

Vice Admiral [Ret'd] Ralph L Hennessy Commemorative Street Naming

By Diana Eloise Hennessy



Thanks to everyone who made the Candlelight Tribute to Veterans the memorable night it was.

We were honoured to be accompanied by His Worship Mayor Jim Watson, Minister of Veterans Affairs Kent Hehr, CWM Vice President Chantal Schryer, Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs General Walt Natynczyk, VCDS Lieutenant General Guy Thibault, Commander of the Royal Canadian Navy Vice Admiral Mark Norman, Perley Rideau CEO Akos Hoffer, Foundation Board Chairman BGEN [Ret'd] Charles Lemieux, Foundation Executive Director Dan Clapin with Associate Delphine Haslé with Hennessy family and friends.

Background to Commemorative street naming for Veterans

In 2005, as part of the celebrations for the Year of the Veteran, the City of Ottawa launched a street-naming initiative to honour our local veterans. The initiative is a partnership between the City of Ottawa, Veterans Affairs Canada, the Royal Canadian Legion and local private developers.

Applicants/nominees proceed through the City of Ottawa's commemorative street naming process, and once approved,

the Office of Protocol liaises with Veterans Affairs Canada and the Poppy and Remembrance Committee of the Royal Canadian Legion who grant permission to utilise the Poppy on the approved street sign.

... The permanent street sign, installed during the final last stages of construction of the subdivision, bears the Poppy — the ultimate sign of sacrifice.

... The presentation of the street sign takes place during the Candlelight Tribute for Veterans every year during the month of November. The event is co-hosted by the City

of Ottawa and the Department of Veterans Affairs with approximately 800 guests in attendance. As part of the Ceremony, the Mayor presents the family with a replica of the actual street sign.

At the end of October, I was surprised and very honoured to receive a phone call from His Worship Mayor Watson advising me that the City of Ottawa and Veterans Affairs Canada wished to honour my late husband Vice Admiral Ralph Hennessy's memory with a commemorative street naming. What an enormous tribute!! I couldn't have been or be more touched or prouder of this recognition...

In preparing to respond to the singular honour the Mayor's proclamation represents, I was struck by a number of relationships:

- **First, the number 11:** As we approached the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month, this historical number had now acquired additional significance: My husband was the 11th person to be honoured by a commemorative street naming and he served as the 11th Commander — or Principal Naval Advisor as it was then termed — of the Royal Canadian Navy.
- **Next, the setting:** The proclamation — in the outstanding creation dedicated to all who served and gave sacrifice — completes a circle which began well over a decade ago when my husband served as a member of the Advisory Council of the Canadian War Museum. During that period, he saw a dream evolve into the wonderful reality that is today's Canadian War Museum and such an ideal setting for the annual Candlelight Tribute to Veterans.
- **Last** — Ralph Hennessy Avenue — will include 2 parks and a school. Since a significant part of my

husband's military career entailed teaching/training and as he retired as Chief of Personnel, the planned school represents another appropriate link. As well, it connects with his lifelong interest and participation in learning. Upon retiring from the Navy, and subsequently as founding Executive Director of the Standards Council of Canada and Vice President of the International Standards Organization, he was graduated from the University of Waterloo — having spent the duration of his Bachelor of Arts studies on the Dean's Honours List — at the age of 77.

My husband was noted for how he cared for those he led; he had a long standing concern and interest in people's welfare and was a gifted listener. Until shortly before his death in June 2014, he continued to participate in such activities as Remembrance Day and the Battle of the Atlantic.

This past November 11th serving men and women, Veterans, families, and citizens from youth to seniors gathered in various locales, or quietly paused alone, to reflect on the price which had been paid for the freedom, liberty and quality of life we Canadians enjoy today. It was a date which held particular memories for my husband — reflecting upon the losses he personally saw during his long years as a participant in the Battle of the Atlantic and after his Father was killed in action in the defence of Hong Kong.

In recognizing Mayor Watson's remarks on behalf of my family, I emphasized "how extremely honoured we are to acknowledge the profound tribute paid to Vice Admiral [Ret'd] Ralph Hennessy, DSC, CD and through him, all those who serve, and have served, our country in war and peace"

Veterans Week Concert

Pegi Jenkins, vocalist, and Patricia Deek, pianist, of Perley Rideau performed a concert on Saturday, November 7th at St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church. "Songs of Faith and Inspiration", was dedicated to past and present Perley Rideau residents to mark Veterans Week. The music was well-received by the audience of 25 and a reception followed the concert, allowing performers to meet and mingle. Described by one audience member as "ethereal", audience members also appreciated hearing remarks on the music selections that helped to provide a better understanding of the music.