

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

# The Globe and Mail

*Toronto,*  
*Canada,*

June 11, 1942.

Sir:

My name is Jack Mahoney I am staff photographer on the Globe and Mail in Toronto.

Through much inquiring, I found, you were the most logical person to write, pertaining to joining the Navy as a naval photographer. I am anxious to join the force in this line, having been newspaper staff cameraman since I was sixteen.

Outside of my newspaper experience I also have contracts with American picture magazines to do a certain number of photo-reportage stories a year.

If you are at all interested, I would be most grateful to receive a letter from you containing information as to the best way of my filing application.

For references in your own forces I would suggest Sub. Lieutenant Herbert Nott who is familiar with both me and my work.

Hoping to hear from you soon, I remain

Sincerely yours,

*Jack Mahoney*

Jack Mahoney.

*Approved 20  
Not for lead  
Good copy*



U.S. 10320545  
CANADA

### ATTESTATION FORM

FOR OFFICERS OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVAL VOLUNTEER RESERVE

3

(A) DESCRIPTION OF APPLICANT

SURNAME.....	MAHONEY	PERMANENT ADDRESS	
CHRISTIAN NAME.....	John Daniel	152 King St. East,	
RELIGION.....	Roman Catholic	Toronto, Ontario,	P178148

DATE OF BIRTH	PLACE OF BIRTH	NAME AND ADDRESS OF NEXT OF KIN
3rd Mch., 1922.	Town Toronto County York Province Ontario Country Canada	Father: Daniel Joseph Same address.

PERSONAL DESCRIPTION

HEIGHT	CHEST MEASUREMENT	HAIR	EYES	COM- PLEXION	WOUNDS, SCARS, MARKS
Feet..... 5	Inflated..... 38	Brown	Blue	Fair	None.
Inches..... 10 $\frac{1}{4}$	Deflated..... 36				
	Mean..... 37				

DATE OF ENROLMENT	RANK IN WHICH ENROLLED	MARRIED, SINGLE, OR WIDOWER	TRADE OR CALLING AND IN WHOSE EMPLOY
17th July, 1942.	Probationary Sub-Lieut. (SB) RCNVR (Temp.)	Single.	Press photographer: Globe & Mail, Toronto, Ontario.

(B) DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY APPLICANT

I hereby declare as follows:—

- (1) That I am a British Subject, domiciled in Canada.
- (2) That I am desirous of being enrolled as an Officer of the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve Force, and that I accept and will abide by the rules of the said Force.
- (3) That\* (a) I have never served, and am not serving in any Naval, Military, Reserve or Territorial Force.

\* (b) I served in..... for the period shown, and attach my record of service.

\* Cross out Clause not applicable.

SERVED IN	RANK	FROM	TO

- (c) I have never been rejected for any of His Majesty's Forces on account of unfitness.
- (4) That the particulars contained above are correct, and true according to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(OVER)

Noted in Service  
Records by *[Signature]*  
20-8-42

(5) On being enrolled as an Officer of the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, I undertake and bind myself:—

(a) To serve from the date thereof for as long as my services may be required, being subject to the provisions of the Naval Service Act, and of the regulations made in pursuance thereof for the governing of the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, and to the customs and usages of His Majesty's Canadian Naval Service.

(b) To report for active service if called upon in time of war or emergency, and, if called into active service, to serve ashore or afloat as may be directed, according to where my services are required.

(c) To provide myself with the necessary uniform as laid down in R.C.N.V.R. Regulations.

Dated this 17th day of July, 1942.

  
Signature of Applicant.

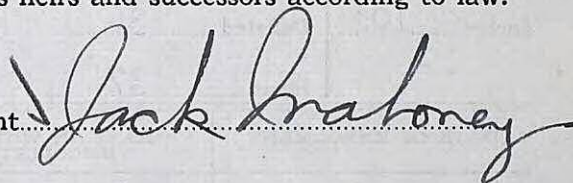
The above declaration was made and signed in my presence this 17th day of July, 1942.

  
Signature of Enrolling Officer.  
Sub-Lieutenant, R.C.N.V.R.

(C) OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

I, John Daniel MAHONEY do sincerely promise and swear (or solemnly declare) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Britannic Majesty, His heirs and successors according to law.

