

Able Seaman Glen Eric Reid Miller V-38035



Able Seaman Glen Miller. Photo: *Calgary Herald* 11 Nov 1944

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- **Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve**
- **Born: Calgary AB, 29 April 1921**
- **Enlisted: Calgary Division RCNVR, 26 May 1942**
- **Civilian Occupation: Packer, Robin Hood Mills**
- **Death: Accidental Death while serving in HMCS *Chatham* on 6 November 1944**
- **Buried: Calgary (Burnsland) Cemetery, Lot 4. Block 9. Sec. G**
- **Commemorated: The Calgary Field of Crosses; the memorial plaque at HMCS *Tecumseh*; and the Naval Museum of Alberta memorial plaque**

Glen Eric Reid Miller was born in Calgary, AB on 29 April 1921. His parents were William Miller and Isabel Miller, who married in Calgary on 4 July 1911. Glen was the fifth of eight children. His older brothers all served in the Second World War. The Miller children were:

Norman (born: 1912) Corporal, Royal Air Force

Gordon (born: 1917) Petty Officer, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR)

Bert (born: 1918) Sergeant, Royal Canadian Air Force

Lyle (born: 1919) Private, Royal Canadian Army Support Corps

Glen (born: 1921) Able Seaman, RCNVR

Beth (born: 1923)

May (born: 1926)

Grant (born: 1928)

The family lived at 1814 30th Ave SW in what is now known as Calgary's Marda Loop neighbourhood. Glen's father, William, deserted the family in 1929. He left Isabel on her own with eight children at the beginning of the Depression, which would last until the start of the Second World War.

For his elementary grades, Glen attended King Edward School, which was about a block away. He left school after Grade 9. At one point, Glen worked on a dairy farm in British Columbia for three years. He had just started working at Robin Hood Flour Mills in Calgary as a packer when he enlisted in the RCNVR at HMCS *Tecumseh* on 26 May 1942. His employer agreed to hold his job for him following the war. His attestation papers described him as being 5 foot 6 inches tall, with brown hair and brown eyes. He listed his religion as Presbyterian. He remained on Divisional Strength until 8 July 1942, when he was taken into Active Service. He trained at HMCS *Tecumseh* for two months and was then sent to HMCS *Naden*, the major Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) training base at Esquimalt, BC, for additional seamanship training.

In November 1942, Ordinary Seaman Miller completed his training and was assigned to his first ship, HMCS *Prince Robert*, an Armed Merchant Cruiser (AMC). The ship, along with sister ships *Prince Henry* and *Prince David*, was built in 1930 as a passenger and cargo ship for the Canadian National Railway. During the 1930s, the ship received only limited use as she was not considered to be well-designed, and the Depression reduced demand for passenger and cargo shipping on the West Coast. With the outbreak of war, *Prince Robert* was purchased by the RCN and converted to an AMC, becoming HMCS *Prince Robert*. Her sister ships went through similar conversions.

When Ordinary Seaman Miller joined HMCS *Prince Robert* in 1942, the ship was part of the Esquimalt Force. Japan had entered the war and was considered a threat to Canadian shipping.



**HMCS Prince Robert April 1941.
Photo Credit: Library and Archives Canada/Legion Magazine**

Prince Robert's job was to patrol coastal shipping lanes, providing a visual presence and satisfying an American demand for a credible Canadian naval presence on the West Coast.

In January 1943, HMCS *Prince Robert* went into refit in Esquimalt

to become an anti-aircraft AMC. Ordinary Seaman Miller was transferred ashore to HMCS *Givenchy* in Esquimalt for accommodation but continued to work on HMCS *Prince Robert* during her refit.

In May 1943, Ordinary Seaman Miller was transferred to HMCS *Chatham*, the RCN base in Prince Rupert, BC. He was assigned to the Boom Defensive Vessels (BDV). These were the vessels that opened and closed the anti-submarine booms that protected harbours. Personnel assigned to BDVs also performed maintenance duties on the booms. In July 1943, Ordinary Seaman Miller was promoted to Able Seaman.

Able Seaman Miller continued to serve at HMCS *Chatham* throughout most of 1944. His character was always rated as "Very Good", and his efficiency was rated as "Superior".

On 6 November 1944, Able Seaman Miller was working on Boom Defence Vessel 2. The vessel was lifting a five-ton boom buoy with its derrick when the derrick failed, causing the buoy to crash to the deck. Able Seaman Miller was caught under the falling buoy and was killed instantly. A Board of Inquiry was held, where it was determined that there was no record of any testing being done on the derrick. Able Seaman Glen Eric Reid Miller was 23 years old when he died.

A. B. Glen Miller

Full naval honors will be accorded A.B. Glen Eric Reid Miller, 23, 1814 30th Ave. S.W., at funeral services at Jacques' funeral home Monday at 4 p.m. Naval Chaplain Rev. J. R. Mordey will officiate. Burial will follow in the Field of Honor, Burnsland cemetery.

Born in Calgary, Glen attended King Edward and junior high schools and was employed at Robin Hood Mills when he enlisted in May, 1942.

He had served on H.M.C.S. Prince Robert and was serving on H.M.C.S. Chatham at Prince Rupert when the accident occurred which claimed his life.

He is survived by his mother, Mrs. Bella Miller; two sisters, Beth, Edmonton, and May in Calgary; four brothers, Cpl. Norman, R.A.F., in England; Petty Officer Gordon, R.C.N. V.R., Halifax; Sgt. Bert, R.C.A.F., Yarmouth, N.S.; Pte. Lyle, R.C.A.S.C., New Brunswick, and one brother, Grant, at home.



A.B. Miller

Calgary Herald, 11 Nov 1944

SEAMAN KILLED WHEN STRUCK BY FALLING BUOY

A 20-year-old naval seaman was accidentally killed at a waterfront naval establishment when a boom defence buoy weighing approximately five tons fell from a derrick scow crane about 1 o'clock Monday afternoon striking him on the back of the head.

An enquiry into the seaman's death is being held by naval authorities today. His name will be released when the next-of-kin have been advised.

Prince Rupert Daily News, 7 Nov 1944

Able Seaman Miller was buried with Full Naval Honours in Calgary's Burnsland Cemetery Field of Honour in Lot 4, Block 9, Sec G. The inscription on his grave reads:

"His happy smile and loving ways will always be remembered."

For his service, Able Seaman Glen Eric Reid Miller was awarded: the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and the War Medal. His mother, Isabel, was awarded the Memorial Cross.

Able Seaman Glen Eric Reid Miller is commemorated in the Calgary Field of Crosses; the memorial plaque at HMCS *Tecumseh*; the Naval Museum of Alberta memorial plaque; and in the Second World War Book of Remembrance, Page 394, at the Centre Block of the Houses of Parliament, Ottawa.

Prepared By:

David Mitchell, former Able Seaman, HMCS *Tecumseh*, Citizen Sailors Virtual Cenotaph Research team



Sources:

- Commonwealth War Graves Commission – profile for Glen Eric Reid Miller
- Library and Archives Canada Service via Ancestry.com – record for military service
- Ancestry.com for family information
- ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Calgary Herald*
- *Prince Rupert Daily News* Archive
- *Legion Magazine* April 2010 issue
- Wikipedia website
- Canadian Virtual War Memorial website