

## Able Seaman Cecil Richard Moss V-69035



Able Seaman Cecil Moss, date unknown. Photo: Brent Moss Collection (Great-nephew).

- **Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve**
- **Born: Hanna AB, 18 December 1925**
- **Enlisted: HMCS *Tecumseh*, 19 August 1943**
- **Civilian Occupation: Student & Bus Boy, Palliser hotel**
- **Death: Died when *Shawinigan* was torpedoed and sank on 24 November 1944. Age 18**
- **Commemorated: Halifax Memorial, Panel 11; Shawinigan Memorial, Shawinigan, QC; & Western Canada HS Honour Roll, Calgary, AB**

Cecil Richard Moss was the son of John Bailey and Emma Blanche (Fox) Moss. He was born in Hanna, Alberta. He was the youngest of eight children, seven sons and a daughter. He was a United Church member and he resided with his parents and some of the siblings at 525 - 19 Ave W, Calgary Alberta. Cecil attended Rideau School and then Western Canada High where he was an accomplished member of the school tumbling team and he performed in a High School play. He completed grade 11 and left school in 1943 at the age of 17; he worked briefly as a bus boy at the Canadian Pacific Railway's Palliser Hotel before enlisting in Aug 1943.

Three of Cecil's brothers enlisted too, Harry and Tom in the Calgary Tank Regiment; they fought through Italy, then in Western Europe. His brother Angus was a pilot in the RCAF. All three survived WWII.

Enlistment documents describe Cecil as 5' 8" tall with brown hair and fair complexion. He had a scar on his forehead. Ordinary Seaman Moss enlisted in HMCS *Tecumseh* 19 August 1943 and did his Basic Training in Calgary followed by ASDIC training at HMCS *Cornwallis*, Nova Scotia. ASDIC (which stands for Anti-Submarine Detection Investigation Committee) was a form of radar used especially in the early days of the War. He did further



Moss Family Photo (date unknown). Cecil is front row, far right.  
Photo Brent Moss Collection

ASDIC training at HMCS *Stadacona* in Halifax and aboard HMCS *Melville* where he earned his Submarine Detection (SD) qualification in May 1944.



Asdic operators on the bridge of HMCS Battleford (Nov 1941), a sister ship to Shawinigan.  
Photo: Library and Archives Canada, MIKAN 3455875.

In June 1944, Cecil joined HMCS *Shawinigan*. The ship had completed a refit in Liverpool, NS and sailed to Bermuda for work-ups. *Shawinigan* then resumed escort duties off the East Coast of Canada and the US where she escorted five more convoys before she sank. Submarine detection was central to a convoy escort's duties, and we can imagine that Cecil's ASDIC training was put to good use in the five months he served in *Shawinigan*. We know Cecil received very positive performance assessments. Specifically, he was noted to be of 'Good Character' and 'Superior' ability as an Ordinary Seaman. In Oct 1944 he was promoted to Able Seaman.

It was on 24 November 1944 while serving as an escort to the ferry *Burgeo*, (Sydney, NS - Port Aux Basques, NL crossings) that *Shawinigan* was lost.

"*Shawinigan* and the US Coast Guard cutter *Sassafras* were ordered to escort the ferry *Burgeo* from Sydney, Nova Scotia to Port aux Basques, Newfoundland. Since the tragic loss of the ferry *Caribou*, ferries on this route were always escorted. The three ships made an uneventful crossing to Port aux Basques on November 24, at which time *Shawinigan* detached to continue anti-submarine patrols in the area. She was scheduled to rendezvous with the *Burgeo* the following morning for the return to Cape Breton. But the corvette never made it.

Nearby, *U-1228*, which had been ordered into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, was tarrying, trying to repair a faulty schnorkel. Without the tactical advantage that the device provided, its commander, Frederich-Wilhelm Marienfeld, feared his chances should he pass through the Cabot Strait. On the moonlit night of November 24, he tested his repairs, found them ineffective and decided to return to Germany. As he issued orders that would pilot his U-Boat back into the Atlantic, the *Shawinigan* was sighted. *U-1228*, which had not yet recorded an attack on enemy shipping, let loose a GNAT torpedo. Exactly four minutes later, HMCS SHAWINIGAN disappeared in a plume of water and a shower of sparks. All 91 members of her crew were killed.

HMCS *Shawinigan* was one of three Canadian warships that was lost with all hands. *Shawinigan's* final resting place is in the Cabot Strait, between Newfoundland and Cape Breton Island. Her precise location is not known, but by best estimates based on the U-boat's reports the *Shawinigan* should lie at 47 degrees-34 minutes north-Latitude, 59 degrees-11 minutes West-Longitude." (Naval Museum of Manitoba)

For his Service, Able Seaman Cecil Richard Moss was awarded the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp, Atlantic Star & the War Medal. His mother, Emma Blanche Moss, was awarded the Memorial Cross.

Able Seaman Moss is remembered by several family members. Major (Ret'd) USAF pilot Chris Fardell is the grandson of Cecil's sister Gertrude (Gertie). Chris' mother and father (Sue and Tony Fardell) reported that the only time Cecil's rough-and-tumble father was ever known to cry was on hearing of the death of his son, he went out to the side of the house for his cry. The family reported that Cecil's sister Gertrude was very fond of her brother. On her death in 2005 she chose to have her ashes scatters at sea so she could be with her little brother Cecil. (Nephew Brent Moss)

Able Seaman Moss is remembered on the Halifax Memorial, Panel 11, his name is located on the Western Canada High School Memorial Plaque and on page 399 of the Second World War Book of Remembrance. Finally, Navies around the world re-use ships' names and the newer ship carries the battle honours of her predecessors. Cecil and his shipmates are remembered on the HMCS *Shawinigan* (K136) memorial in Shawinigan Quebec. That memorial was unveiled when HMCS *Shawinigan* (MM-704) was commissioned on 14 Jun 1997.

**Prepared By:**

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Citizen Sailors Virtual Cenotaph Research Team



**Sources:**

- Library and Archives Canada - Service file - Able Seaman Cecil Richard Moss
- Library and Archives Canada photography collection
- Commonwealth War Graves Commission Database - Able Seaman Cecil Richard Moss
- Second World War Book of Remembrance p. 399
- Canada Post - 45 cent Stamp November 1998
- Calgary Herald Dec 6, 1941 p. 20
- Calgary Herald Dec 13, 1941 p. 18
- Calgary Herald Jan 17, 1942 p. 2
- Calgary Herald Dec 1, 1944 p. 16
- Calgary Herald Dec 7, 1944, p. 1
- Calgary Herald Feb 20, 1945 p.14
- Globe and Mail Dec 8, 1944, p.7
- [http://www.forposterityssake.ca/Navy/HMCS\\_SHAWINIGAN\\_K136.htm](http://www.forposterityssake.ca/Navy/HMCS_SHAWINIGAN_K136.htm)

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- <https://naval-museum.mb.ca/battle-of-the-atlantic/hmcs-shawinigan/>
- Communications with Major (Ret'd) USAF Chris Fardell, Kim Fardell - family relatives
- Communications with Brent, Ian, John and Rick Moss - family relatives

## Other photos:



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