Signature of Applicant



Signature of Witness



Date 17th July, 1942.

Rank Sub-Lieutenant, R.C.N.V.R.

The Oath of Allegiance may be administered by any commissioned officer of the Naval Service.

NOTE.—This form when completed is to be forwarded to Naval Service Headquarters, Ottawa, together with Certificate of medical examination B-207, and record of any previous service.

The record of previous service will be returned after examination at Naval Service Headquarters.

OFFICIAL NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ FILE NUMBER 103-V-545 0-15890 OFFICIAL NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
 NAME MAHONEY John Daniel DATE OF BIRTH 3rd March 1922.  
 (Surname) (Given Names)  
 PLACE OF BIRTH Toronto, Ontario. OCCUPATION Press Photographer  
 RELIGION Roman Catholic EDUCATION \_\_\_\_\_  
 RESIDENCE AT TIME OF ENLISTMENT: Street and No. 152 King St. East Town Toronto Province, etc. Ontario

ENGAGEMENTS				DESCRIPTION					PREVIOUS SERVICE			
Date (in figures)			Period	Height	Hair	Eyes	Complexion	Marks or Scars	Served in	Rank or Rating	Dates	
Day	Month	Year									From	To
17	7	42	H.O.	5'10 $\frac{1}{4}$	Brown	Blue	Fair					

NEXT OF KIN RELATIONSHIP (in pencil) Father NAME (in pencil) Daniel Joseph Mahoney  
 ADDRESS (in pencil): Street and No. 152 King Street East Town Toronto Province, etc. Ontario

MEDALS, CLASPS, HURT CERTIFICATES, PRIZE MONEY				EXAMINATIONS, CERTIFICATES, ETC.							
Date (in figures)			Particulars	Date (in figures)			Particulars	Date (in figures)			PARTICULARS
Day	Month	Year		Day	Month	Year		Day	Month	Year	
17	2	44	Ribbon & Clasp of Can. Vol. Serv. Medal								

BADGES, G.C. OR G.S.				BRIEF PARTICULARS OF WARRANT OR C.M. PUNISHMENTS AND C.P. CHARGES							
Date (in figures)			1st, 2nd or 3rd G.C. or G.S.	Granted Deprived Restored	SHIP OR ESTABLISHMENT	Wt. No.	Date (in figures)			BRIEF PARTICULARS OF OFFENCE	PUNISHMENT
Day	Month	Year					Day	Month	Year		

FILM NO. WSRHH 78-6  
 DATE

Date (in figures)			DAYS FORFEITED						O.H.F. Received
Day	Month	Year	Prison	Det'n	Cells	C. Power	W. Trial	In diff. Char.	
									O.H.F. Received Last Will & Testament dated 17-7-42

SECOND CLASS FOR CONDUCT  
 From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

W.S.G.  
 APPLICATION  
 7217  
 RECEIVED

V.R.

OFFICIAL NUMBER

NAME MAHONEY  
(Surname)

John Daniel  
(Given Names)

OFFICIAL NUMBER

Ship or Establishment	Rating	From			Remarks	Character	Efficiency	Date			Non-Sub. Rating	Qualified			Pr. Qualified	
		Day	Month	Year				Day	Month	Year		Day	Month	Year	Day	Year
York	P/Sub/Lt/SB/T.	17	7	42	per Appt. 14-8-42											
H.M.C.S. Cornwallis	P/Sub/Lt/SB/T.	22	7	42	for trng. and disposal per Appt. 14-8-42.											
H.M.C.S. Bytown	P/Sub/Lt/SB/T.	24	8	42	for Photographic duties--per Appt. 14-9-42.											
H.M.C.S. Avalon	P/Sub/Lt/SB/T.	10	10	42	for duty with staff Photographic Officer											
<del>H.M.C.S. Burrard</del>	<del>Sub-Lieut. (SB) T</del>				<del>addl. on staff of C.O.P.C. as Photographic Officer</del>											
H.M.C.S. Avalon	Sub-Lt. (SB) T	20	8	43	addl. on staff of N.O.I.C. As Photographic Officer											
H.M.C.S. Bytown	Sub-Lt. (SB) T	7	12	43	addl. for duty with Dir. of Naval Information											
H.M.C.S. Stadacona	Sub-Lt. (SB) T	17	1	44	addl. for passage to U.K.)											
<del>HMCS - Pr. Rupert</del>	<del>Sub-Lt. (SB) T</del>	<del>21</del>	<del>1</del>	<del>44</del>	<del>per Appt. 15-1-44</del>											
H.M.C.S. Niobe	Sub-Lt. (SB) T.	5	2	44	addl. on staff of Sen. Can. Naval Off. (London) for Photographic duties - Amended											
H.M.C.S. Niobe	Lieut. (SB) T.	15	1	44	(Sen. of 17-7-43) per Appt List. 36-44 (Promotion anti-dated 15-1-44)											
DISCHARGED	" " "	29	4	44	Missing - after sinking of HMCS Athabaskan Casualty List Pres. Dead - 29-4-44											

