

## Paymaster Lieutenant John Ceredig Lloyd Lewis O-41950



Lieutenant John (Jack) Lewis. Photo: For Posterity Sake website

- **Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve**
- **Born: Lampeter Cardigan, Wales, 31 January 1912**
- **Enlisted: Calgary Half Company, 6 July 1931**
- **Civilian Occupation: Accountant and Stock & Bond Broker, Tanner & Company**
- **Death: Accidental Death while serving in HMCS *New Waterford* on 22 October 1944**
- **Buried: Londonderry City Cemetery, C. of E. Plot. Sec. F. Grave 46**
- **Commemorated at the following memorials in Calgary, AB: Western Canada High School WW 2 Memorial; Field of Crosses; HMCS *Tecumseh* Memorial Plaque and Naval Museum of Alberta Memorial Plaque**

John Ceredig Lloyd Lewis was better known as Jack Lewis.

Jack had shown an interest in the Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR) many years before the outbreak of World War II. He had enlisted at the Calgary Half Company of the RCNVR on 6 July 1931 with the rank of Ordinary Seaman and remained with the RCNVR until 6 June 1934. He was rated as satisfactory and enthusiastic but was discharged because he was attending University in Edmonton and could not attend drills.

Jack was the only child of John James and Elizabeth Lloyd Lewis (nee Davies) and was born in the Village of Lampeter Wales. His father John James Lewis was born in 1871 in the nearby village of Mydroilyn. John James had immigrated to Canada and settled in Calgary as early as 1904. He struggled to find employment. He worked at a cement plant and also as a Real Estate Agent. He was very active in the St. David's Society, an organization that helped promote Welsh culture and assist Welsh immigrants to Canada. Sometime prior to 1911 John James returned to Wales and married Elizabeth Lloyd Davies. Elizabeth's family were farmers near Lampeter. They lived in Lampeter and John tried to work as a real estate salesman.

Shortly after the birth of John Lloyd in 1912, John James returned to Calgary. He found employment as a clerk in the Customs Office. Elizabeth and John Lloyd did not join him in Calgary until 1920. With the hostilities of World War One, they were probably safer living in Wales than travelling to Canada across the Atlantic. A 1921 census document shows the family of three to be living at 1027 17 Avenue East in the Ramsey area of Calgary.

The Lewis family lived a few blocks from the Ramsey School located at 2222 Spiller Road. This was one of Calgary's famous sandstone schools that still stand today. Jack attended school here until he graduated to Western Canada High School (WCHS) located at 641 17 Ave SW. Jack was an excellent student and graduated from WCHS in 1931 with good enough marks to enroll in the University of Alberta (U of A) in Edmonton in 1932. Jack graduated from the U of A in 1936 with a Bachelor of Commerce degree, he was 24 years old. Jack quickly found employment in Calgary with a brokerage and accounting firm, Tanner and Company Ltd. On his Navy enlistment documents, he stated his job as an Accountant and also as a Stock and Bond Broker. He was working for this firm and living with his parents at 225 39 Avenue West when he decided to re-enlist in the RCNVR.

John Ceredig Lloyd Lewis re-enlisted in the RCNVR at the Calgary Base on 20 November 1939. His medical documents stated that he was 5'11" tall and weighed 190 pounds, he had dark hair and brown eyes and was in excellent health. On his attestation documents, he stated that his religion was the Church of England and that he was fluent in both French and Spanish. His University Degree made him a good candidate for Officer Training. He requested a position that his accounting experience would be useful for. Jack was on divisional strength in Calgary until 28 December 1940, he continued to work at his civilian job while attending regular drills. There was not a great demand for Officers in accounting and logistics at this time but the Commanding Officer of the Calgary RCNVR Base, Lieutenant R.D. de Winton sent a letter to Naval Headquarters in Ottawa recommending Jack for Officer Training as a Paymaster. Lieutenant de Winton was impressed that Jack had taken it upon himself to learn all the regulations and responsibilities of a Paymaster.

Acting Paymaster Lieutenant Lewis was dispatched to HMCS *Stadacona* on 28 December 1940. *Stadacona* was the main RCN training base in Halifax Nova Scotia. Here Jack was trained in seamanship and in the Paymaster's responsibility.

