

Citizen Sailors Virtual Cenotaph

As reported previously, the CSVC project of the UNTDA is well underway, but much work lies ahead. Following is a brief report for the Board covering the period of Jun – Aug 2021

What is it?

A reminder that the goal of the CSVC project is to flesh out the life stories of the 1769 Canadian Naval Reservists who perished in WW2, to tell their story of sacrifice, and to “repatriate” them to their home division. The stories will be developed by volunteer researchers from across the country. Ideally, our research crew will include current and past Naval Reservists, sea cadets, university students and other Canadians with an interest in military history.

The tombstone data for these 1769 sailors has been captured 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 stories are returned to the project team where they are integrated into the Spreadsheet. Eventually, the spreadsheet will be the backbone of a website where these stories can be displayed.

Accomplishments Jun – Aug 2021

Instructions for researchers were developed and tested by “pilot” researchers. They have been refined and will be translated into French in the next quarter (retired translator has volunteered her services).

The concept for a project logo and webpage header have been developed by Paul Seguna. Work continues to bring those concepts to life. In particular, we are hoping the resources of NavRes can be brought to bear on finalizing his graphics in various formats.

The files of the 214 Officer war dead were reviewed for the purpose of creating a list of those officers who trained or were staff at HMCS Kings. This list of 42 officers was provided to Glen Davidson for use in his 2023 plaque project. The project staff hopes King’s University students can be recruited to write the life stories for these 42 sailors.

Using online sources, a list was compiled of all RCNVR/RCNR war dead who received honours. This list will be used to generate occasional “Vignettes” that will be emailed to “Vignette” subscribers. While this increases the project staff’s workload, we believe it is a necessary communication tool to create momentum and interest in the project.

A list was compiled of RCNVR/RCNR sailors who perished in several well-known military campaigns (Dieppe, Dunkirk, Normandy, Italy & North Africa) has been compiled for the “Vignette” communications.

Currently, we have eight researchers engaged in writing life stories for 15 sailors. Researchers have commented that there is a ton of online material available and that the main problem is getting too deep into the reading. There is agreement from the research crew that a story can be written in one evening (2-3 hours)

Through Gunroom Shots, we received a number of emails with interesting stories from the membership, but few volunteers to do research. We did recruit John Dalzell Capt(N) (retired). He has volunteered the tombstone + data on 160 war dead who began the Naval Service in Saskatchewan. He is currently completing several life stories for the project

On a technical side Ross has created a template for “Vignettes” and created a separate mailing list for this. It will employ the same ‘Plug-in’ on the web site used by Gunroom Shots. We will shortly have distinct CSVC web pages devoted to CSVC news and materials.

Nothing significant to report related to fund raising. A possible VAC source of funding is being investigated at this time

Next Steps

Goals for the next quarter

- Ongoing outreach to recruit researchers and possible funding including
 - Navy League (Jennifer Bennett)
 - Vignette emails and regular posting to the UNTD Facebook group
 - Naval Reserve Board (?) or NRDs
 - Recruit a communications expert to the project team
- Ongoing research
 - Individual life stories
 - Sorting all 1769 sailors into 17 NRD that existed during WW2
 - Recruit life story reviewer to the project team
 - Translation of researcher instructions
- Technical development
 - Create CSVC web pages and consider value of separate site
- Funding proposal
 - Recruit a proposal writer to the project team

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Kubeck
CSVC Project Manager