

Able Seaman Thomas De La Hunt Malone V-48090



Able Seaman Malone. Photo: Canadian Virtual War Memorial

- **Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve**
- **Born: Montreal QC, 22 April 1922**
- **Enlisted: HMCS *Montreal*, 19 September 1942**
- **Civilian Occupation: Jr Draughtsman, Canada Iron Foundries Ltd**
- **Death: Killed during enemy action against HMCS *Regina* on 8 August 1944**
- **Commemorated: Poundstock (St. Winwaloe) Churchyard, United Kingdom & the Monument to the Brave, rue Notre Dame Centre, Trois Rivières, QC**

Thomas de la Hunt Malone, known as Tom, was the first of two children born to Antoinette Soucier-Malone and Thomas D. Malone on 22 April 1922 in Montreal, Quebec. Sister Anne was born in 1925. His father Thomas was born in the province of Quebec in 1888 while Antoinette was born in England in 1889 and raised in Quebec. They were married in Montreal in 1919. Antoinette was of French-Canadian decent while Thomas was of Irish decent.

By the time Tom was born, tens of thousands of Irish migrants had come to the province of Quebec in the 300 or so years following European contact in the “new world”. They came because of wars between the British and the French; and wars between Protestants and Catholics, as well as enclosure laws, civil unrest, crushing poverty, and famine experienced in Ireland. It is estimated that as many as 40 per cent of present-day French-speaking Quebecers can trace at least some of their ancestors to Ireland. After their marriage, Antoinette and Thomas settled in Three Rivers (now known as Trois Rivières) in a modest home and Thomas set up an insurance agency. They then returned to Montreal in 1922 for a short time before settling again in Three Rivers. The family eventually purchased a large brick home in a prosperous neighbourhood. (Sadly, Antoinette died in 1943). From a letter in Tom’s Navy personnel file written by Thomas to his Member of Parliament, concerning Tom’s prospects of being commissioned, one can see that Thomas was well educated and politically connected.

Following a devastating fire in 1908, Trois Rivières was rebuilt to become a prosperous rapidly growing community. In 1921 the population was 33,000. By 1941 it was 59,600. The city had a veneer of English-speakers who referred to the city as Three Rivers and a French-speaking majority who referred to it as Trois Rivières. Its economy was dominated by five pulp and paper mills with their industrial infrastructure as well as a port on the St. Lawrence River. As a result, it was referred to as the “pulp and paper capital of the world”. Notwithstanding his mother’s heritage, Tom grew up in the English community and was educated in English at Three Rivers High School graduating in 1940. Nevertheless, he was bilingual. And, according to the news paper article which reported his death, Tom was “*Gifted with a great capacity for making friends, he was always in the thick of things and everyone knew and liked him.*” Upon graduation he found work as a draughtsman with Canada Iron Foundries Ltd. in Trois Rivières.



**Rue des Forges, Trois Rivières. Circa 1940.
Photo: BANQ Québec, cote:
P547,S1,SS1,SSS1,D697,P78. Collection
Magella Bureau**

Tom was sworn in at the Montreal Division (HMCS *Montreal*) of the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve as an Ordinary Seaman on 19 September 1942. He was a large man, 5 feet 10 ¾ inches tall weighing 250 pounds with an inflated chest measuring 47 inches. He had fair hair, brown eyes and a medium complexion. Tom was single.

He remained in *Montreal* on “Divisional Strength” attending to administrative duties and appointments until 9 November 1942. The next day he was placed on “Active Service” and began his naval training in earnest until 15 March 1943 when he was drafted to HMCS *Cornwallis* in Halifax, Nova Scotia, for New Entry training. On completion he was then drafted to HMCS *Stadacona*, also in Halifax, for training as a Torpedoman.



**Naval ratings studying the components of a torpedo at the Royal Canadian Navy Torpedo School Halifax, Nova Scotia, January 1941.
Photo: Library and Archives Canada Photo,
MIKAN No. 3567054**

The traditional duties of a torpedoman stemmed from World War I when torpedomen became responsible not only for torpedoes but also for the various ancillary electrical systems found in ships of that era. However, the rapid pace of development of this equipment after 1939 proved a heavy burden. Apart from radar, asdic, radios, and certain engine room responsibilities, the torpedo branch retained responsibility for electrical equipment in ships of all types. The branch also retained responsibility for explosives, other than those specifically associated with gunnery, such as torpedoes, mines, depth charges, and demolition charges; and for the maintenance and adjustment of paravanes, other anti-mining devices, and anti-submarine weapons. To meet the challenge, torpedo ratings were divided into

seamen torpedomen (ST) like Tom, leading torpedomen (LTO), leading torpedomen (Low Power), torpedo gunner's mates (TGM), and electrical artificers (EA). The first four ratings constituted a hierarchy in which the TGM was senior.

