injury while in the performance of his duty. In at least one report, he was said to have

been moonlighting, helping a friend in a Victoria restaurant, when the accident happened. It was also reported that he'd hurt himself at home while prepping a chicken for a family meal. How or where he had cut his finger? Was he on duty or was he at home or was it an accident while off duty? These were critical questions.

In its findings, the Board of Enquiry concluded that Stevens' death was caused by cardiac collapse due to procaine hypersensitivity. As procaine was used as a local anaesthetic in the RCN Hospital, HMCS Naden, prior to suturing his lacerated finger, the Board considered that Stevens' death was attributable to Naval Service. It was also the Board's conclusion that the "lethal result of the use of procaine in this case could not be expected or foreseen* and that, therefore, the death was accidental."

The Board was in full agreement that the novocaine had killed the cook, but disagreed about where to lay the blame. The Board members maintained that it was the cook's fault for moonlighting, which was forbidden by Regulations. As Board President, Commander Grubb disagreed. He considered Norman Stevens' death to be the Navy's fault, because one of its members had administered a drug without first ensuring the patient could tolerate it. "Had this not been so, the cook would still be alive," Cdr. Grubb

argued. The answer to whether Norman Stevens' wife and children would get a pension hinged on the outcome of the Board's deliberations, and after long argument, the members reluctantly accepted Commander Grubb's opinion. He was doing his utmost to ensure that the widow and orphans of CPO Stevens got financial support, and tried to interpret the 'letter of the law' in a way that was not only just but merciful.

Despite these findings, when it

came time for the Canadian Pension Commission to read over the Board of Enquiry's report, and approve a pension for Norman Stevens' wife Joyce, one of the Commission members saw the comment about "moonlighting" and urged that the pension be disallowed.

In a letter to the Canadian Pension Commission from Deputy Minister W. Gordon Mills, Mills tried to make the case for awarding the pension, but his arguments fell on deaf ears: "It cannot be understood how death can be attributed to other than Naval Service as it was a direct result of action taken by a Naval Medical Officer on a Naval rating in a Naval hospital. With these facts before you", Mills continued, "you may wish to reconsider the matter of a pension to the widow of Chief Petty Officer Cook Stevens."

As a result of the Pension Commission's opposition, Norman Stevens' young family didn't get any form of pension from the Royal Canadian Navy. The decision not to award a pension put Joyce Stevens and her children in a difficult spot. She had to move in with her parents at their home on Caledonia Street so that she had childcare available while she searched for work.

It was a hard time, but in recollecting his mother's plight, Norman Stevens (Junior) holds no bitter feelings about the situation. He does however believe that the elaborate funeral held for his father was "a way for the Navy to perhaps try and make amends for his death."

Many years later, Alan Stevens, who had been a babe in arms when his father died, mounted a strong effort to revisit the Pension Commission's decision, and ultimately the family received a small financial award as partial compensation. But it was a case of too little, too late.

~ Clare Sharpe, Museum Exhibit Designer

**There was supposedly an entry on Stevens' Medical History Sheet to the effect that he was allergic to local anaesthetic. But later searches of his records files failed to reveal any such entry.*



Marjorie Nelles | CW.A.C.

SOMETIMES YOU RECEIVE a surprise donation – something that just shows up at the door or in the mail. Recently, the museum received just such a surprise: a shadow box with a photo, medals, service and pay book as well as badges belonging to former Canadian Women Army Corps (CWAC) Corporal, Marjorie* Nelles (née Hull), service number W13316.

Marjorie lived a long life, much of it full of adventures; some of it right here in Work Point. Marjorie was born in Derby, England on July 26, 1904. She emigrated to Canada with her family in 1920, settling in Keoma, Alberta. Marjorie taught school for 7 years before marrying local Canadian Pacific Station agent, James Thorburn Nelles. James Nelles was a veteran of the First World War, losing his arm but that didn't stop him or Marjorie from contributing to the war effort during World War Two.

Both Marjorie and James strongly believed that one of them should serve in the war and, due to the fact that James had lost his arm, it was felt that, that duty should fall to Marjorie. Marjorie signed up for all three services thinking she would join whichever one called her first. In 1942, she joined the CWAC and was stationed at Currie Barracks in Calgary, Alberta. By 1943, James was asked to move to Esquimalt at Work Point Barracks to join the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals – as a Telegrapher he was badly needed. Marjorie, of course went too and worked alongside him with the Signals Corps until the end of the war, spending a total of four years with the CWACs. In civilian life, Marjorie began working for the Department of Mines and Petroleum.

