



The River Round Up

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Lawrence Burke—Our Veteran



Photo taken on honeymoon in Niagara Falls, 1953

Lawrence James was born December 5th, 1916, the 8th of ten children to Philomen (Burke) & Dominic Burke of the Southside. He attended Cannes School where he completed the tenth grade which was the highest grade level at that time. Since his dad Dominic had passed away two years prior there was no funding for Lawrence to further his education.

He stayed at home and did some lobster fishing and some farming until 1939 when he moved to Halifax. There, he worked for Simpson's for a brief time before joining the Merchant Marines. With the war raging in Europe, Lawrence worked on the *Foundation Franklyn*, a tow boat that assisted ships in distress in the North Atlantic. In 1941 he joined the *Vancolite*, a large oil tanker that moved oil throughout the South American coastline and through the Panama Canal. There were as many as four hundred ships along the Columbian coastline guarding the port from German submarines. He served as a fireman, 3rd engineer and 2nd engineer on the *Vancolite*. In 1942 Lawrence moved to the *Royalite*, a smaller oil tanker that traveled in the North Atlantic and along the Newfoundland and United States coastlines carrying fuel to the refineries and navy ships that were docked in the harbors. In 1945 Lawrence went on to the *Quitico Park*, yet

another oil tanker that moved its cargo to the Panama Canal, Aruba and other ports in South America. He remained there until the end of the war.

Lawrence returned to Halifax and joined a Montreal based ship called *Fort Boise*. On his maiden voyage the Captain missed a buoy in the fog and they became shipwrecked on a pile of rocks. Eighteen men were evacuated to a life boat while the Captain and chief-engineer went down with the ship. They rowed for thirteen hours in the dark before reaching the harbor of St. Pierre de Magdalene. The crew was returned to Montreal and Lawrence was given the choice of sailing to Japan or returning home to River Bourgeois. He chose home. A few months later he headed to Jersey City where his sister Elizabeth Martell was residing and joined another oil tanker where he spent the next nineteen years.

In 1950 while home on vacation Lawrence became smitten with the beautiful Hilda Pottie of False Bay. The romance continued for three more years (vacations) and in the spring of 1953 Hilda moved to Jersey City and on October 10th, 1953 they were wed. Their son Larry was born five years later. Larry resides on the Southside with wife Theresa and they have three children: TJ, Kelsey & Colton. In 1959 the family returned to RB for a year while Lawrence built their home on the Southside. Due to lack of employment, the family returned to Jersey City until 1970 when they made River Bourgeois their home for good. Sadly Hilda passed away in 1981 at the young age of 57.

Lawrence worked as a carpenter with Cletus Landry for a number of years building homes. He also cut pulp for a while before retiring for good. These days he has some health issues with his feet and can't travel far however he still enjoys playing cards with the family, reading and his television. He also has done much work on the family history. He is always on call for anyone looking for history on the community as he is a walking book of knowledge or better known as the "River Bourgeois Historian". He

loves visitors of all ages and visits his brother Victor at Richmond Villa often. Lawrence, we the people of River Bourgeois thank you for serving your country and we all wish you better health soon and many more years of happiness.

Sharon Chilvers

Reunion 72 years later



Left to right-Edmond Boyd, Sharon Chilvers & Chisholm Lyons. Seated-Marie Boucher

In March of 2006 the "River Roundup" did a profile story on local resident, then ninety year old Marie Boucher. At that time Marie mentioned that as a nineteen year old she was employed by the Chief Justice of Nova Scotia the Hon. Joseph A. Chisholm to care for his grandchildren which included nine year old Chisholm Lyons. Former local resident Edmond Boyd who resides in Halifax and a subscriber to the paper realized that it was his good friend from St. FX University now living in Mexico that was the young man in the story. A copy of the Round Up was forwarded to Mr. Lyons and he immediately contacted Marie. They corresponded several times and on October 6th Mr. Lyons who lives in Mexico was attending a reunion at St.F.X. and took time to visit the much elated Marie. They spent a couple of hours reminiscing about people they knew. Edmond and the story writer, Sharon, were in attendance for the reunion along with photographer, Therese Pottie also a member of River Roundup team. Mr. Lyons is an annual subscriber to our newsletter.

Sharon Chilvers

Strait Area Transit

The Strait Area Transit now travels down Highway #4 five days a week twice a day, at 7:10 and 11:55 am, returning at 10:15 and 5:05 pm. The bus goes from Chapel Island to Mulgrave. You may call 625-1475 to book the bus and they will pick you up anywhere along the highway. Rates to Port Hawkesbury from RB are: Regular rate is \$24 return; Seniors \$20; Students \$14. Special rates are available

on a five day pass \$50 for students and \$70 for seniors. Other special rates are also available. You may call the "Dial a Ride" program which will pick you up at your door for the same price but they need 48 hour notice.



