

## Citizen Sailors Virtual Cenotaph Report to the Board, June 8, 2021



This project of the UNTDA is well underway, but much work lies ahead. Following is a brief report prepared for the Board.

### What is it?

Of the 1769 Canadian Naval Reservists who died in WW II, very little is known about them at the Naval Reserve Division where they joined. Some of them died in the 24 ships we remember at Battle of Atlantic. Many others died in motor torpedo boats, motor gunboats, in the fleet air arm, in more than 40 merchant ships, in combined operations, in shore establishments, and in 60+ Royal Navy ships.

They enlisted "for hostilities only" and served in the RCNVR, RCNR and WRCNS. Their names can be found on the Halifax memorial and on more than 600 grave markers around the world, but their names are not well known at their own NRD.

The UNTDA Board has approved a project with a goal to flesh out the stories of these sailors, to tell their story of sacrifice, and to "repatriate" them to their home division.

### How does this get started?

Kim Kubeck has assembled the data available from the War Graves Commission, which includes sufficient basic information to facilitate further research. The list has been refined in a spreadsheet that will serve as a (flat) database from which worksheets can be programmatically created. The worksheets are sent to Researchers who dig out additional information from a variety of sources already identified, with on-line guidance about how to make best use of these sources.

The researchers return their completed worksheets, along with a story, assembled in prose from the data. This is reviewed by a reviewer who then programmatically updates the database.

### Where are we now?

The database is in place. Kim has identified a number of pilot Researchers who have been sent worksheets on several sailors. They will provide feedback on the design of the worksheets and the on-line guidance, and then the process will be refined.

An email address for the project has been established: [CitizenSailorsVirtualCenotaph@UNTDA.org](mailto:CitizenSailorsVirtualCenotaph@UNTDA.org)  
We are seeking suggestions for the appearance of a project home page and theme. To start with, this can be hosted on the UNTDA web site, but we expect to establish a separate site in due course.  
We are completing a virtual brochure in two versions, focused on recruiting researchers, and possible fund-raising.

The UNTDA web site home page has been revised to focus on the CSVC project, with links to explanatory docs in English and French. We expect these docs will change both in appearance and content as the

project evolves, and as our graphics experts provide improved visuals. The docs can be downloaded from the web site but where possible, interested readers should always refer back to the web site for the latest versions.

We have received assistance from Hugues for the French translation of the recruiting document and website content, and a friend of mine (retired teacher and trained translator) will translate the researcher instructions and templates. Translation of documentation and content has been identified as one of the primary funding needs for this project moving forward.

Paul Seguna is working on some graphical elements to punch up the presentation material and with ideas for a logo. We expect to incorporate these in the brochure, the web site and a special issue of Gunroom Shots.

## Outside Support

NavRes has expressed interest in the project, but as of this writing, had not seen the explanatory documents. At a minimum, we would like an explicit endorsement we can add to the brochures, and at best, active assistance in recruiting Researchers and participants from NRDs. At the core of the project, the “Cenotaph”, is the readily accessible database with its detail and the sailors’ stories. Beyond this, we will need the support, participation and enthusiasm of both individual NRDs as well as NavRes to consider such things as permanent plaques, books of remembrance, commemorative ceremonies, etc. Execution will undoubtedly vary from NRD to NRD, and will most likely stretch beyond 2023.

Jennifer Bennett is exploring support and funding from the Navy League. Once again, an explicit endorsement would be a good start.

The President has informed several organizations, NAC, CNMT, etc. of our plans, and whether we seek endorsement or support remains to be discussed.

We have reached out to a professor at MUN in St John’s to see if it might be possible to involve university students as researchers (for course credit).

We have reached out to Mr Bob D’Aoust, the author of the Ultimate Sacrifice, for support looking into several hard-to-find Service Records. Bob has not responded so we might need to ask the Archives committee to help with this aspect of the project. We will reach out if Bob maintains radio silence.

## Next steps

With the help of the pilot users, board members and others, additional Researchers will be recruited, instructed and sent worksheets. Experience with the pilot researchers will give us some idea of the demands on them, how many more we will need, and whether we will have to pay for their work.

Roger and I need to refine our lines of communications to both coordinate and deconflict the 2023 battlespace. The project also needs a POC with NAVRES staff so that they can be kept informed of launches, milestones, etc

Other unknowns:

- how much money we need to invest in a separate CSVC web site
- what funding might be available
- what fund-raising we will need to do
- where we should seek support and endorsement

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Kubeck

CSVC Project Manager/ chef de projet CVMC