



William Skehens

Royal Naval Reserve (Newfoundland)

Royal Navy

Service No. D/187466

World War II

Born: 13 Sep 1921

Died: 29 Jun 2002

Place of Birth: North River, Conception Bay, Newfoundland

Parents: John Francis and Ellen "Mary" (nee Butt) Skehens

William was one of eight children born to John and Mary Skehens (Skanes) of Hallstown (North River). He would enlist in the Royal Naval Reserve Newfoundland in April 1940.

According to records, William was part of the 4th Naval Contingent to ship overseas to

Great Britain. The 4th Contingent was composed of 177 men. This contingent was less than the complement of a normal contingent at 200 in strength. The 177 men of this contingent left Newfoundland on May 1st, 1940, on board the SS Nova Scotia. The vessel had originally departed Boston via St. John's and Halifax enroute to Liverpool, England.



SS Nova Scotia

While in service in England, William met Olive Clarke, and they married on Armistice Day in 1943.

Once the war ended, William and Olive made their home together in England. Entries located in the 1960, 1963 and 1972 voter's list place them living in Dulwich, Camberwell, England.

William died at 81 in Sydenham, London borough Lewisham, greater London. He is buried in St. Bartholomew Churchyard there.

Below are several clippings from the Observer's Weekly newspaper that mention William:

From The Observer's Weekly
12 October 1943

Promotions In The Royal Navy

Information has been received from the Commodore, Royal Naval Patrol Service, Lowestoft, England, that the undermentioned Newfoundlanders have been promoted to the ranks shown against their names.

Parsons, Wilfred, (Butlerville, C.B.) No. JX188849 Wartime Acting Petty Officer 1.9.43.

Skehens, William, (North River, C.B.) No. JX187466 Wartime Leading Seaman 13.8.43.

O'gan, Hayward A (Lomond). No. JX211447 Wartime Leading Seaman 13.8.43.

Purchsae, Clyde W. (Exploits). No. JX246632 Wartime Leading Seaman 13.8.43.

Lee, Ronald C. (Petty Hr.). No. JX280027 Wartime Leading Seaman 3.9.43.

From The Observer's Weekly
14 December 1943

Cupid's Activities

FLYING Officer James Frank Power, R.A.F., has been posted on rest at a H.C.U., in the North of England. He has recently been engaged to Miss Olive Downes, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Downes of Southampton.

The engagement of Mr. Ronald Martin of the Newfoundland Forestry Unit and Miss Jean MacLeod, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John MacLeod of Scotstoun, Glasgow, has been announced.

Able Seaman Leo Galway has become engaged to Miss Louis Murphy of Bexley, Kent.

Leading Seaman William Skehens was married to Miss Olive Clarke in London on Armistice Day.

Leading Seaman Douglas Stead has married Miss Peggy Mumford of Peterborough. Mrs. Stead is serving in the A.T.S.

Lieut. Wickford Collins, R.A., is engaged to be married to Miss Daphne Embledean of Naples. The ceremony will be performed by Capt. the Reverend Lawrence Farrell at Tunbridge Wells.

*From The Observer's Weekly
26 February 1946*

MESSAGES FROM OUR BOYS OVERSEAS

Parents of several of our servicemen overseas were glad to hear personal messages broadcast from them from London last week. They included our young men in nearly all the services:

Flight²Lieut. Jim Kielly of Bay

Roberts; Angus Chancey of St. John's; Ralph Ivany of Shoal Harbour, Trinity Bay; John McDonald of Salmonier, who met his sister; Samuel Joy of St. John's, who met his brother Andrew; Bert Thomas of Grand Falls; William Skanes of Clarke's Beach his wife and baby Joe; John Martin and wife, Bishop's Falls; Mr. and Mrs. Michael Luffman, Ramea.

Richard Jones of Corner Brook, who is overseas in the Canadian Army was among the callers at the Caribou Club last week.

The Assistant Trade Commissioner, Mr. J. L. Murphy, acknowledges a letter from Mrs. William Morry, English bride of Sergt. William Morry of the Royal Artillery, who is now residing in St. John's, and who gives a cheering picture of her new home and life.