Thanks for joining and supporting the "Friends of Renee" in our 1st annual "A REASON TO WALK" fundraiser on October 18th. We raised \$210.00 which was donated to the East Richmond Patient Assistant Program Fund and was accepted by River Bourgeois's representative Deirdre Boyd. We want to make this walk an annual event. Instead of our group entering the Run for Cure in Sydney, we will team up here in River Bourgeois with family & friends and walk on Renee's birthday and donate the money locally which can be used directly in our own communities. Thank you to those troopers who came out to walk and also to those who came by to give donations if they couldn't walk. We hope to see a lot more of you out there next year.

Daunette Timmons

Halloween



There are many decorations around RB for Halloween. This display arranged by Debbie & Fraser Martell is on the #4 highway to the east of the RB Funeral Home.

History

Each November we dedicate much of our newsletter to River Bourgeois veterans in memory of Marie Boyd. We thank Sharon Chilvers for her interviews and Donnie Pottie for sharing his collection of historical notes on our deceased members of the armed forces. We are also very grateful for the enormous amount of time he & his committee (especially Raymond Doary & Michael Fougere) have donated to the restoration of the cenotaph site. Please join our veterans and those currently involved in the war effort at the Cenotaph on November 11th.

MV ESSO WILLIAMSBURG All Hands Lost



Fred Simon Bouchie

There can be no doubt that the allied merchant seamen provided the life line that was so vital in both world wars. More than 25,000 merchant ship voyages were made from North America to Britain during WWII of which seventy-two Canadian ships were lost to enemy action.

Fred Simon Bouchie was born on October 19, 1890, the son of Elias & Marie (Poirier) Bouchie. Little is known of Fred's time in River Bourgeois other than that he was a seafaring man. On January 20, 1927 he married Arthenese Poirier of D'Escousse. As there were no children and only a surviving niece & nephew (Leo Bouchie), public record is all that remains to speak of the sacrifice of one of River Bourgeois' finest.

The 11,237 ton *MV ESSO Williamsburg* was built in 1941 by *Sun Shipbuilding* for *Standard Oil Company* of New Jersey. The *US Bureau of Marine Inspections and Navigation* records indicate Fred Simon Bouchie received his certificate as Able Seamen and efficiency rating to Lifeboat Man on October 6, 1924 at Bangor, Maine. On September 27, 1941 he maintained his ratings as recorded by the US Board of Inspections at New London Connecticut. There are many reasons why tankers and other vessels sailed unescorted in hostile waters, knowing that they were top priority on the list of vessels for U-boats to sink. For the *Williamsburg* it may have been that she could make 15 knots when fully loaded. Whatever the reason, her demise would begin on September 12, 1942 as she departed Aruba, Dutch West Indies en route for Reykjavik, Iceland.

Although the ship was armed with one 5", one 3", two .50 cal. and two .30 cal. guns, the crew of 8 officers, 34 men and 18 armed guards, Defensively Equipped Merchant Ships (DEMS), were unable to provide little defense against a torpedo attack. On September 22, 1942 at 01:16 hours, about 500 miles south of Cape Farewell Greenland, U-boat 211 fired two torpedoes at Master John Tweed's vessel.

German records report two hits but the *Williamsburg* was able to escape. It is possible that both torpedoes actually missed their target due to poor weather conditions and visibility. At 00:26 hours on September 23rd the *Williamsburg* was hit by a torpedo which resulted in a great fire. A second torpedo was fired shortly after missing the ship. 40 minutes later a third torpedo severed the vessel in two. With both parts still afloat U-211 left the area.



Photo shows where Williamsburg is recorded to have sunk.

An extensive air & sea search was conducted which failed to locate any survivors, wreckage or debris. To this day military historians continue to search and uncover records as they try to determine why nothing was found when searchers arrived at the location. A weak distress signal was received by a shore station but it is unclear as to the actual wording of the message. Chief Officer Atlantic Coast Halifax received a life boat transmission. Three convoys were in the North Atlantic area at the time, yet were unable to locate the lifeboat or the *Williamsburg*. The full story of the *ESSO Williamsburg* will hopefully one day be told as Norma Andreasen, daughter of Chief Mate Hans D. Andreasen has been researching her father's death for many years now. Hopefully she will complete her work and a book will be written.

A special thank you must go to Leo Bouchie for all his efforts in acquiring much of the information written here. We are also grateful to the US National Archives Records & Administration, Veteran Affairs Canada, US Merchant Marines Website & U-Boat.net.

Don Pottie

Births

Burke: Ena Margaret, 8lbs 5oz, born Oct 2nd to Ramona & Kelvin of Ottawa. A sister for Aiden. Congratulations to the parents and grandparents Roderick & Margaret Burke and Helen Owens

Weddings

Landry/Richards: Congratulations to Lawson Harold, son of Harold & Georgie Landry and Jennifer Joanne, daughter of Mary Fougere & the late John Richards and step daughter of Gerry Fougere who were wed on Oct. 11th at St. John the Baptist Church. Lawson & Jennifer reside in Halifax.

