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CFB Esquimalt building to be renamed in honour of Duncan-born submariner


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An undated photograph of Lt. William McKinstry Maitland-Dougall in his Royal Canadian Navy uniform. Maitland-Dougall was only 15 when he enrolled at the Royal Navy College of Canada in Halifax in 1911. After graduation, he was posted at CFB Esquimalt as one of two midshipmen assigned to Canada's first submarines. VIA IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

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The Department of National Defence is renaming a building at CFB Esquimalt in honour of an early submariner who was born in Duncan and died when his submarine was sunk in the First World War.

A renaming ceremony for Dockyard building D85 will be held Friday morning in honour of Lt. William McKinstry Maitland-Dougall, who was two days shy of his 23rd birthday when the submarine he was in command of was sunk at 2:20 p.m. March 12, 1918.

Maitland-Dougall was only 15 when he enrolled at the Royal Navy College of Canada in Halifax in 1911. After graduation, he was posted at CFB Esquimalt as one of two midshipmen assigned to Canada's first submarines.

With the start of the Great War, he requested a transfer to the Royal Navy in 1915 and rose through the ranks, becoming the first Canadian — and the youngest — to command a British submarine in November of 1917.

He was in command of the HMS D3, a D-Class submarine, when it was mistakenly attacked by a French airship in the English Channel, northeast of Dieppe in 1918. He became the first — and only — Canadian submarine commanding officer to be lost in action.

The submarine sank with all hands on board. The wreck was only discovered by divers in 2007.

The renaming comes on the eve of the 110th anniversary of submarines in Canada.

Canada's submarine fleet came about after then B.C. Premier Richard McBride bought two submarines, originally destined for the Chilean navy, from a Seattle shipyard for \$1.15 million four days before the U.K. declaration of war in 1914.

The Dominion of Canada ratified the sale four days later and put the submarines into service as the CC-1 and CC-2.

The two submarines, which operated without torpedoes, were stationed at CFB Esquimalt until 1917, when they were relocated to Halifax.

Relatives of Maitland-Dougall are expected to be at the renaming ceremony at CFB Esquimalt at 10 a.m. Friday.

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