



Bay Seniors NEWSLETTER



IN THIS SPECIAL EDITION

Veterans share thoughts about service, sacrifice

A cadet's perspective on Remembrance Day

Help fill gift bags for Bay area seniors

Monthly meetings set to resume

No matter how, or where, 'remember we must'

By Stuart Moors, Capt (Navy) (Retd)

We can't congregate this year as we normally would in November to remember our veterans, serving military personnel, and merchant mariners.

Despite this, it really doesn't matter where, when, or how we remember, but remember we must.

What better way to ensure enduring global peace and honour those who sacrificed, served or currently serve to preserve our freedom, values, and way of life?

In November 2005, while I was in command of *HMCS Toronto*, our ship had the honour to embark and transport the remains of one of the Royal Canadian Navy's most significant World War II heroes, Rear Admiral Desmond

Lest We Forget

We won't be able to gather as we normally would on November 11th. But we can still remember and give thanks.

In this special edition, contributors honour veterans and reflect on the meaning of Remembrance Day.

We'll post links on our website and on the Seniors Facebook page about online ceremonies.



"Debby" Piers, from Chester Harbour to Halifax, where the Admiral was to be laid to rest in the naval crypt at St. Paul's Anglican Church.

In his 20s, Piers spent most of World War II at sea in the thick of combat, leading sailors and, ultimately, commanding ships under horrific conditions, including confronting a daunting U-boat threat during convoy escort duties while

crossing the Atlantic. In 1942, at age 29, he led a 42-ship convoy across the Atlantic, with only four small corvettes as protection.

West of Iceland, the convoy encountered 17 German submarines, and for days fought a desperate battle, during which the convoy would lose 15 merchant ships. In the aftermath, Piers wrote

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"Remember we must..."



Remembrance Day 'reminder of sacrifice'

LCdr Sherry Richardson (Retd)

After a lifetime of Canadian military service with Navy, Army, Air Force and Intelligence, Sherry Richardson says, "Our veterans' service is the reason we are even able to observe Remembrance Day."

Sherry retired in 1999 as a Lieutenant-Commander and Commanding Officer of the *HMCS Sackville*, a ship that, she says, "sank two subs and scared the hell out of a third" during World War II.

The ship later served as a research vessel and is now a military museum.

After joining the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service in 1954 in Montreal, Sherry completed basic training, converting to the Royal Canadian Navy in November 1955.

With limited opportunities for women, she completed Electrical School training in *HMCS Stadacona* and was drafted to *HMCS Shearwater - VU32 Squadron* as an Air Electronics Technician working on naval aircraft.

Her loves of flying and aircraft are lifelong. "I was one of the first Girl Guides to ever get an aircraft recognition badge," she says, "And in my 70s I trained at the Debert Flight School, first



getting my recreational license and then my private license." Sherry also served for years in military intelligence.

She later joined the Bedford Institute of Oceanography and served on several research vessels, including *CGS Chebucto*, as first officer.

"When I was in military intelligence, the first thing they did was send me on a three-year Russian course," she says. "That also came in handy later when I was in Fisheries and had to board Russian ships."

Now 84, Sherry continues flying for pleasure.

She also works every summer as a forest fire spotter for the Department of Lands and Forestry. "They pay me to do it, which is great, but I'm

Sherry Richardson aboard HMCS Sackville - where she had been CO - in 2020

definitely afraid they'll find out I'd do it just for fun," she laughs.

Sherry says young people interested in a military career should join the reserves for a year.

"If you like it, ask for a transfer to regular forces. If it's not for you, turn in your kit and walk away."

Saying she is grateful for her long and diverse life of military service, Sherry acknowledges that, for younger generations, Remembrance Day feels less relevant.

"They've never experienced what that sacrifice means. But Remembrance Day reminds us that our people died, often somewhere far away, to make sure we continue to be free."

"Remember we must..."



This year is a milestone WW II anniversary

By Patrick Charlton, RCN Retd

This year is significant, as it marks the 75th anniversary of the end of the Battle of the Atlantic, the longest and most critical battle of World War II.

The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) played a pivotal role in that battle.