(Discharged; Dead - List 19/45 per Correction Sheet #62

GENERAL REMARKS

*Amended by Appt. 8-2-44*  
*Amended by Appt. 21-3-43*  
*Address: 156 King St. E. Toronto, Ontario*  
*Leave for 14 days from 15-12-43*  
*Address: 156 King St. E. Toronto, Ont.*

DATE OF BIRTH			PLACE OF BIRTH		CIVIL OCCU.		REL. ED.	PERM. RESIDENCE			PREV. ENL.	RANK OR RATE ON ENLISTMENT		
DY.	MO.	YR.	BIRTH	MAIN	SUB	GION	P.	CTY.	TOWN	SERV.	DIV.	A	BR.	RANK
03	3	22	11	297	0	10	X	156	14	0	23	2	01	12
ENLIST. DATE			ACT. SERV. DATE			STR.	ACT. SERV. DATE			SHIP OR ESTAB.	RANK OR RATE			
DY.	MO.	YR.	DY.	MO.	YR.	CAT.	DY.	MO.	YR.		A	BR.	RANK	
17	07	42	17	07	42					9740	0	11	09	
SENIORITY			STR.	NON-SUB.		M.				CODED	CHECKED			
DY.	MO.	YR.	CAT.	A	B	ST.								
17	07	43	09				62	29.04.44						

VERIFICATION  
 CAMPAIGN STARS, DEFENCE MEDAL, WA  
 NAVAL GENERAL SERVICE

NAME IN FULL MAHONEY, John Daniel ..... RANK/RATING ... Lieut V. S.

SHIP	SERVICE			AREA	FROM	TO
	FROM	TO	DAYS			
YORK	12.7.42					
ADALON	10.10.42	6.12.43	(365)	nfld		
Disch: Missing after sinking of Adalon (passage)						
to date 29/4/44						

VERIFIED BY ... *John Daniel* .....

VERIFIED BY .....

VERIFICATION FORM

FOR DEFENCE MEDAL, WAR MEDAL, C.V.S.M. and CLASP.  
 NAVAL GENERAL SERVICE MEDAL (1915).

RANK/RATING *Lieut. (S)* OFF. NO. *O-45890* ADDRESS .....

AREA	QUALIFYING PERIODS IN DAYS						STARS MEDALS	✓ 1 2	ELIGIBLE FOR AWARDS OF
	FROM	TO	1939-45	ATLANTIC	DEFENCE	CLASP C.V.S.M.			
							1939-45	1	<i>Star</i>
<i>ld</i>							ATLANTIC		
<i>assage)</i>							FRANCE G.		
							AFRICA		
							PACIFIC		
							BURMA		
							ITALY		
							DEFENCE	1	<i>Medal</i>
							C.V.S.M.	2	<i>+ Clasp</i>
							" CLASP		
							WAR 1945	1	<i>Medal</i>
							WAR 1915		

VERIFIED BY *J. R. ...*

Six copies to be rendered to Naval Service Headquarters

REPORT OF THE DEATH OF AN OFFICER, MAN OR BOY

77

H.M.C.S. ~~NAVAL SERVICE HEADQUARTERS~~, at OTTAWA, Ontario.

Name MAHONEY, John Daniel  
(Christian names in full)

Rank of Rating Lieutenant (S.B.) Official No. R.C.N.V.R.  
(If unknown, date of first entry)

Place of Birth Toronto, Ontario. Date of Birth 3 March, 1922.

