

Signalman Donald James Linwood V-31171



- **Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve**
- **Born: Calgary, AB, 9 May 1924**
- **Enlisted: Calgary Division RCNVR, 19 March 1942**
- **Civilian Occupation: Labourer, Bennett & White Construction**
- **Death: Died in a bike accident while serving in HMCS *Niobe* on 14 July 1945.**
- **Buried: Greenock Cemetery, Inverclyde, Scotland, Sec. C.C.C. Grave 1272**
- **Commemorated: HMCS *Tecumseh* Memorial Plaque, Museum of Alberta Honour Plaque, Field of Crosses Memorial Calgary**

Signalman Donald James (Jim) Linwood, Calgary Herald, July 18, 1945, page 8.

Do you have a better photo you can share? Please submit to CSVC.CVMC@gmail.com

It is interesting that Jim Linwood's family story and his own began and ended in Scotland but 100 miles apart.

Donald James (Jim) Linwood was born in Calgary, Alberta, on 9 May 1924. His father, Charles Linwood, was born in Kirkcudbrightshire in Scotland on April 23, 1884, moving to Stratford, Ontario, when he was a child, while his mother, May Rose, called Rosie (Fitchett), was born in Newtown Linford, Leicestershire in England February 5, 1897. She moved to Canada in 1910. Jim's parents were married in Vancouver, BC, on May 18, 1916. Charles Linwood worked as a steam engineer. The family religion was reported as Presbyterian.

The Linwoods had four other children. Florence Phyllis (Schug) was born in Ontario in 1919; their other son Douglas Charles was born in 1920; Grace (Dolly) Margaret (Attrill) was born May 6, 1923, in Nelson, BC, and the youngest child, June (Kennedy) was born around 1930. The family moved many times, but while in Calgary, they lived at 2117 15 St West.

While in Calgary, Jim completed Grade 9 in the Normal Practice School and one year of high school. He left school at age 16. He found employment at the Alberta Nitrogen Plant and worked for a year as a labourer for Bennett & White Construction.

There was an early interest in the Navy as Jim had been a member of the Calgary-based Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps HMCS *Undaunted* before enlisting at HMCS *Tecumseh*. He was 17 years old. He enlisted in the RCNVR on 19 March 1942 for the duration of hostilities. He was described as 5' 8 ¾" tall with blue eyes, sandy hair, and a fair complexion. He had a scar on his inner left thigh and left thumb.

Jim Linwood was rated as an Ordinary Seaman and was moved to active service on 13 May 1942, remaining at *Tecumseh* until 12 July, when he was shipped to HMCS *St. Hyacinthe* for training. This was a specialized signaling/communications school in Quebec. By 21 August, he was qualified as an Ordinary Signalman (Ord.Sig.) and remained at the school until 28 October 1942, when he was transferred to HMCS *Stadacona*. This was the main naval training base on the east coast, situated in Halifax, NS. On 7 November 1942, he took the half-day course and became qualified in anti-gas measures. Ord. Sig. Linwood was posted in less than a month to HMCS *Avalon*, a newly built escort convoy base in the Dominion of Newfoundland in St. John's. It was built and operated by the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) but was owned by the British Admiralty. Ord. Sig. Linwood's stay proved brief as he was assigned to HMCS *Restigouche*, a destroyer in the Mid-Ocean Escort Force (MOEF), on 9 December 1942.

Destroyers were utilized in the MOEF as protection for convoys from the east coast of North America to Iceland, where the Royal Navy would take over the duties to finish the trip to the UK. Later, the convoys went directly to the British Isles. Shortly after joining *Restigouche*, nicknamed "Rustyguts," Ord. Sig. Linwood received his first yearly evaluation, indicating "very good" character and "satisfactory" efficiency. He was promoted to Signalman (Sig.) May 13, 1943.

