

Petty Officer David Mierion Evans V-13793



- **Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve**
- **Born: Calgary AB, 10 February 1917**
- **Enlisted: Calgary Division RCNVR, 2 May 1941**
- **Civilian Occupation: Clerk, Paint and Arts Supply Ltd**
- **Death: Died when HMCS Shawinigan sank on 24 November 1944**
- **Commemorated: Halifax Memorial, Panel 11; HMCS Shawinigan memorial in Shawinigan QC & Western Canada High School Memorial Plaque**

Do you have a better photo of PO Evans?
Please submit to the Citizen Sailor Virtual
Cenotaph CSVC.CVMC@gmail.com

David Meirion (also spelled Merion after Merionthshire, Wales) Evans was the son of Welsh born David Pugh Evans and Harriet (Jones) Evans, He was born in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. His two much older sisters Jane (Jennie) and Margaret Olwen were born in Wales. He was a United Church member. Both his parents were very involved in the local Welsh Society. His Mother died when he was only six years old, and his father never remarried. David resided with his father and sisters at 508 15 Avenue West, Calgary, AB. He attended Haultain and Victoria schools followed by Western Canada High School, where he did three years of motor mechanics and two years in woodworking before leaving school midway through his Grade 11 year. His principal described him as being of "good moral character."

Before enlisting David worked five years as Clerk and Salesman for Paint and Art Supplies Ltd. in Calgary. His employer's letters of reference described him as trustworthy and conscientious. A Calgary newspaper reported that David Evans was a well-known hockey player. David had two uncles who served in World War I veterans. His Uncle John Pugh Evans served with the British Monmouth Regiment and survived the War. His Uncle William Evans joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) 49th Battalion and was killed at Ypres in June 1916.

David first joined the Royal Canadian Army Service Corp (RCASC (RF)) - 2nd Corps Troops as part of the Non-Permanent Active Militia (NPAM) on 14 August 1940 and trained at Camp Sarcee on the outskirts of Calgary. Private Evans was released from the Army to join the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve in May 1941 as an Ordinary Seaman. He was 24 years old. Enlistment documents describe David as 5' 6 1/2" 155 lbs with dark brown hair, hazel eyes, and a 'fresh' complexion. Ordinary Seaman Evans completed his basic training in HMCS *Tecumseh* and was then posted to HMCS *Naden* in Esquimalt BC for further training.

On the 15 October 1941 David was drafted to the Armed Merchant Cruiser *Prince Robert* F56. The ship soon sailed for Hong Kong as the escort to the troop ships transporting Canadian soldiers. On their return trip to Esquimalt, *Prince Robert* stopped at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on 4 Dec 1941. She resumed her journey back home before the 7 Dec 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. While serving in *Prince Robert*, David was promoted to Able Seaman (AB). AB Evans was then posted to the East Coast in October 1942 where he earned his Seaman Torpedoman TO rating. He was soon serving in Fairmile Motor Launch Q090 as part of the Bermuda Flotilla. Fairmiles were 15-man fast patrol and anti-submarine vessels. While serving in Q090, he was promoted to Leading Seaman. Having demonstrated leadership ability, LS Evans was sent to HMCS *Stadacona* and HMCS *Cornwallis* from June to November 1943 for advanced training as a Leading Seaman Torpedoman LTO rating. He was a very strong torpedo course candidate achieving high marks, perhaps due in part to his Motor Mechanics courses and interest in High School.

On 23 November 1943, Leading Seaman Evans was posted to the flower class corvette, HMCS *Shawinigan*. The ship was part of Escort Group - W3 on Atlantic convoy escort duty. In the spring of 1944, the ship underwent refit in Canada before sailing for Bermuda for workups and then proceeded to again take up escort duties on the east coast of Canada. While serving in *Shawinigan*, David Evans was promoted to Petty Officer. It was during the escort of the ferry *Burgeo*, on the Sydney NS - Port Aux Basques NL crossings that the ship was lost.



HMCS SHAWINIGAN in St. John's, Newfoundland circa Nov/Dec 1943.
 Note that her mast was snapped off.
 Photo credit: From the collection of David Simon, ERA
 (<http://www.forposterityssake.ca>)

"*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, Frederick-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, Petty Officer David Meirion Evans was awarded 1939-45 Star, Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp, Atlantic Star and Clasp & the War Medal. Petty Officer Evans is remembered on the Halifax Memorial, Panel 11; on the memorial to HMCS *Shawinigan* in the town of Shawinigan and he is remembered on the Western Canada High School Memorial Plaque.

Petty Officer Evans is remembered by a family descendent Major (Ret'd) Dan Cameron who is proud to possess David's medals. He also has a small Jade figurine that David brought back from Hong Kong while there in 1941 in HMCS Prince Robert. David's niece, Pat (Timmins) Garrity remembers going up to HMCS *Tecumseh* every Remembrance Day. Her Mother was very sad those days on the loss of her brother, she remembered too, that for a full year after the death of David, the two sisters wore a white blouse, black skirt, and black arm band. In November 1944, Pat's Mother send a telegram to David announcing Pat's birth. David sent his congratulations back by telegram. It was the last anyone was to ever hear of him.

Prepared By:

Commander (Ret'd) Greg McKenzie (CO HMCS *Tecumseh* 1987-90) & Citizen Sailor Virtual Cenotaph Research Team



Sources:

- Commonwealth War Graves Commission Database - Petty Officer David Meirion Evans
- Western Canada High School Memorial Plaque
- Library and Archives Canada - Service file for Petty Officer David Meirion Evans
- Calgary Herald Dec 1, 1944 p. 16
- Calgary Herald Dec 7, 1944, p. 1
- Globe and Mail Dec 8, 1944, p.7
- http://www.forposterityssake.ca/Navy/HMCS_SHAWINIGAN_K136.htm
- <https://naval-museum.mb.ca/battle-of-the-atlantic/hmcs-shawinigan/>
- Major (Ret'd) Dan Cameron RCAF - Ottawa, Evans family descendent
- Pat (Timmins) Garrity - Calgary, Evans family descendent
- Gwilym Evans - Wales, Evans family descendent

Newspaper Article from the Calgary Herald

4 Calgary, 5 Alberta Men Lost In Shawinigan Sinking

Sinking of the corvette H.M.C.S. Shawinigan, on operational duty in the North Atlantic, was announced today at Ottawa by Hon. Angus L. Macdonald, naval services minister. With the exception of five members of the crew reported dead following recovery and identification of their bodies, all the remainder of the ship's complement, seven officers and 78 ratings, were listed as "missing".

The missing list included four Calgary sailors. Stoker Petty Officer Dick C. Swart, 23, son of Mr. and Mrs. D. C. Swart, 329, 9A



P.O. Evans



S.P.O. D. Swart A.B. C. R. Moss

St. N.W.; Able Seaman Cecil R. Moss, 18, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Moss, 524 19th Ave. W.; Petty Officer David M. Evans, 27, only son of D. P. Evans, 508 15th Ave. W., and Able Seaman Douglas J. Blaylock, former employee of Hospital Supplies Ltd.

FIVE OTHER ALBERTANS