Occupation in Civil Life Press Photographer Religion Roman Catholic

Number of years service in the Navy (Long Service R.C.N., or mobilized service in case of R.C.N. (Temporary) or Reserve ratings) From 17 July, 1942 to 29 April, 1944.

Date of Death 29 April, 1944. Place of Death At Sea.

Cause of Death Missing, presumed dead, when H.M.C.S. "ATHABASKAN" was torpedoed and sunk by enemy action in the English Channel.  
(If due to accident, violence, or enemy action, particulars to be stated briefly)

Nearest known relative or friend { Name Mr. Daniel J. Mahoney, Relationship Father  
Address 156 King St. East,  
TORONTO, Ontario.

Date on which the above was informed by Ship Naval Service Headquarters: 1 May, 1944.

Date on which death was registered with local Officials ---

In the case of Imperial Service men, whether Active Service, Pensioner or Reserve, date on which the prescribed return was rendered to the Registrar General in London, Edinburgh or Dublin, according to Nationality ---

Place of Burial No burial. Date of Burial ---  
(if known) (if known)

Location, Number, etc., of grave ---  
(if known)

Undertaker employed ---  
(if any)

If borne for discipline only, date D.S.Q. or invalidated ---

ENTERED IN  
D.N.P.A.'s LOG BOOK  
JAN 19 1945  
CLERK No. 1  
*mm*

The NAVAL SECRETARY, Naval Board,  
Department of National Defence,  
Ottawa, Canada.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~  
Commanding Officer,  
OTTAWA, Ont., 12th January, 1945.

*H.B. Money* *EMC*  
\*\*\*\*\*  
for SECRETARY, NAVAL BOARD.

In all cases this Form is to be sent in addition to the Report by Telegraph required by the Regulations.

Distribution: File, Imp. W. G. Com., Dom. Stat., Register.



Bureau for Translations  
Foreign Languages Division

Our No.: 244

Your No.:

August 24, 1947.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Mahoney:

You are perhaps <sup>all</sup> unaware of the fate of your son Jack, who lost his life between April 29th and May 1st, 1944, while a member of the crew of the "Athabaska". At that time I and one of my comrades were stationed in the fishing village of Ponquel (?), near Plonescat in Brittany, France. On that night there was an explosion on the destroyer, which probably had struck a mine, and on the next day I and my comrade, Erich Gossmann, and a number of French fishermen and a member of the French coastguard, Gilbert by name, picked up some bodies which we buried in the Plonescat cemetery. The identifications tags and valuables, including wallets found on the bodies, were transmitted to the customs station at Morlaix from where they were surrendered to the Red Cross. At least that is what was supposed to be done but at that time the French railway stations were under heavy bombardment and the effects may have been lost.

I would have written to you before this but I myself have been a prisoner of war since August 1944 and was released only a short while ago. I hope that this information will be of some use to you. Should you be interested in obtaining further particulars, please write.

Yours respectfully,

(Signature)

Name and address for reply:

Wilhelm Ehnes,  
Rottweil a/Neckar,  
Schrambergerstr, 54.

5729

HIS MAJESTY THE KING  
Patron-in-Chief of the British Empire Service League  
Grand Patron

HIS EXCELLENCY FIELD-MARSHAL THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE VISCOUNT ALEXANDER OF TUNIS, G.C.B.  
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA

Grand President  
LT.-GENERAL SIR RICHARD TURNER, V.C., K.C.B., K.C.M.G., D.S.O.

Dominion Honorary Presidents  
MAJOR-GENERAL THE HON. L. R. LAFLECHE, P.C., D.S.O.  
BRIG.-GENERAL ALEX. ROSS, K.C., C.M.G., D.S.O., V.D.

VICE-ADMIRAL PERCY NELLES, C.B., R.C.N. AIR MARSHAL W. A. BISHOP, V.C., C.B., D.S.O., M.C., D.F.C.

Dominion First Vice-President  
LT.-COL. L. D. M. BAXTER, O.B.E., V.D.

Dominion President  
MAJOR-GENERAL C. B. PRICE, C.B., D.S.O., D.C.M., V.D.

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Dominion Vice-Chairman  
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Dominion Honorary Solicitor  
O. F. HOWE, ESQ., K.C.

Dominion Honorary Counsellor on Education  
LT.-COL. THE HON. WILFRID BOVEY, O.B.E., K.C., LL.D., D.LITT.



