

From: [john appler](#)
To: [Council](#)
Subject: Robert Hampton Gray Day
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Dear Mayor and Council, My name is John Appler, a proud RCN veteran and member of the Vancouver Navy Veterans Association. I am sending this note to request that you consider proclaiming August 9th. as Robert Hampton Gray Day. Whom may you ask is Robert Hampton Gray??

Robert Hampton Gray was born in Trail, B.C. and raised in Nelson. He joined the Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve in 1940 as a officer cadet trainee and was sent to England where he discovered it was quicker to take flight training to become an officer. When he completed flight school he was assigned the the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm and posted to Nairobi, Kenya in 1942. In 1944 after training to fly Corsairs he was posted to HMS Formidable where he saw action attempting to sink the Admiral Tirpitz, a German battleship hiding in fjords in Norway. He was mentioned in dispatches twice during this time frame. In 1945 HMS Formidable was sent to the Pacific where Gray took part in the battle of Okinawa and various raids on the Japanese homeland. In late July of 1945 he was nominated for the Distinguished Service Cross for assisting in sinking a Japanese destroyer near Tokyo. On August 9th. he led a flight of 8 Corsairs that attacked 5 Japanese warships in Onagawa Wan (Bay) where he led an attack at very low levels due to enemy anti aircraft fire from the vessels and shore batteries. He dove low and dropped his remaining bomb, which scored a direct hit causing the Amakusa, a destroyer escort to flounder and sink within minutes. Unfortunately he was last observed skimming over the water with flames and smoke coming out of his aircraft. His aircraft exploded as he hit the sea and his body was never recovered.

As a result of his actions he was awarded the Victoria Cross, the last Canadian and only RCN serviceman in World War Two to achieve this honour. The people of Japan erected a memorial to his courage on the shore of Onagawa Wan, the only such monument for an enemy warrior in the Japanese homeland. In August, unofficially the 9th., HMCS Robert Hampton Gray, last of the Harry Dewolf Class Arctic Offshore Patrol Ships, will be commissioned in Halifax. The ship's motto is to me the best description of the man. "FORTITUDO, SOLLERTIA CONSTANTIQUE" translates to "COURAGE, SKILL, DETERMINATION".

I humbly request that August 9th. 2025 be proclaimed Robert Hampton Gray Day in Esquimalt in recognition of the long history between the community and the RCN and the courage of Lt. Gray on this the 80th. anniversary of his actions and death that led to the awarding of the Victoria Cross.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

John Appler
Vancouver Navy Veterans Association
