

Bill Edgar Cryderman died March 3, 2003 in Penticton Hospital

Bill Cryderman joined the Royal Canadian Navy on the 6th June 1924(RCN #2115) at Esquimalt as an Ordinary Seaman (in the Seaman Branch) and took his Basic Naval Training at HMCS NADEN. He served on various RCN and Royal Navy ships and shore establishments including HMCS PATRICIAN, HMCS NADEN, HMCS VANCOUVER, HMCS SKEENA, HMCS ST. LAURENT, HMS TIGER, HMS WARSPITE, HMS REVENGE, HMS VERNON, HMS EXCELLENT and HMS VICTORY.

He was at the commissioning of HMCS VANCOUVER on 5 Feb 1928 after which they sailed from Portsmouth on Saturday 17 Mar 1928 for Esquimalt BC. He remembers that during the transit of the Bay of Biscay, a vicious storm arose which caused them to lose the foretop mast and it also stove in their whaler. She and HMCS CHAMPLAIN were two of the WWI era Destroyers that the Royal Navy loaned to the RCN at that time. Bill also stood by HMCS SKEENA (the original one) whilst it was being constructed in the Thorneycroft Yards and commissioned her on 23 Jun 1931. She was one of a pair of Canadian designed and built for Canada Destroyers, the other being HMCS SAGUENAY.

He served the summer of 1927 onboard HMS TIGER, which was the last of the coal-fired Battle Cruisers, where she was stationed at Portland Breakwater (i.e. Weymouth, England). Bill says they generally went to sea about once a month for Gunnery School full calibre firing, after which the target was towed back to be checked for damage below the waterline.

Bill qualified as a Diver 2nd on 30 Apr 1926 at Whale Island, which was in the upper reaches of Portsmouth Harbour, and which held both the school for Gunners and the school for Divers as part of Portsmouth Naval Base, known as HMS EXCELLENT. He later went on to obtain his Divers 1st Class in 1930. The Diving equipment in use at that time was the Seibe Gorman hardhat gear and the Davis Submarine Escape Lung, all of which he trained in.

He went on to become a Chief Gunners Mate (T) and then was Commissioned as an Acting Gunner (T)<sup>X</sup> (RCN #17270) in Apr 1941, and in 1942 returned to Esquimalt in charge of diving on the West Coast until his retirement at the end of 1945.

He recalls that he took Diving Tender #2 from the builders in Vancouver BC near the end of 1943. George Luscombe was an RCNVR Motor Mechanic, Diver as the Engineer on board and between them they designed the air-cooling and purifying filters as well as the control valves for the divers air. Bill also remembers drafting up and passing the plans for the decompression chamber to the Dockyard Engineer Officer, after which it was constructed for the Diving Unit in Esquimalt. A couple of years ago a CPO from FDU (P) visited him and took most

of the artifacts and memorabilia Bill had back to that Diving Unit, where they should be to this day. He still has a few photographs of his diving buddies and will send them on to the Ottawa Chapter for display purposes when he has them duplicated. Bill vividly recalls one time they were at Coal Harbour on the Northwest Coast of Vancouver Island to lay big slabs of concrete (which formed a ramp for seaplanes to be brought ashore on) from the shore into the ocean waters, and one of the seaplanes did not drop the cat line used to ease him into the water. Instead, it trailed behind him until the Pilot found that he was unable to takeoff with it still attached. In this embarrassing situation the Pilot did not wait for someone to come out and take the cable, rather he tripped the release (it immediately sank to the bottom) and took off. The Divers then had to locate and recover this cat cable and take it back to the seaplane hangar. Of course the Pilot took quite a ribbing from all concerned for his faux pas, stated Bill, with a grin on his face.

Bill Cryderman retired from the RCN to pension on 6 Dec 1945 and went to live in Saanich BC on Vancouver Island with his family of 2 sons and 2 daughters where he made a comfortable living as an entrepreneur with his own truck garden, selling the produce from his own stand. After a number of years passed he moved to various mainland locales (all south of Prince George). During this phase of his life Bill was involved in the logging and bulldozing industry, operated a dairy farm, ran a sawmill for some period of time and even dabbled with ranching and the cattle business - *that is quite a diversified career after being a Sailor and a Diver!*

Unfortunately, during this busy time in his life, Bill lost track of any of his Naval and Diving friends. In 1970 he retired for good and he does a bit of woodworking now, although he finds that it takes very little now to keep him busy and fill in the time. Bill is now 84 years young and for anyone who is out his way that wishes to drop in on him (he will make them most welcome. Bill tells us that he has one of his sons already retired from the Armed forces.



Bill Cryderman



Bill in Standard (1928)