

Radio Artificer 3rd Class RONALD CLYDE MILLER V13303/40959



Radio Artificer 3rd Class Ronald Miller.
Photo: Canadian Virtual War Memorial

- **Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, Royal Canadian Navy**
- **Born: Calgary Alberta, 20 April 1920**
- **Enlisted: Calgary Division RCNVR, 19 September 1939**
- **Civilian Occupation: Carpenter's Helper**
- **Died while maintaining radio equipment at HMCS *Newport Corners* Naval Radio Station, NS on 16 April 1945**
- **Commemorated: Falmouth Cemetery, NS; the Calgary Field of Crosses, Western Canada High School Honour Roll, and the memorial plaques at HMCS *Tecumseh*, and the Naval Museum of Alberta in Calgary Alberta.**

Ronald Clyde Miller was the son of James Henry (Harry) Miller, born in New Brunswick, and Annie (Anderson) Miller, born in Scotland. Ronald was born in Calgary, Alberta on 20 April 1920 and he lived with his parents and older sister, Lillian, at 227 - 11 Ave NW. Ronald attended Hillhurst School for elementary and junior high school. While attending these schools, he was featured in the Calgary Herald Newspaper for individual education achievement. He then attended the Technical High School (located in a wing of Western Canada High School) where again the Calgary Herald reported him to be at the top of his class. In addition to his academic success, Ronald was a Sea Cadet with RCSCC *Undaunted* in Calgary, and he was a Boy Scout in Calgary's 6th Troop where he was cited in the Calgary Herald for scouting leadership. After high school Ronald was employed as a Carpenter's helper.

Ronald first joined Calgary's 23rd Field Battery as a Signaller 30 October 1936. The Army Militia took men as young as age 16. On 19 September 1939 he transferred to the Royal Canadian Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR) by enlisting as an Ordinary Telegrapher at the Calgary Division (later renamed HMCS *Tecumseh*). Telegraphists sent and received messages in Morse code. They usually held a TOP SECRET security clearance as they were privy to the receipt and transmission of confidential and secret messages. Ronald initially joined the RCNVR for "The Duration of Hostilities" only, but he later transferred to the permanent Regular Navy.

Enlistment documents describe him as 5' 10 ½" with brown hair and blue eyes. He was fully vaccinated, and he could swim. He was a Presbyterian. On enlistment with the RCNVR, he was immediately sent to HMCS *Naden*, the Navy's training base in Esquimalt, BC. While there his training and successful employment quickly led to his promotion to Acting Telegraphist, and then

full Telegraphist (Tel). He was assessed to be of “Very Good Character” and “Superior Efficiency” in his trade.

In late July 1940, Tel Miller was posted to HMCS *Prince Robert*. *Prince Robert* was a former Canadian National cruise ship. When Miller joined the ship’s company, the ship had just been converted to an Armed Merchant Cruiser. She was heavily armed with guns from the Royal Navy removed from older British battleships. Soon after joining the ship, HMCS *Prince Robert* made front page newspaper headlines for the dramatic capture of a large German merchant ship off the coast of Mexico. It was carrying diesel fuel and thought likely to be a tender for German submarines. The German merchant ship’s crew were captured as prisoners and the ship was sailed back to Esquimalt. Tel Miller left *Prince Robert* in Oct 1940. He returned to HMCS *Naden* for further training and employment in shore-based radio stations. He was promoted to Leading Telegraphist in December 1941 and Acting Petty Officer in May 1942.

Ronald’s quick rise through the ranks in the highly technical telegraphist trade did not go unnoticed by his superiors. In June 1942, he challenged and passed the Selection Board for promotion to Commissioned Rank. It is unclear from his service file why he did not pursue training as a Naval officer. Instead, in June 1943, he transferred to the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) for a seven-year term, meaning his Navy service would continue after the war too.

In addition to Telegraphists, the RCN needed technicians who could maintain radio equipment including transmitters and receivers. Miller underwent extensive further training to qualify as a Radio Artificer. A Radio Artificer 4th Class was a senior non-commissioned rank equivalent to a Petty Officer. Artificers received better pay and allowance for their highly technical knowledge.

Radio Artificer 4th Class Miller was now a highly trained technician. He was sent to the East Coast



and assigned to a Top-Secret shore-based Naval Radio Station (NRS) at HMCS *Newport Corner*. The base was located on the Minas Basin of the Bay of Fundy, near Windsor, Nova Scotia. The station could transmit and receive halfway around the world stretching from Murmansk, Russia to the Falkland Islands. Work there was a critical component of the success of the RCN, and its allies in combating the U-boat submarine threat in the years long Battle of the Atlantic. He worked his way up through increasingly more advanced qualifications and he was rated

Radio Artificer 3rd Class in May 1944. In June 1944, Ronald married Elizabeth Florence Dill and they lived in the nearby village of Falmouth, NS.

RA 3/c Miller was killed April 16, 1945, mere weeks before the German surrender. He was troubleshooting a problem on a High Frequency radio transmitter in a confined space when he was electrocuted and died of electric shock. RA 3/c Miller was buried nearby in the Falmouth Cemetery, Falmouth, Nova Scotia. Tragically, his wife Elizabeth was due to give birth to their first

child when she learned of the death of her spouse. Elizabeth and RA 3/c Miller's twins; Gaile Suzanne and Gary Ronald James, were born on 18 Oct 1945 in Windsor, Nova Scotia

For his service, Radio Artificer 3/c Miller was awarded the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp, and the War Medal. A Memorial Cross was awarded to his Widow and to his mother.

Radio Artificer Ronald Clyde Miller is remembered in the Second World War Book of Remembrance, p.545, at the Centre Block Houses of Parliament, Ottawa, the Calgary Field of Crosses, Western Canada High School Honour Roll, and the memorial plaques at HMCS *Tecumseh*, and the Naval Museum of Alberta in Calgary Alberta.

Prepared By:

Commander (Retired) Greg McKenzie (CO HMCS *Tecumseh* 1987-90) & Citizen Sailor Virtual Cenotaph Research Team



Sources:

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- Calgary Herald July 17, 1944, p. 8 - Wedding Ceremony description
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