

## Ordinary Seaman Daryl Leslie Snowfield V-50337



Ordinary Seaman Daryl Snowfield.  
Source: Canadian Virtual War Memorial

- **Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve**
- **Born: Hannah, N. Dakota USA, 5 October 1922**
- **Enlisted: HMCS *Queen*, 22 October 1942**
- **Civilian Occupation: Shipping Clerk, General Films Ltd.**
- **Death: Died of typhoid fever while serving in HMCS *Valleyfield* on 18 January 1944**
- **Commemorated: Regina Cemetery, Block D. Plot 1. Grave 7**

Daryl Leslie Snowfield was the youngest of four children born to Lillian Gertrude Snowfield and Mundy Snowfield on 5 October 1922 in Hannah, North Dakota. His oldest brother Clarence was born in 1916 and his sisters Bernice and Sarah were born in 1918 and 1920 respectively. Daryl's parents Lillian and Mundy were both born in North Dakota, in 1891 and 1890, respectively. They were married in southern Saskatchewan in 1914 but returned to North Dakota shortly afterward. They settled in Hannah, North Dakota until 1923 when they moved a short distance to the town of Langdon. Both communities are within twenty miles of the Manitoba border.

Sadly, Mundy died in 1924 when Daryl was a toddler. Lillian then moved the family about 360 miles northwest by road to Regina, Saskatchewan in 1927, and, according to the *Regina Henderson's Directory*, settled in a modest neighbourhood. There, Daryl enrolled in Thompson Public School where he completed grades 1-8 between 1929 to 1937. He then enrolled in Commercial High School and completed grade 10 before leaving school in 1939. The family lived in three different houses in the neighbourhood during Daryl's childhood and adolescence which allowed him to attend the same public school and keep the same circle of friends.

There is no information available regarding the source of the family's income until the mid-1930s when, despite an unemployment rate of 30% and significant social unrest in Saskatchewan caused by the Great Depression, the children proved to be both industrious and cohesive as they began to find work in succession and remain living together sharing their earnings. His brother Clarence was first to find work as an apprentice with the Toledo Scale Co. from 1936 to 1937, and then as a clerk in a pharmacy for two years before finding a position with Simpsons which operated a huge mail order facility in Regina. By 1943 he was a supervisor then, in 1945, a department manager. Bernice found work in 1938 with the City of Regina and then with Simpsons, and Sarah found steady employment with the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool as an accounting clerk. Daryl began working in 1939 with General Films Ltd., a film and camera dealer. Once enrolled in the Navy, he made a pay allotment in favour of his mother Lillian as well.

On 22 October 1942 Daryl enlisted in the Regina Division (*HMCS Queen*) of the Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve as an Ordinary Seaman (Temporary). On enrollment, Daryl was single, 5 feet 8 ¾ inches tall and weighed 159 pounds. He had dark brown hair, blue eyes, and a fair complexion.

Daryl remained in *Queen* for four and a half months undertaking various administrative duties and taking basic training. On 19 April 1943 he was on a train bound for Esquimalt, British Columbia and *HMCS Naden*, a large training base. There he underwent more training in seamanship, drill, and small arms as well as gunnery. On completion of this phase of training on 24 July, he was selected to specialize in torpedoes. On completion of torpedo training, he was rated Seaman Torpedoman on 18 September 1943. This rating entitled him to a pay raise of 10 cents per day!



**Naval ratings studying the components of a torpedo at the RCN Torpedo School Halifax, NS, Jan 1941.**  
**Source: Library and Archives Canada**

He was then drafted to the various “stone frigates”: *HMCS Givenchy* in Esquimalt, *HMCS Stadacona* in Halifax and *HMCS Hochelaga II* in Montreal for travel and administrative purposes. On 19 November he was nominally drafted to the River-class frigate, *HMCS Swansea* for one day. In the end, he was reassigned to *Swansea*’s sister ship: *HMCS Valleyfield*. He joined *Valleyfield* on the day of her commissioning, 7 December 1943.

*Valleyfield* was named for Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, Quebec, situated on Grande-Île in the St. Lawrence River. The ship was built at Quebec City by Morton Engineering and Dry Dock Company. After arriving in Halifax on 20 December her ship’s company began work ups in St. Margaret’s Bay, NS. During that period thirty-two members of the *Valleyfield*’s ship’s company,



**HMCS Valleyfield**  
**Source: Government of Canada**

including Daryl, contracted a serious intestinal infection which, according to a Medical Board of Inquiry, “*greatly reduced Daryl’s resistance and was directly attributable and aggravated by his naval service.*”. Further, the Board concluded, “*...his resultant weakened immune system could not cope when he came in contact with typhoid fever.*” The Board also recommended that a “*more adequate and efficient means of medical documentation be devised in order that a rating’s health*

*records may be immediately available on admission to hospital.*”

Daryl was landed in Halifax where he was admitted to hospital in *Stadacona*. He died a short time later, on 18 January 1944. He was 21 years old.

Three and one-half months after Daryl’s death, in the early hours of 7 May 1944, *Valleyfield* was hit by one torpedo on the port side of her boiler room, broke in two and sank within four minutes

about 50 miles south of Cape Race, Newfoundland. One hundred and twenty members of *Valleyfield's* ship's company perished in the sinking and five more later died of exposure onboard a consort. Only 38 were rescued and survived.

Daryl's remains were returned to his family in Regina where he is buried. He is commemorated in the Second World War Book of Remembrance, page 448, at the Centre Blocks of Parliament, Ottawa. Additionally, Snowfield Lake (Lat 55° 02'N Long 105° 24' W) in Northern Saskatchewan is named in his memory.

For his service, Ordinary Seaman Daryl Leslie Snowfield was awarded the 1939-45 Star, the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp, and the War Medal. His mother, Mrs. Lillian Snowfield, was awarded the Memorial Cross.

HMCS *Swansea* remained in service in the Royal Canadian Navy until 1966. What if Daryl's draft to *Swansea* had not been changed to *Valleyfield*? He would have missed the epidemic which took his life. What if he had been on board *Valleyfield* when she was torpedoed? Would he have been one of the 38 who survived the sinking? Who can say? What can be said is that Daryl stepped forward when his country called.

#### Prepared By:

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#### Sources:

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