

Lieut-Commander William Franklin Campbell, (MiD), O-11898



Lieutenant-Commander William Franklin Campbell. Photo: canadian-virtual-war-memorial

- **Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve**
- **Born: Shelburne ON, 28 October 1904**
- **Enlisted: Saskatoon Division RCNVR, 29 January 1924**
- **Civilian Occupation: Salesman, Imperial Oil Limited**
- **Death: Died when HMCS Louisburg sank on 6 February 1943**
- **Mention in Despatches (MiD)**
- **Commemorated: Halifax Memorial, Panel 9, Campbell Narrows in Wathaman Lake (56.9833°N 103.6667°W) and Campbell Point, Nunavut (78° 13'N 102° 45'W) was named in his honour by the Government of Canada.**

William Franklin Campbell was the first of four children born to Alice May Campbell and Edward Cassidy Campbell on 28 October 1904. In 1912, the family moved to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, which was in the midst of an economic boom. There Edward Campbell established a dental practice. Upon completion of elementary school at Albert Public School, William enrolled in Nutana Collegiate Institute, graduating in 1921. He then studied accounting at the University of Saskatchewan for two years. A series of short-term jobs followed. The Great Depression and the accompanying devastating drought destroyed the Saskatchewan economy in the 1930s. It wasn't until 1935 that William found a well-paying job with Imperial Oil which he held until 1939 when he entered active service.

William enrolled as a Stoker in the newly established Saskatoon Half Company of the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR), in January 1924. At the time of enrollment, William was 5'10 1/2", and weighed 154 pounds. He had dark hair and blue eyes. He became very active in the RCNVR and took training on the West Coast at every opportunity. From Leading Stoker, he was commissioned in 1929 and promoted to Lieutenant in 1931. He served as the Commanding Officer of the Saskatoon Half Company in 1933-34. He also took qualifying courses in seamanship, gunnery, and pilotage. In September 1939, he entered Active Service. In the 1246 days in which he served, his major positions were: the Extended Defence Officer at HMC Naval Base Vancouver from September 1939 to June 1940; HMCS *Assiniboine* (eventually as

Executive Office) September 1940 to August 1941: HMCS *Louisburg* in Command, August 1941 to February 1943. He was promoted to Lieutenant Commander in February 1940.

While in Vancouver William married Freda in December 1939. She accompanied him to Halifax where she gave birth to their son, Edward Robert (Teddy) in June 1942. At the time of Teddy's birth, HMCS *Louisburg* was in Halifax in refit. At the end of June, she was assigned to Western Approaches Command, Londonderry. William would not see Teddy again. While on convoy escort duty, HMCS *Louisburg* was sunk by Italian torpedo bombers off Cape Tenes, Algeria on 6 February 1943. Forty-three members of her ship's company, including William, lost their lives.

Lieutenant Commander William Franklin Campbell was posthumously Mentioned in Despatches: *Lieutenant-Commander Campbell, as Commanding Officer of HMCS Louisburg, was responsible for the saving of many lives due to his rapid summing up of the situation and his prompt action. His bravery, in the face of the enemy, cost him his own life"*

For his Service, Lieutenant Commander William Franklin Campbell, RCNVR was awarded: 1939-45 Star, Atlantic Star, Africa Star and Clasp, Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp, War Medal, Mention in Despatches. His wife, Freda Campbell, awarded the Memorial Cross.

Lieutenant Commander William Franklin Campbell is commemorated on the Halifax Memorial, Panel 9. Two geographic features are named in his memory: (1) Campbell Narrows formed by two islands in Wathaman Lake in Northern Saskatchewan (56°58'N 103° 40'W), and (2) Campbell Point on Ellef Ringnes Island in Nunavut (78° 13'N 102° 45'W)

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Sources:

- Commonwealth War Graves Commission database
- Library and Archives Canada Service Record for Lieutenant Commander William Franklin Campbell
- Saskatchewan Virtual War Memorial – Profile page for Lieutenant Commander William Franklin Campbell
- Canadian Virtual War Memorial – Profile page for Lieutenant Commander William Franklin Campbell
- CFB Esquimalt Naval and Military Museum – Publications – The Navy List
- Canadian Virtual War Memorial – Profile page for Lieutenant Commander William Franklin Campbell
- For Posterity's Sake – HMCS LOUISBURG

- McPherson, Ken, and Burgess, John (1981). THE SHIPS OF CANADA'S NAVAL FORCES 1910-1981. Toronto, Ontario: Collins Publishers.