

## Leading Supply Assistant Albert Kenneth Evans, V-4935



Photo Credit: Padre Phil Miller

- **Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve**
- **HMCS *Carleton*, Ottawa**
- **Born 20 May 1921, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario**
- **Civilian Occupation: Retail Store Clerk**
- **Died 21 Aug 1944, age: 23**
- **Commemorated on the Halifax Memorial, Panel 12, the Sault Ste. Marie Cenotaph & St Luke's Cathedral**

Albert Kenneth Evans' parents were immigrants from the UK. His father, Albert Ernest (served in WWI, as a Private in the 13<sup>th</sup> Btn Royal Welsh Fusiliers) and Ada Evans were married at St. Barnabas Church in Middlesbrough, England on July 31, 1919. They immigrated to Canada shortly thereafter and gave birth to **Albert Kenneth Evans** at 358 North Street, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario on May 20, 1921. Albert had a younger sister, Marvis Mary, and was known by his middle name, **Ken**, to his friends and classmates.

Ken developed an early interest in the Navy and was a member of the Sea Cadets in his teenage years. He completed his junior matriculation (Grade 12) at Sault Collegiate High School in 1939. He took a position as a clerk at Devine Sporting Goods where he worked for three years before enlisting in the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR) at HMCS *Carleton* on March 11, 1942 at the age of twenty years old. He was single and living at 49 Forest Avenue, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario at the time of his enlistment. He was 5'11" tall, weighed 130 lbs and had brown hair, brown eyes, and a medium complexion.

The day after enlistment, Supply Probationer Evans found himself in Toronto doing Basic Training at HMCS *York*. In June 1942, after completing his Basic Training, he was promoted to Supply Assistant, and was transferred to HMCS *Cornwallis*, NS for additional training. In August 1942, he began work as a Supply Assistant at HMCS *Stadacona*, a large Naval Base in Halifax, NS. Supply Assistant Evans received Very Good character assessments in Halifax and by the Spring of 1943, he had passed the professional exams for Leading Supply Assistant. In November 1943, Leading Supply Assistant Evans was drafted to his first (and only) sea-going ship, HMCS *Alberni*.

Leading Supply Assistant Evans joined *Alberni*, a Flower-Class Corvette, in November 1943 while she was undergoing a refit in Liverpool, NS. The ship sailed again in Feb 1944 and Leading Supply Assistant Evans served in *Alberni* during a busy period prior to its sinking. After work-ups in Bermuda, *Alberni* was one of 17 Royal Canadian Navy ships assigned to *Operation Neptune*, which was the naval portion of the Normandy D-Day landings. In June and July of 1944, *Alberni* escorted merchant ships (between Southampton and the Normandy beaches), as well as landing

craft, floating piers (for the Mulberry harbour), tugs and barges. On July 26, 1944, Leading Supply Assistant Evans witnessed his ship shoot down a German aircraft (Junkers Ju 88) that reportedly struck the water approximately 100 yards from the ship.

Having served 895 days in the RCNVR (with 282 days overseas), Ken's luck ran out. On August 21, 1944, while performing an anti-submarine patrol east of the D-day landing site in the English Channel, the *Alberni* was struck on her port side by a torpedo fired from a German U-480 submarine. She sank in less than a minute, taking 59 sailors to a watery grave, including Leading Supply Assistant Albert Kenneth Evans. Ken was 23 years old when he was determined missing and presumed dead. His body was not recovered.



Photo Credit: Padre Phil Miller

For his service, Leading Supply Assistant Albert Kenneth Evans was awarded: 1939-45 Star, France and Germany Star and Clasp, and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp War Medal. His mother, Ada Evans was awarded the Memorial Cross.

Leading Supply Assistant Albert Kenneth Evans is commemorated on the Halifax Memorial, Panel 12, as well as on a plaque at St. Luke's Cathedral in Sault Ste. Marie. He is also remembered on the Western face of the Sault Ste. Marie Cenotaph located in front of the Courthouse at 426 Queen Street East, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. The inscription on the Cenotaph was written by poet and novelist Rudyard Kipling. It reads:

From little towns, in afar land, we came,  
To save our honour and a world aflame;  
By little towns, in a far land, we sleep,  
And trust those things we won



The Sault Ste Marie Cenotaph Nov 2021  
Photo Credit: Graham Elder

### Prepared by:

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### Sources:

- Commonwealth War Graves Commission Database – Albert Kenneth Evans
- Library and Archives Canada - Service file for Leading Supply Asst - Albert Kenneth Evans (accessed through Ancestry.ca)
- Canadian Virtual War Memorial – Profile page for Albert Kenneth Evans

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMCS\\_Alberni](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMCS_Alberni)
- <https://www.alberniproject.org/Museum.html>
- Sault Ste.Marie Public Library (Bentley Ahonen)
- Personal communication, Padre Phil Miller, Branch 25, Royal Canadian Legion
- Military History of the Upper Great Lakes: The Soo Locks in WWII. Retrieved 11 Dec 2021 from <https://ss.sites.mtu.edu/mhugl/>

Postscript: Given the importance of the Soo Locks, the town of Sault Ste Marie found itself “militarized” during WW2. The locks needed to be defended at all costs since 90% of the USA iron ore shipments destined for factories on the East Coast, and millions of tons of Canada’s grain shipment destined to feed Allied troops on the Western Front, passed through these locks. The Soo locks were defended from land, sea and air by men and equipment. One of the most obvious defences was the barrage balloon. These large balloons were anchored to the ground by steel cables and were the first line of defence against dive bombers. These balloons appeared in the Spring of 1942, seemingly overnight and much to the surprise of the local residents. Some of the anchors are still embedded in the ground today and have been known to destroy the occasional lawn mower blade.

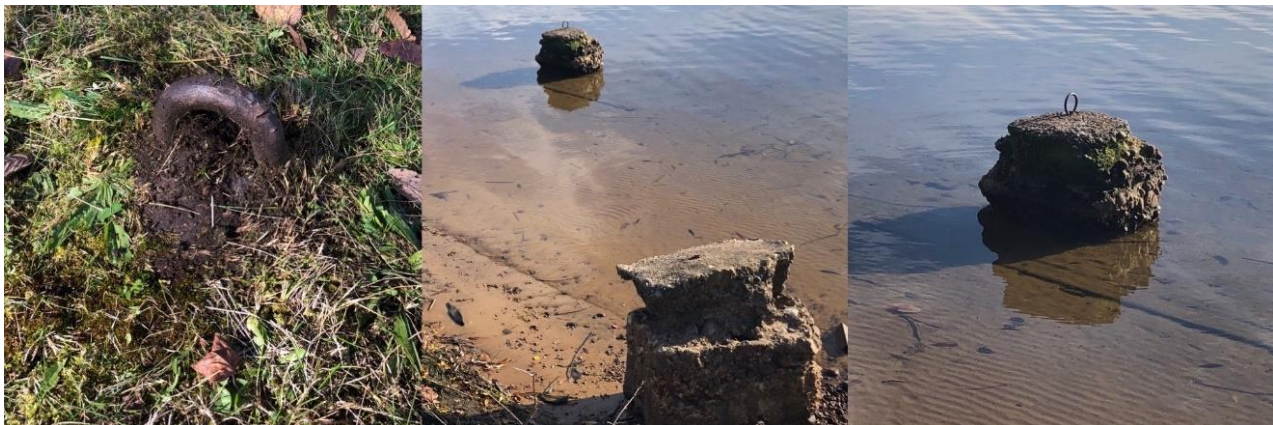


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