He was serving in HMCS *Restigouche* in April 1943 when his ship rescued 43 survivors from the Dutch cargo steamship SS *Blitar*. It was noted that the *Blitar* fought off three U boats for nearly 10 hours after being separated from the main convoy heading from New York to Liverpool (HX 231). Once the ship sank, the lifeboats were found by patrol aircraft and rescued by HMCS *Restigouche* and HMS *Trent*, two escort ships from a convoy travelling in the opposite direction.

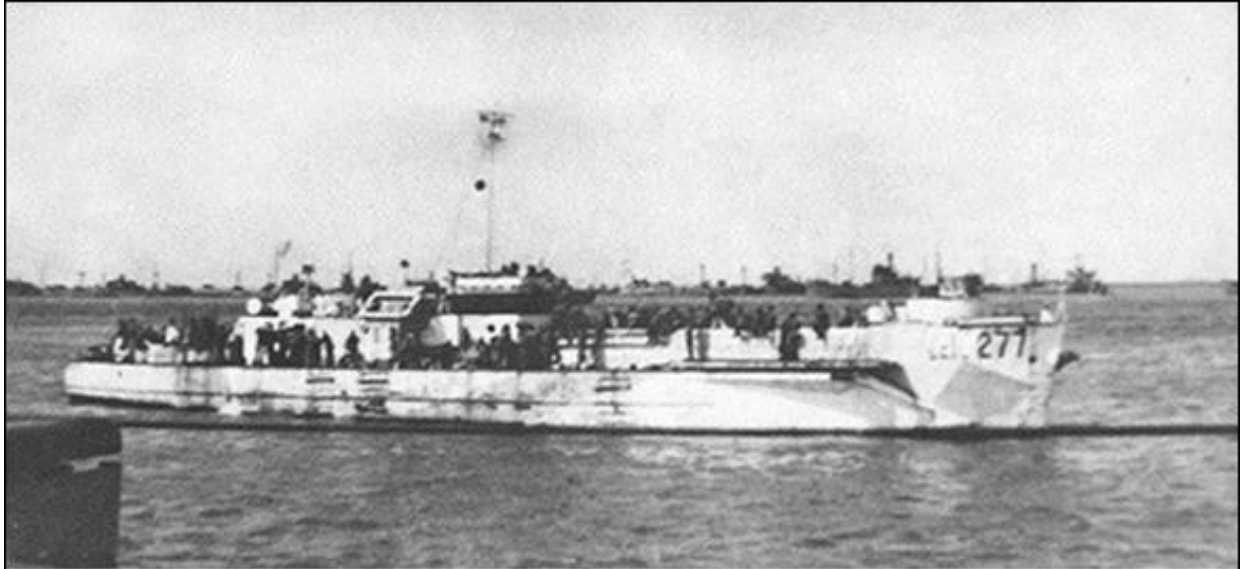
Sig. Linwood remained in *Restigouche* for almost a year. During this period, the ship escorted nine convoys in the Atlantic and two in the Mediterranean and African theatres. The latter originated in the Firth of Clyde near Greenock on the west coast of Scotland and were made up specifically of faster ships.

He was attached to HMCS *Stadacona* on 25 November 1943 but via HMCS *Niobe*, a shore establishment in Greenock, Scotland. By 1940, nearly all RCN destroyers were based in Britain on loan to the Royal Navy. There was a need for an RCN manning station in the UK, originally HMCS *Dominion* in Devonport. It was later moved and finally recommissioned as *Niobe* in Greenock, as by then, Canadian corvettes also required the depot.

For Sig. Linwood, the first nine months of 1944 – 5 January 1944 to 27 September 1944 - were served aboard landing craft, specifically Landing Craft Infantry Large {LCI (L)}. These United States-built craft were provided to the Allies through a Lend-Lease program between the USA and the UK. Several of the LCI (L) were transferred to Canada. The craft were steel-hulled and designed to carry 200 troops at up to 15 knots.

