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Patricia MARTINSON — Halifax

Published: October 26, 2024



Martinson, Patricia Of Halifax. Entered into rest, aged 101, on October 18, 2024. Born in Downpatrick, Ireland on May 4, 1923, to Captain William and Mildred Martinson. As a young teenager she attended a series of military training schools with the hope of eventually entering the Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, England. In 1940, to help in the war effort, she joined the British army and served in the Norfolk regiment. She eventually transferred into an army officer cadet training program in India and in December 1942 was commissioned in the Royal Indian Navy. She was working in the naval dockyard in Bombay when the SS Fort Stikine exploded on April 14, 1944, killing over 1,000 people and leaving some 80,000 homeless. She survived the blast relatively unharmed, and in the hour following she drove through the wreckage looking for survivors, including many friends and colleagues, delivering as many as she could to Saint George's Hospital. In March 1944 she married Rosemary Black at Saint Thomas' Anglican Cathedral in Bombay and their daughter Anne was born in December of that year. The family returned to England in 1946 where Patricia served as a supernumerary with the Royal Navy and worked in a variety of civilian jobs, while longing to be back at sea. Eventually she was hired as third officer with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and found herself at sea again, traveling to Australia, New Guinea, Hong Kong, and Korea. She served on the SS Fort Charlotte during the Korean War, returning again to England in 1952. Unsure what to do next, her wife Rosemary suggested they look for opportunities in Canada. The family soon settled in Vancouver, BC, and in 1953 Patricia joined the Canadian Air Force for a five-year posting, initially serving in air traffic control and then with Search and Rescue. The following year, the family moved to France where Patricia would finish her five-year posting. Their time in France was the happiest time of the marriage. In 1958, the family moved to Scotland, and the following year son Simon Patrick was born in Morpeth. Patricia found herself in a variety of civilian jobs and trades, including a brief time working in gold mines in Ghana. In 1960 she and Rosemary mutually agreed to separate, and Patricia returned to sea, serving on board a variety of commercial ships throughout the 1960s. Once again, she found herself traveling the world, including time in Singapore, Indonesia, Guyana, and Trinidad. In 1980 Patricia was working for the Saguenay Shipping Company when it was sold to the Guyanese government and the workers were sent home. She returned to Quebec City where she was living at the time with her close friend Isobelle Bailey. In October of that year, with Isobelle's care and support, Patricia underwent gender transition surgery. She was deeply grieved when Isobelle died only three years later. After a brief time as a cargo surveyor in Quebec, in 1982 Patricia moved to Halifax to undertake a job as the officer in charge of three ships owned by El Paso Pipelines. Shortly after she arrived, one of the ships was deemed unseaworthy, and the other two were sold to Titan Steamships. She was asked to take charge of the one ship which now remained in Halifax, the Golden Phoenix, and to prepare her for sea. One night, while in dock at Pier 31, the Golden Phoenix began to slip her moorings during a strong wind storm and was at risk of colliding with a nearby ship that was loading grain. Patricia took charge. After arranging four different tugs to help stabilize the ship, the crisis was averted and a collision in the harbour prevented. Along with Patricia there

were only three other crew members aboard the ship that night. A few years later Patricia was presented with the Silver Rose Bowl in recognition of her efforts that night. A year later, Patricia concluded her work with Titan Steamships. In 1987 she began working a variety of jobs in Halifax, including private seniors' care, as a security guard in the ladies' department of Mills' Brothers, and as a heritage interpreter at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. She found a spiritual home at St. George's Round Church and the King's College Chapel where she made many friends and was renowned for the gourmet meals she produced with a toaster-oven and a small hotplate. In the 1990s she began volunteering with the Nova Scotia International Tattoo, supervising the props department and building sets, retiring from this work in 2015 at the age of 92. She returned to her employment at the Maritime Museum, where she shared with visitors stories about her nearly 70 years of life at sea. In 2019 she was featured in the Museum's special exhibit "The Sea in Her Blood," which highlighted the life at sea of seventeen extraordinary women. Patricia was predeceased by her father, William Farrell; mother, Mildred Esther; sister, Elizabeth Ann; brother, Michael John; wife, Rosemary Black. Survived by her daughter, Anne Murie (John). Requiem to be held at Saint George's Round Church, 2222 Brunswick Street, Halifax, on Tuesday, October 29 at 10 am, with a reception to follow in the church hall. Condolences may be directed to: office@roundchurch.ca

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