After her husband died in 1957, Marjorie remained working for the B.C. government until 1970 when she retired. She then decided to go to New Zealand for 6 months and ended up living there for 17 years.

She didn't stop there, for Marjorie loved a good adventure. Her notebook details that she went off on a tramp steamer to various ports of calls including Hong Kong, Manila, Singapore, Penang, Port Sweltenham (Malaysia), Bali and Australia.

When Majorie came back to Canada, she lived in Calgary for a short time but decided that the climate in Victoria was more to her liking and arrived back here in 1987 at the age of 83. She retained a strong connection with the military through the Royal Canadian Legion Ex-Service Women's Branch #182 right here on Gorge Road in Victoria.

Marjorie Nelles passed away on August 5th, 2004 at the age of 100.

We are pleased to be able to add Marjorie Nelles' shadow box to our collection. Incidentally, Marjorie herself donated her tunic to the museum in 1995.

~ Debbie Towell, Curator



**Throughout Marjorie's documentation her name is spelled a number of ways: Margery, Marjorie and Marjory. We have selected Marjorie as that is how her signature appears in her service and pay book.*



PHOTOGRAPHY PIONEER

Lieutenant-Commander Jackson George Kempster

A day doesn't go by when someone doesn't contact us looking for old photographs of ships their family members served on or crew photos of the sailors these same family members served with. However photographs don't just happen. Someone has to take them. Here we have a photo of some of the people who took official photos for the RCN during WWII. This group photo of the RCN Photographic Section at HMCS Stadacona in Halifax, N.S., was taken in May 1943, and is just one of over one hundred black and white photos we received last fall from the family of LCdr. Jackson George Kempster.

Jack Kempster was the first photographic rating and the first photographic officer in the Royal Canadian Navy. When this photo was taken, Petty Officer Kemper was already leading photographer at Halifax and he was known for having designed the trade badge worn by himself and other ratings in the photography section. LCdr. Kempster served in the navy from 1939 to 1968. Kempster grew up in Ottawa and studied photography at Rockcliffe Air Station where he graduated with better than 98 per cent honors from an eleven week course, which he completed in seven weeks. He served for three years in the Royal Canadian Naval Reserve in Ottawa before being posted to Halifax.

During his career, he served as RCN liaison to Howard Hawk's film crew during the filming of "Corvette 225" in 1942. He also photographed Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip during their 1951 tour of Canada and Princess Margaret during her 1958 visit to British Columbia. In 1941 he was issued the first 4x5 Speed Graphic camera purchased by the RCN. He used it throughout his career and when he retired in 1968 he wrote the Base Commander at CFB Esquimalt (which was his last posting) for permission to purchase the camera. Permission was granted and he obtained the obsolete camera for \$5.00.

~ Joseph Lenarcik, Assistant Curator



Write us...

We welcome your questions and comments with regard to any of the articles we have featured in this or past issues of *Headway*.

Please write to the museum at:

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Or email:

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CFB Esquimalt

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Artifact Donations

CFB Esquimalt Naval and Military Museum holds a growing collection of files on Canadian naval vessels, biographies of leading figures in the establishment of Canada's Navy, information about the history and development of what is now Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt, maps and charts, historical documents, and photographs which have been digitally scanned.

All this information is available for the interested visitor.

The museum is always looking for more documentation that can be included in its library and archive. We also seek artifacts that relate to the history of the Navy and Army on the west coast of Canada. We are particularly interested in obtaining

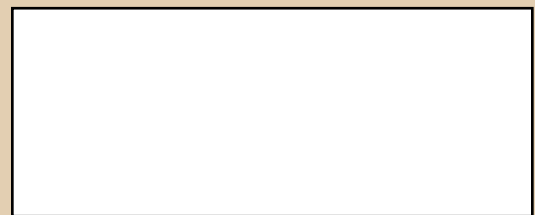
photographs for addition to the museum's growing photo database.

If you have photos, periodicals, personal documents or other items pertaining to the West Coast defences, the Royal Canadian Navy, the Canadian Women's Army Corps or the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service, please contact the museum.

We are careful about adding to the collection. We want to make sure that everything collected by the museum is significant and relevant to our mandate.

If you own an item that you believe fits these guidelines and would like to share it with the future, CFB Esquimalt Naval and Military Museum would like to hear from you.

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