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Douglas Gordon Spurrell

Royal Naval Reserve Newfoundland

Royal Navy

Service No. 189396

World War II

Born: 29 May 1917

Died: 16 Mar 1983

Place of Birth: St. Johns, Newfoundland

Parents: William J. Russell and Gertrude R. Spurrell

Born in 1917, Douglas was born prior to his parents marrying, which did happen sometime later.

The 1935 Newfoundland general census shows William at 52, Gertrude at 40 (now married) and children Arthur 24, Douglas

18, Dorothy 8, Mary 7, Annie 5, and Fred 3, all listed with the surname Russell. It seems that William (Douglas's biological father was married twice.)

The entries in the 1945 census tell a slightly different story. William is now 60 and Gertrude 52. The family entries show Dorothy at 19, Mary 18, Annie 15, Fred (George) 13 and Douglas at 28, single but entered as stepson and using the surname, Spurrell. This may indeed have come about upon his enlistment, as his original birth certificate carried the name Spurrell.

Douglas was one of the 175 men of the 3rd Naval Contingent that embarked St. John's, Newfoundland on January 14th, 1940, and arrived at Liverpool, England, seventeen (17) days later on January 31st, 1940. The troop transport vessel was the HMHS Newfoundland.



HMHS Newfoundland

The Newfoundland was a British Royal Mail Ship that was requisitioned as a hospital ship in the World War II. She was sunk in 1943 in a Luftwaffe attack off southern Italy.

Douglas appears in June 1943 listed as a passenger on the SS Fort Townshend, having departed St. John's, Newfoundland, St. John, New Brunswick and arrived in New York City. According to the ship's listing, Douglas was described as being single, 5' 11" tall, with a fair complexion, brown hair, and blue eyes. His calling or occupation is "British Navy seaman."

Douglas is found on a voters list in 1957. He is living in St. John's, Newfoundland and working as a civil servant.

Douglas was married twice. His first wife was Deborah Edith Johnson. They had one son together. Deborah passed away in 1984 in Auburn, New York at the age of 63.

His second wife was Margaret A. Vidito of Nova Scotia, Canada.

Douglas passed away in March 1983 at his residence in Aurora, York, Ontario, Canada. He is buried in the Aurora Cemetery there.