



In Memoriam

CARMICHAEL, Donn (1929 - 1985) Age: 55

UNTD MALAHAT 1948 U-13190

The only information we have on Donn's passing, is the snippet below;

"Donn Carmichael, BA'52, MLS'74, January 12, 1985 in Victoria. After a 20 year career as a naval officer, he went back to university, first to the University of Ottawa, and then back to UBC. He worked as a librarian for the Greater Victoria Public Library from 1971 until his death. He is survived by his wife Helen, mother Ruth, two daughters and a son, five stepchildren, and a brother and sister."

Donn Carmichael did name "The Martlet" in 1948 but the story as to how/why that occurred and some other interesting connections, deserves some unwinding.

Donn's grandfather, Herbert Carmichael, an Engineer, came to BC from Northern Ireland in the late 1800s. He was the BC Gov't Dep't of Mines Official Assayer of Silver. His only child, a son, was Donn's father, William Maurice Carmichael, born in Victoria in 1892. William Maurice Carmichael trained in civil engineering in Ireland and England before returning to Canada just prior to WW I. He enlisted in the Canadian Army, but, wishing to see some action, he soon left for England and worked his way to a commission with the Royal Engineers. He went to the front in 1915, and served until the end of the war. After the war, Carmichael returned to British Columbia. Finding no positions for engineers, he set up a small silver workshop in 1920 (behind his parent's house in Oak Bay). In 1924 he employed an English-trained smith, George Bennett Sr., and was able to open a downtown showroom in Victoria. From there the business expanded, and was able to weather the Depression. He opened a second shop in Vancouver (on Howe St.) in 1935, but closed it at the beginning of WW II and moved the inventory back to Victoria. This stock of silver, including some imported wares, lasted the firm through the war years, during which time the shop supplied metal fittings and accessories for ships fitting out in the local harbors. The shop was called Carmichael Silverware and was located on Fort St. They also had a warehouse on Government St.

"The family was wealthy, artistic, and talented. Like his father, Maurice also enjoyed the pastimes of Victoria's plutocracy such as the Dunsmuirs and the Audains, along with colonial remittance men like the Phillips-Wolleys. His second wife was a daughter of Sir Richard McBride, the former Conservative premier of British Columbia. The Carmichaels were devoted to shooting, fishing, and gardening. Thus the firm had an entry through the most prestigious phalanxes of British Columbia society to a distinguished clientele. In this Carmichael shared both interests and friendships with such fellow practitioners as society architect Samuel Maclure and architectural sculptor George Gibson."

One of his special commissions post-WWII was to produce the Drum Major's Silver Mace for the Ship's Band of HMCS ONTARIO.

Donn himself was born in Ladysmith, BC in 1929, but grew up in his father's/grandfather's silversmithing and heady social environment.

The shop flourished, closing only in the 1950s after Donn's father's death in 1954 at the age of 62.

Donn was in 2nd year at Victoria College and in the UNTD, when in the Fall of '48 they ran a contest to change the name of the student newspaper, which was then called "The Microscope". He happened to be sitting under an unofficial Badge/Coat of Arms/Crest of the College, which consisted of the 3 red Martlets, taken from McGill U, who had originally formed the College in the early 1900s. He had some Heraldic familiarity from the family business and knew that those legless birds were called Martlets and submitted the name. In a vote of 8 to 5, his name was chosen over his nearest competitor, "The Viking". Donn won \$5 for his effort and of course "The Martlet" survives to this day, 67 years later.

As was the case up until the early 60s, Donn had to move to UBC to complete his BA in Sociology,

which he did in 1952. At that time he would have been attached to DISCOVERY.
One of the mantras of UNTD summer training classes was "smoke 'em if ya got 'em". In early 1952 at UBC, Donn Carmichael ran a student survey asking whether smoking during exams should be permitted. Broken down by gender and addiction level, it was meant to cast light on the then existing smoking ban. Results were predictable and the ban was upheld.

Donn had 3 UNTD summers; '49, 50, '51 and went Reg Force right out of UBC in 1952 and was a qualified CommO and served on CAP DE LA MADELEINE and also ashore at YORK, retiring as a LCDR, O-12205.

His MLS Thesis in 1974 appears to have been "Bookmobile and associated services provided by the Greater Victoria Public Library 1954-1974"

WAC
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