P.O. BOX 657  
CABLE ADDRESS: CANLEG

June 24, 1948.

WAR SERVICE RECORDS  
OTTAWA - CANADA

CHARGED TO  
SINCE  
REC'D. CENTRAL REGISTRY  
JUN 28 1948  
REFERRED TO 48  
0-45890

Director of Records,  
Dept. of National Defence (Navy),  
OTTAWA, Ontario.

Re: MAHONEY, John Daniel (Lt.) (deceased)  
Royal Cdn. Naval Volunteer Reserve  
0-45890

Dear Sir:

These Headquarters have received an inquiry on behalf of the mother of the above-noted deceased Officer, respecting the location of his grave and place of burial.

It will be noted that there has been previous correspondence with the mother, Mrs. A. Mahoney, 156 King St. E., Toronto, by which we note that this Officer lost his life in the sinking of H.M.C.S. ATHABASKAN, along with a large number of other Naval personnel, and that the mother received a communication from a German ex-P.O.W., Wilhelm Ehnes. This man stated that he and other comrades had recovered several bodies at that time, including the above-noted, and is reported to have buried them in Plouescat Cemetery, near the village of Ponquel, Brittany, France.

However, the point is, would you kindly advise whether any further information has been obtained, such as the proper identification of this body and whether same has been disinterred and reburied in a Canadian cemetery.

Appreciating any further word you may have on this subject, I am, Sir,

Yours very truly,

A. A. Robinson,  
SENIOR PENSIONS OFFICER.

AAR:GD

"They served till death! Why not we?"

LA/CAP

Ontario, 15th July, 9

REGISTERED

Dear Mr. Mahoney:

Shortly after the sinking of H.M.C.S. "ATHABASKAN", bodies from this ship were recovered and buried along the coast of Finistere, France, at Brignogan, Plouescat, Santec and L'Aberwrach. France at that time was under German occupation and in most cases all positive means of identification were taken from the bodies by the Germans. The citizens of the above mentioned French towns looked after the burials and held funeral services.

The Army Graves Services, Overseas, have, since the cessation of hostilities, been making searches on the Continent in an effort to locate graves and identify bodies and have forwarded to Naval Headquarters exhumation reports, dental records, etc., of casualties from H.M.C.S. "ATHABASKAN" with a view to definitely establishing the identity of bodies which they have exhumed and over whose graves they have erected temporary markers.

With the above mentioned documents was enclosed a medal which was found on one of the bodies. A photograph of it is attached and it would be appreciated if you would inform Naval Headquarters as to whether or not you can identify this medal as belonging to your late son.

All available dental data which was received with the exhumation reports was compared with the dental particulars on your son's file at Naval Headquarters but no positive identification was made.

Should you confirm that the medal was the property of your late son, Grave Number 30, Row "B", Plot Number one, in the Plouescat Communal Cemetery, Plouescat, Finistere, France, will be accepted as being that of Lieutenant Mahoney.

Yours sincerely,

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
NAVAL SECRETARY.

*Dep Sec 22.7.49*  
Pers (N) File Room

Encl.

Mr. Daniel J. Mahoney,  
156 King Street East,  
TORONTO, Ontario.

*DWPO*  
*(To Col. Hamilton)*

*in set*

*Mr. Mahoney*  
*156 King Street East*

Despatched by  
N. Sec  
*2.8.49*  
Date 20.7.49  
Time

LA/CAM

N.S. 0-45890,  
N.S.C. 4160-355/3,  
PERS.(N) "N"/4.

Your: NDTC 4160-1.

6 November, 1947.

The late Lieutenant (S.B.) John Daniel MAHONEY  
Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve,  
0-45890

With reference to your submission of the 26th of September, 1947, attached is the original letter, envelope and a translation of the letter received from Mrs. A. Mahoney, mother of the deceased.

