

## Petty Officer Joseph Sydney Wheatley V-57235



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- **Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve**
- **Born: Horsley, England, 26 March 1905**
- **Enlisted: HMCS *Tecumseh*, 24 March 1943**
- **Civilian Occupation: Police Officer, City of Calgary**
- **Death: Died of disease complications attributable to military service on 25 June 1946**
- **Buried: Calgary (Burnsland) Cemetery, Lot 8. Block 11. Sec. G**
- **Commemorated: Calgary Field of Crosses; and the memorial plaque at HMCS *Tecumseh*; and the Naval Museum of Alberta memorial plaque**

Joseph Sydney Wheatley was born in Horsley, England on 26 March 1905. He was known as Syd. His father was Thomas Wheatley (1864 - 1951) and his mother was Mary Eliza (Fisher) Wheatley (1864 - 1924). Thomas worked as a coal miner and lived in the Derbyshire area of England for most of his life. Thomas and Mary were married in 1885 and between 1886 and 1905 they had 10 children. Syd was the youngest, almost 20 years younger than his oldest sibling.

Five of the ten siblings found their way to Calgary, and all these four brothers and one sister served in the military:

Thomas (1886 - 1935) arrived in Calgary in about 1912. He was a Staff Sergeant in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) Siberia force in 1919. He was also a police officer from 1920 to 1923.

Samuel (1888 - 1917) arrived in Calgary in about 1912. He worked as a brewer when he joined the CEF in 1915. He was killed in action on 8 April 1917 in France.

Agnes (1892 - 1963) served in the British Army Auxiliary Corps in the First World War. She was in Calgary by 1921.

Arthur (1895 - 1963) joined the CEF in 1914. He served with the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery in France until 1919.

Harold (1899 - 1967) joined the Royal Navy in the First World War as a collier (shovelling coal into the boiler). He arrived in Calgary in 1926, later moving to New Westminster and then back to England.

Syd arrived in Calgary in 1926 at the age of 21. He had been working as a coal miner in England. He described his education as being equivalent to Grade 9. In 1927, he joined the Calgary Police Department (now Calgary Police Service).

By all indicators, Syd Wheatly was a very dedicated police officer. There are many articles in the *Calgary Herald* archives throughout his career with the Calgary Police describing his accomplishments as he took on drunks, looters, bootleggers, thieves, robbers, gamblers, and assaulters. He provided assistance to accident victims, transients and probably anyone else who needed help. He mostly worked the night shift in what was then referred to as a prowler car.

In 1933, Syd married Marion Hegan in Calgary. Marion (1910 - 1991) was from Wetaskiwin, AB. Marion was a highly regarded Registered Nurse. She graduated in 1931 and worked at the Calgary General Hospital until she retired in 1971. In 1953, she became the first neurological nurse in Alberta.

Syd and Marion had three daughters – Donna, Agathe, and Ellen. The family lived at 466 22nd Ave NW for many years.

In early 1943, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) embarked on a campaign to recruit men for full-time shore patrol duties. A Naval Shore Patrol Service (NSPS) was instituted as a separate Navy branch. The RCN established a Shore Patrol Training School at HMCS *Stadacona*, the major operations and training base in Halifax, NS.

Constable Wheatley took a leave of absence from the police department and enlisted with the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR) at HMCS *Tecumseh* to become a Navy Patrolman. He enlisted on 24 March 1943 as an Able Seaman (Shore Patrol). His Attestation papers describe him as being over 6 feet tall, with brown hair, blue eyes, and a fair complexion. He listed his religion as United. He had just turned 37. He went on Active Service a week later.

In June 1943, he was sent to HMCS *Stadacona* for the Shore Patrolman course. He completed the course at the end of July and was promoted to Leading Patrolman. He worked as a Shore Patrolman at HMCS *Stadacona* until December 1943 and was then transferred to HMCS *Burrard* in Vancouver, BC.



HMCS *Burrard* was an administrative command set up in Vancouver. It was headed by the Naval Officer in Charge (NOIC) Vancouver and was co-located with the Army and Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) commands at the Jericho Beach Joint Services Headquarters. Leading Patrolman Wheatley likely worked directly with his Army Provost Corps and RCAF Service Police colleagues.

In December 1944, Syd was promoted to Petty Officer Patrolman. He continued his work as a Shore Patrolman in Vancouver until February 1945, when he was transferred to HMCS *Avalon* – the Navy shore establishment in St John’s, Newfoundland. He served as a Shore Patrolman there until May 1945, when he was sent to HMCS *Peregrine* in Halifax, and was then posted back to HMCS *Tecumseh* in Calgary.



On 26 June 1945, Petty Officer Patrolman Wheatley was discharged from the Navy, having been declared “Medically Unfit”. He had developed a Duodenal Ulcer, which was considered to be due to his Navy service. He was entitled to an extra 30 days’ pay (\$79.50) to cover rehabilitation costs.

Despite being declared medically unfit by the Navy, Syd rejoined the Calgary Police Department in July 1945. In December 1945, Constable Wheatley was promoted to Patrol Sergeant. His medical condition continued to deteriorate, and he was hospitalized for several weeks in early 1946. After being released from the hospital he again returned to his police duties. He returned to the hospital in early May and this time did not return to duty.

Sergeant Wheatley died on 25 June 1946. He was 41 years old.

Petty Officer Patrolman Joseph Sydney Wheatley is buried in Calgary’s Burnsland Cemetery in Lot 8. Block 11. Sec. G. His gravestone is engraved with, “A Loving Daddy and Faithful Friend”.

For his service, Petty Officer Patrolman Joseph Sydney Wheatley was awarded: the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal & Clasp, and the War Medal. His wife, Marion, was presented with the Memorial Cross.

Petty Officer Patrolman Joseph Sydney Wheatley is commemorated in the Calgary Field of Crosses; the memorial plaque at HMCS *Tecumseh*; the Naval Museum of Alberta memorial

plaque; and the Second World War Book of Remembrance, Page 591, at the Centre Block of the Houses of Parliament, Ottawa.

**Prepared By:**

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**Sources:**

- Commonwealth War Graves Commission – profile for Joseph Sydney Wheatley
- Library and Archives Canada Service via Ancestry.com – record of military service of Joseph Sydney Wheatley
- Ancestry.com for family information
- ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Calgary Herald
- Canadian Virtual War Memorial website
- Naval History Net website
- GC Ships Histories website
- MP History Website - <https://www.cmpa-apmc.org/mp-history.htm> l
- Canadian Military Police Virtual Museum website - <http://mpmuseum.org/rcn.html>
- Blueline Magazine - [https://www.blueline.ca/military\\_police\\_-\\_75\\_years\\_and\\_counting-3486/#:~:text=The%20Canadian%20Military%20Police%20Branch,during%20the%20Second%20World%20War.](https://www.blueline.ca/military_police_-_75_years_and_counting-3486/#:~:text=The%20Canadian%20Military%20Police%20Branch,during%20the%20Second%20World%20War.)