



Harold Austin French

Merchant Seaman

World War II

Born: 05 Nov 1926

Died: 11 Nov 2016 (age 90)

Place of Birth: Bay Roberts, Conception Bay North, Newfoundland

Parents: Nathan and Agnes (nee Taylor) French

The fourth child born to Nathan and Agnes French, Harold would continue the family tradition of service to king and country. His father had served in the Royal Newfoundland Regiment in World War I and had met his wife, Agnes, in Scotland who became his war bride.

His older brother Wilfred served in the 166th Royal Artillery regiment (Newfoundland) during World War II.

Although not formally in uniform, Harold served as a Merchant seaman during the war, thus upholding the family's legacy of service.

According to the official Newfoundland census of 1921, the French family were living in Bay Roberts and had just moved there from the Great Britain. Nathan, his wife Agnes and baby Wilfred (born in Ayrshire, Scotland) who was 2 and baby Edward Donald just nine (9) months (born in Newfoundland). Nathan was employed as a bookkeeper with C & G Dawe Company.

By 1935, the family moved to St. John's West and were living on Pleasant Street. Nathan is employed as postmaster and the family now included Nathan at 39, Agnes 38, Wilfred 16, Edward 15, Leslie 12, Harold 8, and Yvonne 4.

Nathan passed away in January 1938 and Agnes married Simon Piercey of St. John's. The 1945 census has them living on Monroe Street. Simon is 62, while Agnes is just 48. Living with them are Harold at age 18 and Yvonne at 15.

Harold graduated as a Marine engineer from the dock yard in St. John's, Newfoundland. He worked on a cable ship, the CS Lord Kelvin, before moving to Woburn, Massachusetts.



SS Lord Kelvin

The British **SS Lord Kelvin** was a cable-laying ship which served during the Second World War. Initially owned by the Anglo-American Telegraph Company, **Lord Kelvin** was completed in 1916. During the Second World War, *Lord Kelvin* was leased to the Western Telegraph Company. On 27 September 1942, while southwest of Anticosti Island, she was performing cable work when the Canadian *Bangor*-class minesweeper *Chedabucto* was ordered to escort her to Rimouski, Quebec. *Chedabucto* was running in a blacked-out state, and at 05:55, *Lord Kelvin* rammed the minesweeper in its side, near the wardroom. One member of *Chedabucto*'s crew was killed in the accidental collision.

Following the war, Harold married Elsie Lorraine Reeves of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia in 1947. They would have four (4) children, 3 boys (Bruce, Mark & Thomas) and 1 girl (Suzanne) and were married for sixty-nine (69) years.

In August 1949, Harold, along with wife Elsie, and young son Bruce, moved to Woburn, Massachusetts, USA. In 1955, the family moved to Candia, New Hampshire where he worked for Sprague Electric Company in Concord until retirement. It is here at Rockingham, East Candia that Harold passed in November 2016 at the age of 90. He is buried in the Holbrook Cemetery there.