McNamara/Smeenck: Congratulations also to Marjorie, daughter of Theresa & Ben Smeenck and David, son of George & the late Yvonne McNamara. Their wedding took place on Oct. 25th at St. John the Baptist Church. Marjorie & David reside in Antigonish.

Bits& Bites:

- Congratulations to **Gilbert Boucher** who won as councilor in District 7. Congratulations also to Sharon Chilvers & George J Landry who also worked very hard and made it a close race.
- Congratulations to **Anne Landry**, daughter **Janice Pelly** and cousin **Kara-Leigh Burke** who raised \$1065. for the Cancer Walk/Run for the Cure that was held at the Halifax Commons on Oct. 4th. They wish to thank you for your contributions.
- **Club 200 Cenotaph Restoration** tickets are now on sale for \$30.00 each and are eligible for all six draws. Locals will be contacted between now and the first draw date of Nov. 14th. Draws continue until December 19. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and if anyone has not been contacted and would like to purchase tickets, please call Donnie Pottie 535-2740.
- **45 Card game** Seniors Bldg. Sunday 7:30 pm.
- **Cribbage** Seniors Bldg Mondays at 7pm.
- **Bingo every Friday night - 7:45 at TLC** with early bird games. Fourteen \$100. games with specials & rising jackpot (\$1000) to go.
- On Sunday, Nov. 2nd at 11 am a spaghetti dinner will be hosted by the **Friends of Doris Brown** at the St. Peters Lions hall. Doris recently underwent surgery and is presently undergoing cancer treatment. Please come out and lend your support. Free-will offering would be appreciated.
- **CWL Merchandize Bingo** at 2 pm Nov. 2nd. Funds received from these bingos are used for community projects such as funeral receptions, Christmas boxes for the needy, our special anniversary dinner, religion classes, etc. Please support this fundraiser.
- October is Pro-Life month so the CWL and **Lucille Boudreau** (535-2756) are asking for your pennies.
- St John the Baptist CWL is gearing up for **Operation Christmas Child**. Shoe boxes are filled with basic gifts (the list is in the boxes) and sent to children regardless of race or religion in countries suffering from war, famine or other disaster. Any community members willing to take part call Leona at 535-2927. Boxes must be ready to go by Nov. 9th.
- **Seniors meeting** Nov. 4th at 1:30pm.
- Friends and family of **Chad Landry** who has Idiopathic Aplastic Anemia and may soon need a transplant are hosting a fundraiser at the Bras d'Or Inn on Nov. 8th. An auction will take place from 2-5 pm. In the evening local musicians will entertain from 9-1. Anyone willing to donate items for the auction please call Margaret or Kathleen Bourque @ 535-3178, Vera Landry/ Bourque @535-3259 or Therese Pottie @ 535-2740. Monetary donations will be accepted prior to and at both functions.
- **Senior's mini Bingo** @ 1:30 on Nov. 12th.
- **CAP site meeting** on Nov 12th at 7 pm.
- **CWL meeting** Nov. 15th at 7pm.
- **A celebration for Special Anniversary Couples** will be held on Nov. 23rd beginning with mass at 10 a.m. followed by dinner at the TLC. Anyone in the community celebrating a 25th, 40th, 50th or 55+ (or if you know of anyone) celebrating these milestones please call Mary @2699, Ann @2942 or Deirdre @2927.
- **RBCSS meeting** Nov. 26th at 7 pm.
- Congratulations to **Linda & Danny Cote** on their fortieth wedding anniversary on Oct. 5th; **Joe & Anne Sampson** who celebrated their 49th on Oct. 6th and **Victor & Evelyn Burke** who celebrated their 68th on Sept. 11th.
- Happy 50th birthday to Gloria LeBlanc.
- **CAP site public fall hours are from 2-4 and 6-8 pm Monday to Thursday and 2-4pm on Fridays.** We have wireless & high speed internet services plus a scanner, fax & photocopier. We also have a great selection of used books. Saturdays you can call Sharon @ 535-3516 or Sherry @ 535-3182 for appointment. CAP phone # is 535-3251. FAX number is 535-3638. Festival mugs & hats have been reduced in price. Email address is rbcap@stpeterscable.com. Visit our website at www.stpeterscable.com/~rbcap.
- **Anyone wishing to book the TLC** should call Mike Fougere at 535-3308. People requiring use of the Funeral Home - call Marie & Conrad Fougere at 535-2621. Call Georgie or Harold Landry at 535-2939 to open the church for any special functions i.e. weddings, baptisms etc.
- The Round Up is available at Bucky's Garage, RB Post Office or East Coast Credit Union. Subscriptions are available for \$20.00 delivered in RB, \$30.00 within Canada and \$40.00 internationally per year.

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