2. No information has been received that a grave has been located for the above-named, but efforts are still being made by the Canadian Naval Authorities Overseas in conjunction with the Director of Graves Registration and Enquiries, London, England, and Units of this Directorate on the Continent to locate the graves of Canadian Naval personnel who lost their lives in the European theatre of war. Any news is immediately passed on to the next-of-kin concerned.
3. From various reports received, it has been learned that along the coast of Finistere, France, at Brignogan, Plouescat, Santeec and L'Aberwrach, shortly after the sinking of H.M.C.S. "ATHABASKAN", bodies from this ship were recovered and buried. Of approximately seventy bodies known to have been recovered in this region, only three, however, were definitely identified. In many cases all positive means of identification were taken from the bodies by the Germans, who are known to have later used the data so obtained, in the interrogation of prisoners of war from the ship. In this connection also it is pointed out that the Department does not accept personal effects and clothing found on bodies as a positive means of identification as it is feasible that during the emergency that existed at the time that articles of clothing may have been worn by members of the crew other than the owners.
4. It is understood that the citizens of the above-mentioned French towns looked after the burials and held funeral services, even against the wishes of the Germans.
5. The War Office, London, expects that the bodies of Canadians will in due course all be disinterred and re-buried in proper consecrated Canadian Cemeteries on the Continent. It may be possible at that time to definitely identify some of the remains now buried as unidentified by means of dental charts and physical particulars available at present in the Department.
6. The next-of-kin of the late Lieutenant Mahoney will be informed immediately any further news respecting him is received.

Encl.

NAVAL SECRETARY.

The Commanding Officer,  
H.M.C.S. "YORK".

Ontario, 16 November, 9

REGISTERED*DWP*H.M.C.S. "ATHABASKAN" - CASUALTIES

Attached is a self-explanatory copy of a letter and enclosures from Mr. F.C. Williams, Treasurer, The Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League, Montreal, P. Q., to the Secretary of the Imperial War Graves Commission Overseas, dated the 31st of October, 1949. It is noted that Mr. Daniel T. Sweeney, Ex-Able Seaman, Official Number V-23913, was a prisoner of war from H.M.C.S. "ATHABASKAN".

2. It is apparent from this letter that the Army Graves Services have erected headstones over additional graves to those listed in Appendix "A", paragraph 5, of Naval Headquarters' letter, N.S.C. 4160-355/3, T.D. 2, N.S. 9275-2, N.S. 0-54790, PERS.(N) "N" 1A, dated the 17th of October, 1949. To prevent a recurrence of an error of this type the views of the Imperial War Graves Commission are to be obtained as requested in paragraph 2 (c) of the latter submission. A list of all graves marked with identifying markers of H.M.C.S. "ATHABASKAN" casualties is to be obtained if possible.

3. With further reference to N.S.C. 4160-355/3, T.D. 2, N.S. 9275-2, N.S. 0-54790, dated the 17th of October, 1949, the name of Lieutenant (S.B.) J.D. Mahoney, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, 0-45890, is to be added to the list of names in paragraph 3 of Appendix "A". Naval Headquarters has accepted this body as having been positively identified on the basis of the wallet containing this officer's Identity Card found on the body and next-of-kin has been informed. This information is to be forwarded to the Imperial War Graves Commission.

4. Exhumation Report and medal forwarded under cover of your submission NUK 4160-355/3, NUK 4160-1 dated the 12th of July, 1948, are returned.

Encls.

*Dep Sec Pers*

NAVAL SECRETARY.

Despatched to  
N. Sec.

Naval Member of the  
Canadian Joint Staff (London),  
11 Hill Street,  
LONDON W. 1, England.

*Lt Col Lantier*Date  
Time

17-11-49

*BF 29/11**Ans Dnt**Ch Sec*

12th July, 1948.

Dear Sir:

THE LATE LIEUTENANT(S.B.) J.D. MAHONEY, R.C.N.V.R.

Receipt is acknowledged of your letter of 24th June, 1948, concerning the late Lieutenant Maloney, R.C.N.V.R.

For your information, the Army Graves Service, London, operating under the War Office is responsible for tracing of graves of all British Commonwealth servicemen. Our Naval Liaison Officer in London is informed as soon as any information is obtained regarding Canadian Naval personnel buried on the continent. Any such information obtained is always passed on immediately to the next of kin.

It is known that up to 70 bodies from H.M.C.S. "ATHABASKAN" were buried on the coast of France, near Brignonan, Plouescat, Santec and L'Aberwrach shortly after the ship was lost. Of these, only three have been positively identified to date.

