

MERCHANT NAVY COMMEMORATIVE THEME PROJECT (MNCTP)

NEWS RELEASE

TODAY WE REMEMBER THE SINKING OF
THE HMHS LLANDOVERY CASTLE

JUNE 27, 2022

OTTAWA, YESTERDAY – Mr. Stéphane Ouellette, President and Chief Executive Officer, Merchant Navy Commemorative Theme Project (MNCTP), was joined by Major-Général Marc Bilodeau, CD, QHP, MD, Surgeon General, Canadian Armed Forces, members of the Royal Canadian Medical Service Association (RCMSA), and the Canadian Opera Team in remembering the tragic sinking of *His Majesty's Hospital Ship (HMHS) Llandoverly Castle*.

On June 27, 1918, the *HMHS Llandoverly Castle*, under the command of Lt.-Col. Thomas Howard MacDonald (a native from Nova Scotia), was torpedoed by German submarine [SM U-86](#), off southern Ireland (en route from Halifax, Nova Scotia to Liverpool, England). Out of the 258 souls on board, 234 lives were tragically lost by drowning and subsequent machine-gunning of lifeboats.

The hospital ship consisted of a crew of 168 men and 94 Canadian Army Medical Corps (CAMC) personnel, including Medical Officers, Nursing Sisters, a Pharmacy Dispenser, a Ward Master, Medical Orderly NCOs, dozens of Medical Orderlies, and a hospital Chaplain. Only one lifeboat survived the attack. It was picked up by the destroyer *HMS Lysander* on the morning of June 29, 36 hours after the attack. Twenty-four people survived the attack on lifeboats, including six members of the Canadian Army Medical Corps. This tragic sinking was the deadliest Canadian naval disaster of the Great War, and became internationally infamous as one of the greatest atrocities of the First World War.

On June 26, 2018, *The Llandoverly Castle: A New Canadian Opera*, premiered at the [Calvin Presbyterian Church](#) (located in Toronto, Ontario, Canada). Another performance followed on June 27th. This 'New Canadian Production' was created by composer Stephanie Martin and librettist Paul Ciufo as an act of remembrance for this special centennial commemorative date. On April 6, 2020, *The Llandoverly Castle: Opera Laurier's First Full Performance* was streamed on "YouTube Premieres."



(From left): LCol (Ret'd) David Borthwick, CD, Secretary, RCMSA; Stéphane Ouellette, President & CEO, MNCTP; Major-Général Marc Bilodeau, CD, QHP, MD, Surgeon General, and CWO/Adjuc Martin Bédard, MMM, MSC/CSM, CD, CF Health Services Group, Canadian Armed Forces; CWO (Ret'd) Maurice Beauchamp, MMM, CD, President, RCMSA; and, Robert Loken, National Manager, Honours, Awards & Commemoration, Veterans Affairs Canada

[Please Click Here to Watch on YouTube](#)

The *Llandoverly Castle* is part of a 'Canadian driven' worldwide recognition initiative dedicated to honouring our Allied Merchant Navy and American Merchant Marine Veterans as the mainstay of the Allied Forces victories in both World Wars. It also highlights their contributions to the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. Likewise, we pay tribute and promote the modern day shipping industry as paramount to international security, defence, and to the global economy.

Quotes

"This anniversary is a unique opportunity to remember those who lost their lives in the atrocities of First World War, including health services personnel. It is also a good reminder of the danger our fellow-members of the Royal Canadian Medical Service have faced in the past and are facing today, risking their lives to support the Canadian Armed Forces mission, both in the past and current operations."

– Major-Général Marc Bilodeau, CD, QHP, MD, Surgeon General, Canadian Armed Forces

"In following our mission to preserve the Royal Canadian Medical Service heritage and to increase public awareness of the contributions made by the men and women of Canada's military medical services, on this date of June 26, 2022, we commemorate the 104th anniversary of the torpedo sinking of HMHS Llandoverly Castle (a Canadian Hospital Ship) that took place on June 27, 1918. With the passing of historical information and remembrance of events like this, it will assist and ensure that they are never forgotten. We honour and remember those members of the Canadian Army Medical Corps and all others who lost their lives. May they "Rest In Peace."

– Chief Warrant Officer (Ret'd) Maurice Beauchamp, MMM, CD, President, Royal Canadian Medical Service Association

Associated Links

- [New book on war nurses relevant now more than ever | the Reporter | April 22, 2020](#)
- [Opera telling story of HMHS Llandoverly Castle premieres in Waterloo | CBC: Kitchener-Waterloo | February 28, 2020](#)
- [New opera tells little-known story of Canadian nurses killed in WWI boat sinking| CBC-Radio Sunday | June 15, 2018](#)
- [The Sinking of HMHS Llandoverly Castle 27 June 1918 – 100th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremonies held in Ottawa and Halifax, June 2018 | Royal Canadian Medical Service Association \(RCMSA\)](#)
- [Opera to focus on Great War nurses 100 years after hospital ship sinking| National Post | November 8, 2017](#)
- [Matron Margaret Marjory Fraser | Valour Canada](#)
- www.llandoverlycastle.ca

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