As a volunteer with the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust - *HMCS Sackville*, I am honoured to serve in an organization that commemorates and remembers all those who have served in our Naval Service, and in particular, those who made the supreme sacrifice.

Every time I step aboard the almost 80-year-old *HMCS*



HMCS Sackville, one of 123 Canadian corvettes, saw active service during World War II, was later used as a research ship, and is now a military museum.

Sackville, I am reminded of the tremendously difficult and cramped conditions her sailors lived with and worked in as the ship did her duty, along with other RCN ships, protecting convoy after convoy in submarine-infested waters across the North Atlantic. The dangers were constant, but in the end, Canadians and our allies prevailed. As has often been said, it was a time of

ordinary Canadians doing extraordinary things. I continue to be thankful to the men and women of the Royal Canadian Navy, the Royal Canadian Air Force and the Canadian Army for their commitment and sacrifice in serving and protecting our country. I am equally thankful to the families of military members, for providing vital support to those in uniform.

"Remember we must..."

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a controversial yet influential report to highlight equipment, training and convoy tactics deficiencies.

Maneuvering a 5,000-ton frigate in Chester, with the hidden shoals and brisk winds, was not without risk of grounding. Despite days of preparation in the East Coast Navy's modern navigation simulator, I was sleepless with anxiety the night before.

On a pristine afternoon, we



turned 180 degrees in Chester Harbour while our 13-gun salute rang out, echoing back from land, as Rear Admiral Piers' remains were embarked (above). At sunset, en route to Halifax, the Navy's Historian regaled our crew with stories of Piers' illustrious career.

That helped sink in for me how miniscule my anxieties at navigating Chester Harbour would have been when compared to the nightmarish events faced by Desmond Piers and all the other Canadians who served so selflessly in war.

"Remember we must..."



Gone, but not forgotten

By Sharon Jessup Joyce

As a daughter, niece, parent, aunt and cousin of members of the Canadian Forces, Remembrance Day has always been an occasion for reverence, reflection, and gratitude for me.

But some years ago, when I was working on our family tree, I learned my grandfather's twin brother, William Henry Drummond, had served in World War I. Suddenly, I saw that long-ago war through a more personal lens.

William voluntarily enlisted in the *8th Siege Battery, Canadian Garrison Artillery*, on May 22, 1917. Thomas, my grandfather, was married and had a daughter, but Will was single, living at home with his widowed mother, and helping to support four younger sisters. His service pay would be better than what he made as a train yard conductor.

There are no surviving family photos of Will. All we know comes from his enlistment documentation: then 27, he was dark-haired and blue-eyed, with a lean build and a large scar on his leg.

He served as a gunner on the Belgian front from July to November, 1917, where the Battle of Passchendaele ended in victory for Canadian and British troops. Battle conditions



'Canadian Gunners in the Mud, Passchendaele, 1917' by Alfred Bastien. (Public domain).

were horrific, and casualty numbers on both sides were enormous.

There were nearly 16,000 Canadians wounded or killed in the Belgian mud on November 6 alone.

One of the fallen that day was William Drummond.

The military record states that while on duty with a gun crew, he was "severely wounded in the body and rendered unconscious."

He was taken to No. 1 Canadian Field Ambulance, "where he succumbed to his injuries some hours later without regaining consciousness."

William was laid to rest in the Vlamertinghe Military Cemetery in Belgium.



William Drummond's headstone. (His age is incorrectly recorded as 23). Photo courtesy of Marg Liessens

"Remember we must..."



'Take time to appreciate veterans' urges cadet

By Alexandra Morrison, Cadet Warrant Officer Second Class

I joined my Cadet Unit, 250 Vimy Royal Canadian Air Cadets, in 2015, at the age of 12. The Remembrance Day service I attended that year with my fellow cadets was my first service ever. It was also the first time I've felt the emotions that come with Remembrance Day to their full extent.

I recognize Canada still has a long way to go as a nation to gain justice and peace for all its citizens, and I can't fully understand the fear and sadness World Wars I and II brought to past generations and to some Canadians' daily lives now. But hearing the Last Post echo through my ears as I stood in file among my fellow cadets made me truly reflect on the sacrifices made to get our nation to where we are today.