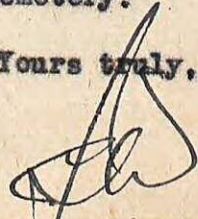
In regard to establishing the definite identity of bodies, the following points should be noted;

- (a) Articles of clothing, lifebelts and personal effects do not necessarily constitute positive identification, as it is possible that in the emergency that existed at the time of the action, such articles might have been worn by persons other than the owner.
- (b) Burials were in the majority of cases under the supervision of the Germans who were in the habit of stripping bodies of personal effects.

In the case of Lieutenant Mahoney, a copy of the letter which his mother received from Wilhelm Eines who claims to be a German ex-prisoner of war, was forwarded to our London office for transmission to the Army Graves Service for possible further investigation. To date, no report has been received whether any trace has been established through this letter, but a further inquiry has been made. You may be assured that Mrs. Mahoney will be advised as soon as any definite information is received.

None of the bodies of the Athabaskan casualties which were buried on the Coast of France have as yet been disinterred and reburied in a Canadian cemetery.

Yours truly,



A.A. Robinson, Esq.,  
Senior Pensions Officer,  
Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League,  
OTTAWA, Ontario.

NAVAL SECRETARY.

Despatched by  
N. Sec.Date 13.7  
Time

Globe & Mail  
July 3/48

Missing on Athabaskan

# German Letters Tell Of 60 Canadian Tars Buried on French Soil

Just what happened after the sinking of the HMCS Athabaskan on April 29, 1944, is puzzling a Toronto mother who recently received four letters from a German who claims to have buried her son.

Lieut. Jack Mahoney, son of Mr. and Mrs. D. J. Mahoney of 156 King St. E., was listed missing, and later presumed dead, after the Athabaskan went down. Lieut. Mahoney, formerly a staff photographer on The Globe and Mail, served as a photographic officer with the RCN.

After reading the letters from the German, who might have been either in the German army or working with French underground forces, Mrs. Mahoney is confronted with a mystery. Did her son reach the French coast alive, or did he drown when the ship sank? Why did the German delay so long in writing, and what were his motives? Is there a story about the sinking of the Athabaskan that has not yet been revealed?

The first letter, in German, came from Wilhelm Ehnes, Schrambergerstr, 54, Rottweil, Wurttemberg, in the American zone, and told of the sinking. He wrote:

"About that time I was ordered, with my comrades, to a little German service post in the fishing village of Possquen near Plouescat, in Brittany. That same night the destroyer Athabaskan blew up, having probably run into a mine. On the following day, with my comrade, Erich Gassmann, some French fishermen and also the Garde Maritime of Plouescat, I took the dead to a place of safety, and also made sure they were buried in the Plouescat cemetery."

He mentions identification tags, pocketbooks and other valuables being sent to the customs office at Morlaix to be handed over to the Red Cross Service Post. This might not have been done because of heavy bombing at the time, he adds.

"This German says there are 60 Canadian boys buried in the same cemetery, but, to my knowledge, none of their parents have heard of it," says Mrs. Mahoney.

The second letter dated June 1, 1948, tells of papers of Jack's which the German forwarded. But Mrs. Mahoney never received them. He apologizes for his delay in sending them because of air raids, the Allied invasion, and a period spent in hospital. Mrs. Mahoney sent Ehnes letters and parcels of food, but received no acknowledgment of them.

The third letter, dated May 28, 1948, which arrived last, enclosed two letters from a Canadian Wren



Lieut. Jack Mahoney

Jack from Ottawa to St. John's, Nfld., then overseas. He turned down an offer to be chief medical photographer for the navy, in favor of more active duty. He won commendation for photographing the sea battle involving the German battleship Tirpitz, early in 1944.

Naval records reveal that the Athabaskan, one of the Tribal class destroyers, was on its second sweep of the invasion coast, accompanied by HMCS Haida, when a pair of torpedo boats were sighted. In the consequent attack, the Athabaskan was hit by a salvo of shellfire, forward of her bridge, and flames leaped up the superstructure. The afterdeck was smashed by another salvo. Finally a torpedo struck her stern, which broke off and sank. The bow reared up, then it sank, too.

There were no casualties on the Haida, but of the Athabaskan crew 130 survived, 46 were picked up by the Haida and 85 were taken prisoner by the Germans. Survivors describe seeing the skipper, Commander J. H. Stubbs, clinging with others of his crew, to a raft, and singing the Wavy Navy song to cheer his men.

