

Told to Tammy (Irving) MacLeod by her father on February 10, 2002.

Joined the navy in June of 1943. The first training he took was at the Queen Charlotte Armory in Charlottetown, PEI, from there he was sent to Cornwallis, NS for a 4 month Gunnery course. Dad was shipped out on the "New Amsterdam" bound for Niobi, Scotland. He landed in Portsmouth, England and traveled by train to Scotland where he was chosen to take another gunnery course, which happened to be in Portsmouth, England, so the next day he was back aboard the train bound for England. They were trained in the use of 9" guns. After this training he was sent to Belfast, Ireland to join the HMCS Ontario.

HMCS Ontario with main armament of nine 6-inch guns was turned over to the Royal Canadian Navy by the RN one month before the war ended in Europe. Formerly the British Cruiser "Minotaur", she was refitted for service but reached the East too late to see any action. She was paid off in 1958. She was 555.6ftX63ftX16.6ft in size and had a crew of 555 men.

Aboard the Ontario Dad and his crew were down 3 decks where they operated the guns. There were 9 X 6" guns with 2 magazines on each side. Dad's job was to line the ship up with the targets. There were 10 men plus the Officer (Mr. MacLeod), they drew straws to see in what order they would leave their post in the event of an emergency, Dad was fifth and the Officer was last. They were sent to Scataflow, Scotland for training but after only 1 month they received word that their ship was being sent to the Pacific for duty. 2 British destroyers accompanied the HMCS Ontario to the Mediterranean, but the crew of the destroyers had gotten so sunburned that they couldn't continue on. After spending 1 week in the Mediterranean to become accustomed to the temperature, the Ontario continued on through the Red Sea to Aden. It was in Aden that they received word that the war with Japan was over. They were ordered to sail to Hong Kong, where they spent 6 months going to shore in small groups to round up the Japanese to send them back to Japan. Dad said that he was paid \$1.00 per day as an ordinary seaman, after 6 months of service he became an able seaman and paid \$1.50 per day. Because his ship was on the move so much he did not receive his increases in pay until after returning home. Dad also said that he had wanted to join the Air Force but because the ship was not in Port long enough, he was unable to get an application. On the way back to Canada they stopped in Honolulu to overhaul the ship before heading to Victoria, BC. It took them 17 days and 17 nights to make the trip. Dad left Victoria by train and arrived home on PEI in March or April of 1946. I remember my grandmother saying that when Dad arrived home, he was so thin from seasickness that you could almost see through him.

Dad received 3 medals for his service in the war, one being the Burma Star.

In 1947 or 1948 the Department of Veterans Affairs provided Dad with enough money to buy land from Silas Hugh. He tried to keep cattle but he didn't have enough room. In the early 1950's he bought a Dalmon 1 row potato harvester, which was one of the first on PEI, and an old coal truck from somewhere in NS and this was the beginning of his life as a potato farmer. He farmed potatoes until 1988 when he retired and he and Mom joined a motor coach club from Moncton and started to travel to many different places including Alaska and Mexico. They still love getting together with the many good friends they made in the club and traveling to the various rallies.