Jack's father John James Lewis died on 2 April 1941 and Jack was given leave to attend his funeral. Jack returned to Halifax and continued his training until 1 June 1941. Enlistment in the RCNVR in Calgary had increased to the point where they required a Paymaster Officer. Jack Lewis was given this position and was on active duty (DHQ) in Calgary until 3 March 1944 when he was dispatched back to HMCS *Stadacona* in Halifax.

At some point in his life, Jack met a woman from Lethbridge named Margaret Alice Wray. On 27 June 1941, Jack drove to Lethbridge and he and Margaret got married. Margaret Wray was born in Raymond Alberta in 1912; she was the daughter of a well-known Doctor and Surgeon Dr. John S. Wray who had served in the medical corps in World War 1. Margaret was a trained dietician and had worked at the Holy Cross Hospital in Calgary when she met Jack Lewis. They lived together in Calgary until Jack was dispatched to Halifax. Margaret did not know how long he would be gone so she moved back with her parents and worked as a dietician at the Galt Hospital in Lethbridge.

Jack was rated Paymaster Lieutenant on 20 March 1944 when he was dispatched to HMCS *New Waterford*. HMCS *New Waterford* was a brand new River Class Frigate, which had been built by the Yarrows Company in Esquimalt B.C., completed on 17 February 1943. The ship was in transit from Esquimalt to Halifax via the Panama Canal and was commissioned in Halifax on 21 January 1944. *New Waterford* had a complement of 141 men and it was customary for any ship with over 101 men to have its own Paymaster. Jack joined the ship in Halifax on her return from workups in Bermuda; *New Waterford* had been given her first assignment as part of Escort Group 6 based out of Londonderry North Ireland.

Escort Group 6 was usually on European escorts and often was in port in Liverpool and Portsmouth. On 16 October 1944, HMCS *New Waterford* was returning to Londonderry when she assisted HMCS *Annan* in the sinking of U-boat U-1006 near the Faeroe Islands north of Ireland. On 22 October 1944, HMCS *New Waterford* was tied up at berth #9 of the jetty in the River Foyle Harbour in Londonderry Ireland. Lieutenant Jack Lewis was off-duty and was visiting with other officers on HMCS *Beacon Hill* which was tied up at berth #8. He left *Beacon Hill* at 2330 hours and was last seen near a taxi cab across the jetty from *Beacon Hill*.

Jack Lewis was reported missing on 23 October 1944. His description was reported to the local constabulary and an effort was made to find the driver of the taxi he had been seen near. On October 24-26, dredging operations took place near the jetty but found nothing and there was no success in finding the driver of the cab. A Board of Inquiry was conducted by the Commander in Chief of Western Approaches on 13 November 1944. It was concluded that Lieutenant Lewis had probably slipped off the jetty and drowned. He was not declared deceased at this time though because it was possible he had left in the taxi he was last seen near. On 21 November 1944 a body was recovered in the Foyle River, it was identified as being the remains of Lieutenant John Lloyd Lewis of the RCNVR. It was determined that the cause of death was asphyxiation by drowning.

Lieutenant John Ceredig Lloyd Lewis was buried in the Londonderry City Cemetery, Church of England Plot, Section F, and Grave #46 on 23 November 1944. All officers of the *New Waterford* were in attendance.

For his service Jack Lewis was awarded: The 1939-1945 Star, the French Germany Star and Clasp, the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp and the War Medal. His mother and wife were both awarded The Memorial Cross.

Lieutenant John (Jack) Ceredig Lloyd Lewis is commemorated in the Second World War Book of Remembrance, page 365 at the Centre Block House of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa; Western Canada High School WW 2 Memorial in Calgary; Field of Crosses in Calgary; HMCS *Tecumseh* Memorial Plaque and Naval Museum of Alberta Memorial Plaque in Calgary

#### Prepared By:

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#### Sources:

- Commonwealth War Graves Commission Database profile for John Ceredig Lloyd Lewis
- Library and Archives Canada military file for John Ceredig Lloyd Lewis
- Ancestry.ca: information on John James Lewis, Elizabeth Davies and Margaret Wray
- Calgary Herald Obituary for John James Lewis, 15 April 1941
- Calgary Herald Obituary for Margaret Lewis, 20 April 1988
- For Posterity's Sake page for HMCS *New Waterford* K321