Sig. Linwood served in LCI (L) 260, 266, Squid (L) 135 and LCI (L) 115. Many were under the command of RCNVR officers. Most notable was his service on LCI (L) 277. According to his pay

and identification book, he was on HMC LCI (L) 277 while stationed with Commando Battalion 41, RCN Commando Base, from 14 March 1944 to September 1944. He was attached to the 1st Canadian Flotilla for the Normandy invasion off Juno Beach on D-Day, 6 June 1944. Sig. Linwood's obituary mentioned that he was wounded at the time of the invasion and was home on leave in October 1944.



**LCI (L) 277 at anchor off the coast of England prior to the invasion of Normandy.
Credit: Peter Ballantyne for his father. Lt. William H.M. Ballantyne RCNVR CO LCI (L) 277**

At the time of his leave, Sig. Linwood was attached to HMCS *Peregrine*, a Navy shore establishment in Halifax that served as a drafting depot and manning pool. He spent a short time, 9-27 November, at HMCS *Cornwallis* before being drafted to the Communications School, HMCS *St. Hyacinthe*, from 28 November 1944 to 8 January 1945. At the school, he completed a Signalman refresher course. His yearly report rated his character as very good and his efficiency as satisfactory.

In February 1945, Sig. Linwood was shipped back to HMCS *Niobe* in the U.K. From his records, it appears he worked ashore in *Niobe*. There would have been plenty of work for a signalman at this headquarters. He would have been present when VE was announced on 7 May 1945. It was reported that the announcement was followed by a large party organized by the Commanding Officer for the Ship's Company. Linwood continued to work and was officially qualified as a Trained Operator (TO) in Visual Signalling on 19 May 1945.

After VE day, RCNVR sailors fell into three categories: (1) those who wished to demobilize back to civilian life, (2) those who "signed on" for an additional two years to fight with the *Interim Force*, and (3) those who wished to sign on permanently with the RCN. Sig. Linwood's file does not include any documents that would explain his selection. However, the fact that the Navy returned him to the UK after his wound convalescence in Calgary hints that the Navy considered him an asset.

Just before midnight on Friday, 13 July 1945, Signalman Linwood was riding a bicycle when he hit a rock in a turn in the road. He crashed into a stone wall – several kilometres from *Niobe* -

between Largs and Greenock, Scotland. He sustained a fractured skull with an intracranial hemorrhage. He was transported to the RCN hospital at HMCS *Niobe*, where he died of his wounds in the early morning hours of 14 July 1945. Jim Linwood was 21 years old.

Signalman Donald James (Jim) Linwood was buried with full military honours in the Greenock Cemetery, Scotland, section 3 C's, plot #1272. The headstone is engraved:

"IN MEMORY OF OUR BELOVED JIM HE GAVE HIS ALL FREELY"

For his Service, Signalman Donald James Linwood was awarded the 1939-45 Star, the Atlantic Star, the Africa Star, the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp, and the War Medal. His mother, Rose, was awarded the Memorial Cross.

Signalman Linwood is remembered in the Second World War Book of Remembrance, page 535, Centre Block of the Houses of Parliament, Ottawa, the Field of Crosses Memorial in Calgary, the Naval Museum of Alberta Honour Plaque and the HMCS *Tecumseh* Memorial Plaque.

Jim Linwood's father also served in the military. His attestation papers, signed in Edmonton, AB, showed that he served in the Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR) in London, Ontario, for three years before joining the war effort on November 17, 1914, at 30 years of age. He was attached to the 31st Battalion of the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force as a steam fireman due to his training. He purchased his discharge, as a Lance Corporal, for \$16 on 3 April 1915. Charles Linwood later joined the Royal Canadian Airforce (RCAF) and was on leave from the RCAF Station Scoudouc NB to attend his son Jim's funeral with family in Calgary. Charles Linwood died in 1961 and was buried in Calgary as a Flight Sergeant with the RCAF.

Prepared By*:

Lieutenant-Commander (Ret'd) Steven Perron CD (HMCS *Tecumseh* 1971-85), Citizen Sailors Virtual Cenotaph Research Team



*All stories are edited by the project crew and sometimes altered to conform to the Citizen Sailors Virtual Cenotaph format, length and content parameters.