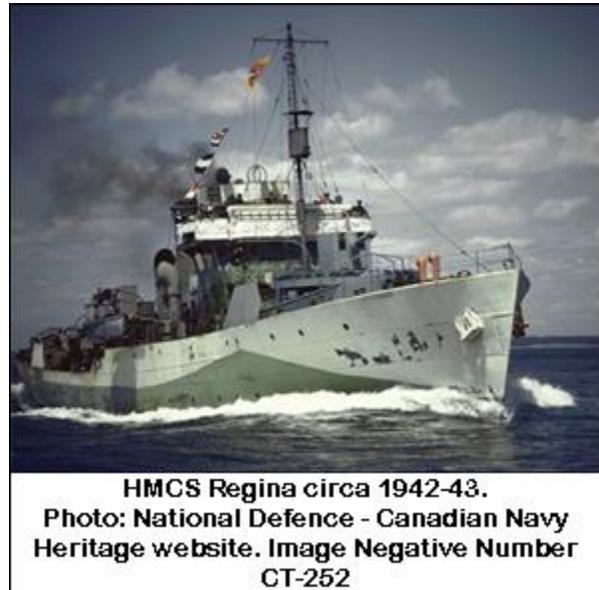
In all ships an ST was employed in the simple routines involved in the care and maintenance of electrical equipment, while in destroyers and cruisers he assisted in the maintenance of torpedoes. In destroyers and smaller ships including corvettes, he maintained depth charge throwers and Hedgehogs, and, at Action Stations, might be a member of the electrical damage-control party, torpedo-tube crew (in destroyers), or depth charge/Hedgehog crew.

On 13 October 1943 Tom was drafted to the corvette, HMCS *Regina*, which had been in refit in Sydney and Pictou, Nova Scotia since June 1943. By December the refit was complete, and *Regina* commenced work-ups before joining Escort Group C-1 in February 1944. After an eventful Atlantic crossing that saw *Regina* escort two ships under tow safely to their destinations, she arrived in Londonderry toward the end of March and was assigned to Western Approaches Command for duties associated with Operation Neptune, the invasion of Normandy.

Regina's D-day task, together with the Canadian corvettes *Summerside* and *Woodstock*, was to escort twenty-seven Liberty ships through the Bristol Channel, along the south coast of England, and through a swept channel to Normandy arriving there in the early morning hours of 7 June. Upon completion of this task, *Regina* returned to the United Kingdom to be dispatched repeatedly to escort other ships and convoys until 8 August 1944.

On 8 August, *Regina* was the sole escort of a ten-ship convoy proceeding southwest from Milford Haven along the north Cornwall coast off Trevoze Head bound for Normandy. At about 2130, a Liberty ship, the *Ezra Weston*, experienced an explosion which was mistakenly thought to have been the result of the ship striking a mine. *Regina* closed her and stopped to render assistance. An eyewitness recounted how Tom reacted to the situation*. Sensing a threat, Tom called the bridge to obtain permission to render safe the depth charges loaded on their rails on the stern. Upon receiving permission, he quickly set to work to adjust up to two dozen depth charges. *Regina* remained stopped for about forty-five minutes, then a second explosion erupted in *Regina* sinking her in less than 30 seconds. The second explosion, as was the first, were caused by torpedoes fired by the German U-boat, *U-667*. If Tom had not rendered the depth charges safe they would have exploded as the ship sank killing or gravely wounding most of the crew who were in the water. Tragically, Tom did not save himself by his actions. While he may have saved the lives of up to seventy, he and twenty-nine other members of *Regina's* ship's company perished. Able Seaman Tom Malone was 22 years old.

For his service, Able Seaman Thomas de la Hunt Malone was awarded the 1939-45 Star, the France and Germany Star and Clasp, the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp, and the War Medal. His quick action to render safe the depth charges was never officially recognized.



Tom's remains were washed ashore on Cornwall's north coast on 13 August 1944, and he was buried with full naval honours on 15 August in St. Winwaloe Churchyard, Poundstock, Cornwall, United Kingdom. He is also commemorated on the Halifax Memorial, Panel 12 and on the Monument to the Brave in Trois Rivières, QC.

Prepared By:

John Dalzell, Capt(N) (retired), Commanding Officer HMCS UNICORN 1983-88 & Citizen Sailor Virtual Cenotaph Research Team



Footnote: * Notes of a conversation between Engine Room Artificer Donald McIntosh, HMCS Regina, and Capt. J. Dalzell (Retired), April, 2015

Sources:

- Commonwealth War Graves Commission record for Able Seaman Thomas de la Hunt Malone
- Library and Archives Canada Service Record for Able Seaman Thomas de la Hunt Malone
- Canadian Virtual War Memorial – Profile page for Able Seaman Thomas de la Hunt Malone
- Notes of a conversation between Engine Room Artificer Donald McIntosh, HMCS Regina, and Capt. J. Dalzell (Retired), April, 2015
- For Posterity's Sake. HMCS Regina K234, Retrieved May 23, 2022 from http://www.forposterityssake.ca/Navy/HMCS_REGINA_K234.htm
- Canadian Census Records. Retrieved May 22, 2022 from <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/Pages/census.aspx>
- Gilbert, Norman Tucker. The Naval Service of Canada Its Official History Volume II. Ottawa, Ontario: King's Printer, 1952.
- The Irish in Canada. The Untold Story. Retrieved May 27, 2022 from <https://gail25.tripod.com/que.htm>
- Wikipedia (May 27, 2022). Trois-Rivières. Retrieved May 28 from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trois-Rivi%C3%A8res>