"Get away, get clear," he shouted to the Haida, as enemy aircraft approached, 15 minutes later. That was the last seen of him.

Six of the crew, in a small motorboat equipped with a sail, managed to get to England rather than be taken prisoner by the Germans in France. The encounter occurred near the Ile de Vierge, the westernmost tip of France.



Jenny

named Jenny, a picture of her, and a picture of Jack, which Ehnes found on his body when he buried him.

"For you, these things may have worthwhile memories," it read. "For me, they are only souvenirs of an unknown soldier for whom I did a last service. I am sending them that they may bring you some comfort."

He explains he has just returned from an American prisoner-of-war camp and is living with his 80-year-old mother. Having lost all his possessions in an air-raid on Mainz, he finds re-establishing the family business difficult, especially with life as it is now in Germany.

The letters from the mysterious Jenny, contain lines that discourage Mrs. Mahoney who said she knows her son had received no mail from Canada for some time. They read, in part:

"I'm terribly sorry you're so downhearted today. I wish I could cheer you up . . . the best of luck, have a good trip and a good time. Bon voyage and a speedy return."

## Fire Leaps Track, Mill Destroyed

Meadowvale, July 2 (CP).—More than \$5,000 damage was caused to the Moran alfalfa mill here when fire swept through the building early today.

Raging through dried alfalfa, the fire destroyed a large shed, an office, leaped across the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks and set the railway station ablaze. Firemen battled the blaze for three hours before they were able to bring it under control. The fire was blamed on spontaneous combustion.

## Toronto Man Drowned

Bobcaygeon, July 2 (Special).—A Toronto resident, 26-year-old Rodney McDonald, was drowned today after falling from the local dam. His body was recovered by a brother-in-law, Reuben Thomas of Weston. Thomas told police that when he heard the splash he thought it was a fish biting at his line. When he missed McDonald he rushed to the spot and dived in. By that time, the man was dead. Another brother-in-law, Lloyd Thomas of Thistletown, helped bring the body to shore.

## Saved George Veteran Thanked

George [Name obscured] was saved from [Name obscured] by [Name obscured]. The veteran was thanked for his [Name obscured].

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The ink on the letters has run slightly, but it doesn't look as if the letters had a thorough dunking in the water. The two pictures are in good shape also. Mrs. Mahoney would like to meet this Jenny, in the hope she could tell her something more of her son.

Still in the dark about what actually happened, and not certain that the boy Ehnes buried was really her son, Mrs. Mahoney made enquiries at naval headquarters at Ottawa, through HMCS York. But she received no satisfaction. They simply wrote back to HMCS York stating that they didn't think it was her son, and that they could give her no information.

Disgusted with the lack of cooperation she enlisted the support of the Canadian Legion. Her friend, Edward Beiyes of the Toronto branch, has written to Legion headquarters at Ottawa, who will, in turn, see that a thorough investigation is made.

"Graves of Canadian servicemen are Canadian Government property," said Mr. Beiyes. "It is the government's responsibility to account for Canadian servicemen who died in action, if at all possible. I consider the navy very lax in not passing on the information to the Special Task Force in Europe, whose duty it is to investigate these matters. They should trace this German, and find out if other Canadians are buried in the same cemetery."

His mother regards it as fate that Jack went down with the Athabaskan. Originally assigned to the Haida, he asked to be transferred to be with his friend, Les Ward, another public relations officer (formerly with the Evening Telegram.) Both were lost with the ship.

Service with the navy had taken

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Veteran Ernie

For the second time in 32 years, Ernie Pearson, First Great War veteran, has received expressions of gratitude from royalty. In 1916, he was awarded the King's Medal for saving King George V. from being trampled by his horse and this week, he received a letter of thanks from Princess Elizabeth for a rug which he made.

Thrice wounded and once gassed while serving with the First Contingent in France during the First Great War, he is a patient at Christie St. Military Hospital.

King George was thrown from his horse while on inspection of Canadian Troops near Ypres, according



DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE  
MINISTÈRE DE LA DÉFENSE NATIONALE

O. H. M. S.  
SERVICE DE SA MAJESTÉ

*Photostatic copy of  
medal*

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