As cadets, we enjoy a close relationship with the Canadian Forces, but we are not members of the Royal Canadian Air Force. In spite of that, every time I put on my cadet uniform, hear our national anthem, or go flying with the program, I feel the strength of those who fought for my right to do so.

I recommend everyone use their time of remembrance this year to truly stop our ever-so-busy world to appreciate the veterans and those who perished in wars and in other military service.



Alexandra Morrison, Cadet Warrant Officer Second Class

We are looking for gift bag donations to make Christmas merrier for seniors

Many of our community's seniors will be unable to have their traditional holiday celebration this year. So Bay Seniors is putting together around 75 Christmas gift bags for them, and volunteers will fill and drop off the bags.

A Bay Seniors fabric tote bag will be filled with items like boxes of tissue, puzzle/sudoku books, pencils, eyeglass cleaner, sugar-free candy, hand wipes, mini bottles of hand sanitizer, socks, and other items suitable for men and women.



If you would like to donate one or more new, unopened items for this project, please drop off your contribution at the Community Enterprise Centre, 5229 St. Margaret's Bay Road, by November 20.

Member survey

Thanks to everyone who weighed in on our member survey. Here's some of what you had to say:

The top requested activities were, in order, monthly speakers' meetings, skills development workshops, and single-interest demonstrations or sales.

More respondents preferred in-person options, but live video and pre-recorded video were also of interest to many.

Look for complete survey results in our mid-month update.

Fitness requests

A number of members asked for a return, in some form, of Bay Seniors fitness classes. While some are eager for in-person classes, others are interested in live video or pre-recorded video classes.

Because the survey was primarily anonymous, we were unable to collect names, and members interested in fitness classes should contact fitness@bayseniors.ca.

Property Tax Rebate

HRM's deadline for rebate applications is Dec. 31. Details at: <https://www.halifax.ca/home-property/property-taxes/exemptions>

Get your sparkle on at our relaunched monthly meetings

After a 9-month break, Bay Seniors monthly meetings are back, with key Covid precautions. Unlike our regular drop-in format, attendance for meetings is by advance reservation only, as the capacity for the room is now much smaller.

On Thursday, November 12, at 2.30 pm, we're presenting 'Jewellery, Old and New'. Book your spot before Nov 9.

The first speaker will be local jewellery designer and maker Beth Rogers. She will talk about how she creates beautiful silver jewellery from old sterling flatware. The second speaker will be Sharon Jessup Joyce, on how to be a savvy collector or seller of Canadian fashion jewellery.

Guests will have a chance to shop for locally-made jewellery by artisans Beth Rogers, Paula Fredericks, Sue George, Amy Nemeth and Theresa Sapp.

Bay Seniors will have donated costume and fashion jewellery for sale, with proceeds to the St. Margaret's Bay Food Bank.

In keeping with Covid-19 precautions, masks are required and disposable



gloves will be available for handling jewellery. Refreshments will not be served, but guests are welcome to bring their own beverage in a travel cup.

New and renewing members may sign up at the meeting and receive their free face mask.

For more info, or to book a spot (before November 9), email centre@bayseniors.ca.

Facebook jewellery sale

We're still looking for donations of costume and fashion jewellery in excellent condition, which can be dropped off at the Community Enterprise Centre until Nov. 28.

From November 16 to 30, we're holding an online jewellery sale on Facebook. Look for details on the Bay Seniors Facebook page and in the November mid-month newsletter update.

Established in 2009, the Seniors Association of St. Margaret's Bay (Bay Seniors) is a not-for-profit registered society whose purpose is to promote and participate in the development of wellness living for seniors; to research and represent the interests of seniors living in the greater St. Margaret's Bay area; and to provide housing and accommodation options for seniors. For more information about any of the topics in this newsletter, visit our website www.bayseniors.ca or contact the Seniors Information Centre: email centre@bayseniors.ca telephone 902-820-3334. The centre is located at Unit 1 – 5229 St. Margaret's Bay Road, Upper Tantallon, NS, B3Z 4R5. It's open 10 - 2 on Tuesdays and Thursdays.