Sources:

- Commonwealth War Graves Commission Database – file for Donald James Linwood
- Library and Archives Canada – Service file for Sig. Donald James Linwood
- Pictures of funeral
<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2456479?Donald%20James%20Linwood>
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/navy/services/history/ships>
- Headstone <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/137314699/donald-james-linwood>

This material may be freely reproduced for non-commercial purposes, provided it includes the statement that it has been prepared by the Citizen Sailors Virtual Cenotaph project of the Naval Reserve Association of Canada from interviews and publicly accessible sources.


- July 18, 1945 (page 8 of 16). (1945, Jul 18.) *Calgary Herald* (1939-2010)
Retrieved from: <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/july-18-1945-page-8-16/docview/2252953045/se-2>
- Second Book WWII Remembrance Ottawa page 535

Other Photos:



Calgarians' Son Dies Overseas

Signalman Officer Donald James Linwood, 21, died overseas as a result of injuries received in a bicycle accident when he was stationed at H.M.C.S. Niobe. He is the son of FS and Mrs. Charles Linwood, 2117 15th St. W.



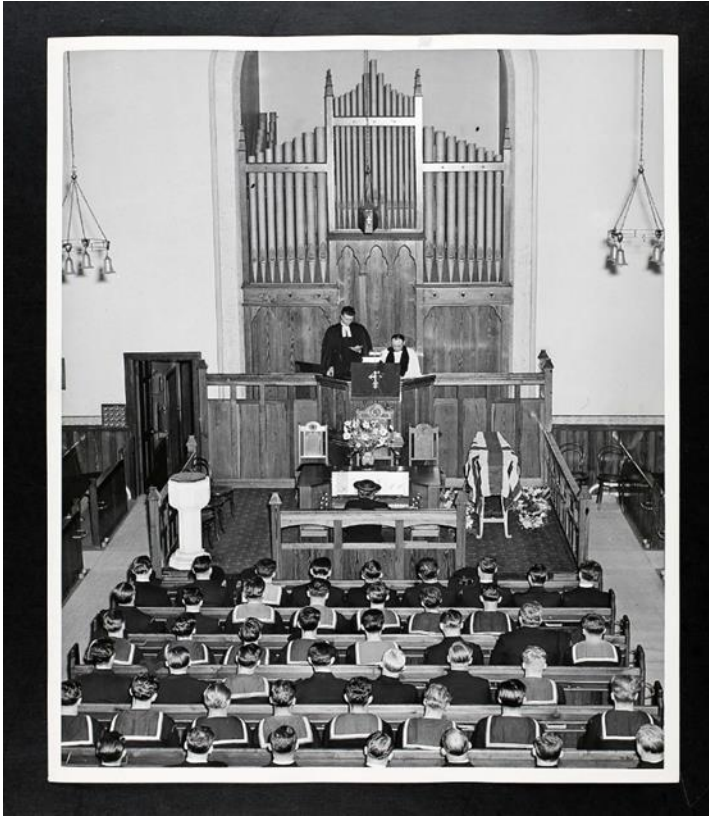
Born in Calgary, he attended Normal Practice school and worked for a year at the Alberta Nitrogen plant before enlisting in May, 1942. He was a member of the Calgary Sea Cadet Corps.

Donald James Linwood.

He served on H.M.C.S. Restigouche until the invasion of Normandy, during which time he was on a landing craft. He was wounded at that time and was home on leave last October.

Besides his parents, he is survived by a brother, Douglas, in Edmonton; three sisters, Grace, Phyllis and June, all of Calgary. His father is stationed at Scotts N.B., but is home on leave.

CITIZEN SAILORS VIRTUAL CENOTAPH - CÉNOTAPHE VIRTUEL DES MARINS CITOYENS



Funeral with full military honours ending at Greenock Cemetery, Scotland. Source: service file.