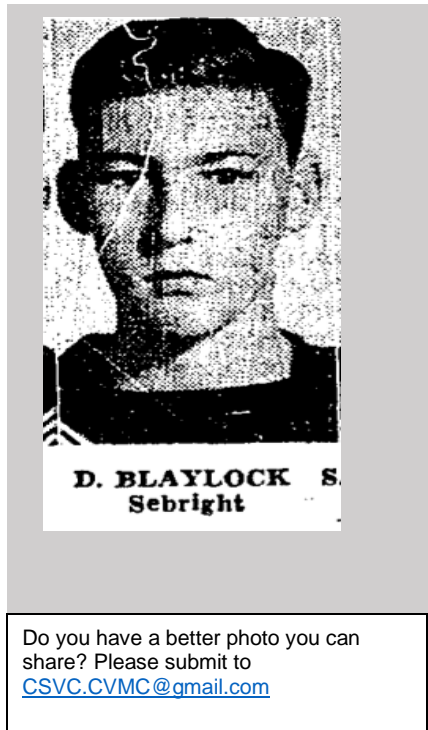


## Able Signalman Douglas John Blaylock V-56350



- **Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve**
- **Born: Calgary AB, 29 July 1925**
- **Enlisted: HMCS Tecumseh, 4 March 1943**
- **Civilian Occupation: Shipping Clerk, Stevens Alberta Company**
- **Death: Died when HMCS Shawinigan sank on 24 November 1944**
- **Commemorated: Halifax Memorial, Panel 11; the memorial to HMCS *Shawinigan* in Shawinigan QC, and the Victoria and Haliburton Counties Honour Roll**

Douglas John Blaylock was the son of English parents, John and Mary Blaylock, and brother to Irene Mary (Blaylock) MacDonald of Sebright, ON. The Blaylock family resided at 1010 - 6 Avenue West, Calgary, AB. His Mother died days after he was born. His father was an Alarm Operator with the Calgary Fire Department and he had three years previous Military Service in England with the Cumberland Yeomanry. After coming to Canada his father saw service again as a member of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police. When WWI was declared he promptly joined Calgary's Lord Strathcona Horse and served five years overseas. He was wounded several times and lost his leg in the Battle of Moreuil Wood. His son Douglas had Sea Cadet experience with the Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corp (RCSCC) *Undaunted* in Calgary and was a rugby player. He left High School in 1942 with a Grade 11 education and before enlisting Douglas worked as Shipping Clerk for a surgical supply company, Stevens Alberta Company.

Douglas Blaylock was 17 years old when he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve at HMCS *Tecumseh* on 4 March 1943. Enlistment documents described Douglas as 5'11 1/2", 119 lbs with blond hair, blue eyes, a fair complexion, and records indicated that he knew how to swim. The Medical Officer describes him as 'underweight' but commented that he would likely put on weight while in the Navy. Ordinary Seaman Blaylock completed his basic training at HMCS *Tecumseh*, followed by Navy Signals training at HMCS *St. Hyacinthe* in Quebec, where he qualified as an Ordinary Signalman. In Oct 1943, Douglas was drafted to the Navy training facility HMCS *Cornwallis*. While at *Cornwallis*, he was promoted to Acting Able Signalman (March 1944). That month was also a time of sadness for AB Blaylock as his father died in March 1944 in Calgary, leaving only his sister as his next-of-kin.

With his promotion came a transfer to his first sea-going ship, HMCS *Iroquois* while she was in refit in Halifax. Then, on the 11th of June 1944 he was transferred to HMCS *Shawinigan* which

had just come out of a refit. The ship sailed for Bermuda for workups and then proceeded to take up escort duties on the east coast of Canada. While serving in Shawinigan he was rated as of Good Character and Superior Efficiency as an Able Signalman. It was during the escort of the ferry *Burgeo*, on the Sydney NS - Port Aux Basques NL crossings that the ship was lost.

"*Shawinigan* and the US Coast Guard cutter *Sassafras* were ordered to escort the ferry *Burgeo* from Sydney, Nova Scotia to Port aux Basques, Newfoundland. Since the tragic loss of the ferry *Caribou*, ferries on this route were always escorted. The three ships made an uneventful crossing to Port aux Basques on November 24, at which time *Shawinigan* detached to continue anti-submarine patrols in the area. *Shawinigan* was scheduled to rendezvous with the *Burgeo* the following morning for the return to Cape Breton. But the corvette never made it.

Nearby, U-1228, which had been ordered into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, was tarrying, trying to repair a faulty schnorkel. Without the tactical advantage that the device provided, its commander, Frederich-Wilhelm Marienfeld, feared his chances should he pass through the Cabot Strait. On the moonlit night of November 24, he tested his repairs, found them ineffective and decided to return to Germany. As he issued orders that would pilot his U-Boat back into the Atlantic, the *Shawinigan* was sighted. U-1228, which had not yet recorded an attack on enemy shipping, let loose a Gnat torpedo. Exactly four minutes later, HMCS *Shawinigan* disappeared in a plume of water and a shower of sparks. All 91 members of her crew were killed.

HMCS *Shawinigan* was one of three Canadian warships that have been lost with all hands. *Shawinigan's* final resting place is in the Cabot Strait, between Newfoundland and Cape Breton Island. Her precise location is not known, but by best estimates based on the u-boat's reports the *Shawinigan* should lay at 47 degrees-34 minutes north-Latitude, 59 degrees-11 minutes West-Longitude." (Naval Museum of Manitoba)

For his Service, Able Signalman Douglas John Blaylock was awarded 1939-45 Star, Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp, Atlantic Star & Clasp, & the War Medal.

Able Signalman Blaylock is remembered on the Halifax Memorial, Panel 11, on the memorial to HMCS *Shawinigan* in Shawinigan, Quebec, and he is remembered on the Honour Roll for Victoria and Haliburton Counties for those who have given their lives in the cause of freedom.

**Prepared By:**

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**Sources:**

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- Library and Archives Canada - Service file for Able Signalman Douglas John Blaylock

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