

HMCS Barrie K138 – Second World War Submarine Hunter !

At our Barrie City Hall, within the foyer is the Rotunda, off to the side is a large glassed encased 8' scale representation model of this very ship dedicated to the City in 1940. HMCS Barrie was a "Flower-class" corvette. The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) decided to assign the names of Canadian towns and cities to the ships instead following the Royal Navy's use of the names of flowers for the ships of the class.



Model of HMCS BARRIE in the Rotunda - built by Mr. D. Houghton, RCN

Corvettes commissioned in Canada during the Second World War were named after communities, for the most part, to better represent the people who took part in building or sponsoring them. Similar ships were built, named for a town/city and launched in Halifax, NS, Quebec, North Vancouver and Esquimalt, BC; as well in Ontario.

The corvettes were favored by our Navy for their speed and tenacity as minesweepers, sub-hunters and merchant escorts. Shipyards across Canada began building these British-designed all-purpose auxiliary vessels often with 3-4 being built simultaneously. Many hundreds of men and women were employed to construct and out-fit the ships so that crews could work efficiently during war-time in the North Atlantic. HMCS Barrie was the third ship of 19 Flower Class Corvettes built in the shipyards at

Collingwood, Ontario. She was launched on December 19, 1940 and commissioned on May 12, 1941 given the pennant number K138.

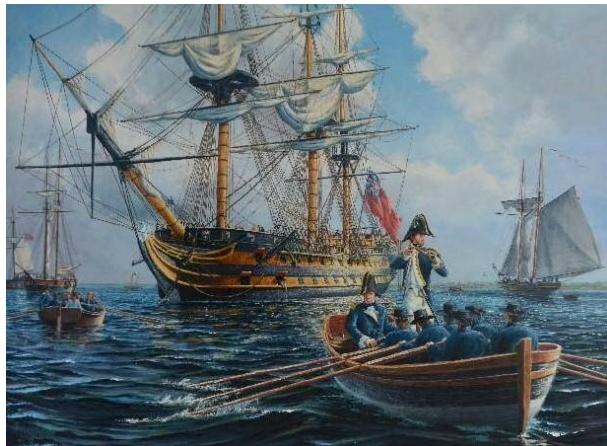


HMCS BARRIE K138
Courtesy of "For Posterity's Sake"

War bond campaigns personalized the importance of supporting the war effort: "*Buy War Bonds and help build a Corvette*" were often displayed and actively shown in many towns. The townspeople of Barrie were asked to supply many items for HMCS Barrie. In particular they gave the crew four sets each of woolen articles, the money for the yarn totaled more than \$1,000 (1942) dollars having been voted by the Town Council. The knitting was done by the women of the town. Additionally, funds were raised for a much needed clothes washing machine. This was a welcomed item for an all-man crew often working shifts or non-stop when actively engaged corralling submarines they were hunting.

A headline from the Barrie Examiner January 9, 1941 read : "*Corvettes are now effective against Subs" Corvettes like the H.M.C.S. "Barrie" Supply Answer to Sub Menace*

Some familiar names you will recognize if your family was raised or worked among the many hundreds of men and women who contributed to the War effort from 1940-1944. Some regional names that may be familiar are: HMCS Collingwood, HMCS Orillia, and HMCS Owen Sound. HMCS Barrie performed escort duties and it was noted in the Barrie Examiner dated Oct. 12, 1944 that it had also plucked 14 survivors of a torpedoed merchant ship "Livingston" having been sunk by a submarine southeast of Bourgeois NS. Crew survivors had drifted for over 8 hours! Much earlier in 1942 HMCS Barrie was also involved in another rescue saving 38 British sailors after their ship "Empire Fusiller" had been torpedoed by a German U-boat on Feb. 16, of that year southeast of St. John's NFLD.



(left) HMS Dragon – Captain Robert Barrie, RCN



(right) HMCS Barrie K138

Within the Mayor's outer office are two distinguished oil on canvas paintings by local artist Peter Rindlisbacher. Both had been commissioned through private donations to the Sir Robert Barrie Committee. HMS Dragon is vividly illustrated showing Commander-Captain Robert Barrie surveying the area off Tangier Island in Chesapeake Bay (USA). The second painting shows HMCS Barrie K138 as convoy escort in the North Atlantic.

The building of the Corvettes during the war was incredibly important to escorting convoys and submarine hunting. Canada Post had decided to issue a series of postage stamps entitled: King George VI War Issue 1942-1943. There are seven stamps that were produced recognizing the significance of several key military armaments. Of particular interest to me as a collector of Canadian postage stamps was the *“Launching of a Corvette”*. It symbolizes that the Corvette was a remarkable ship during that time. It is identified (for collectors) as the Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue #260.



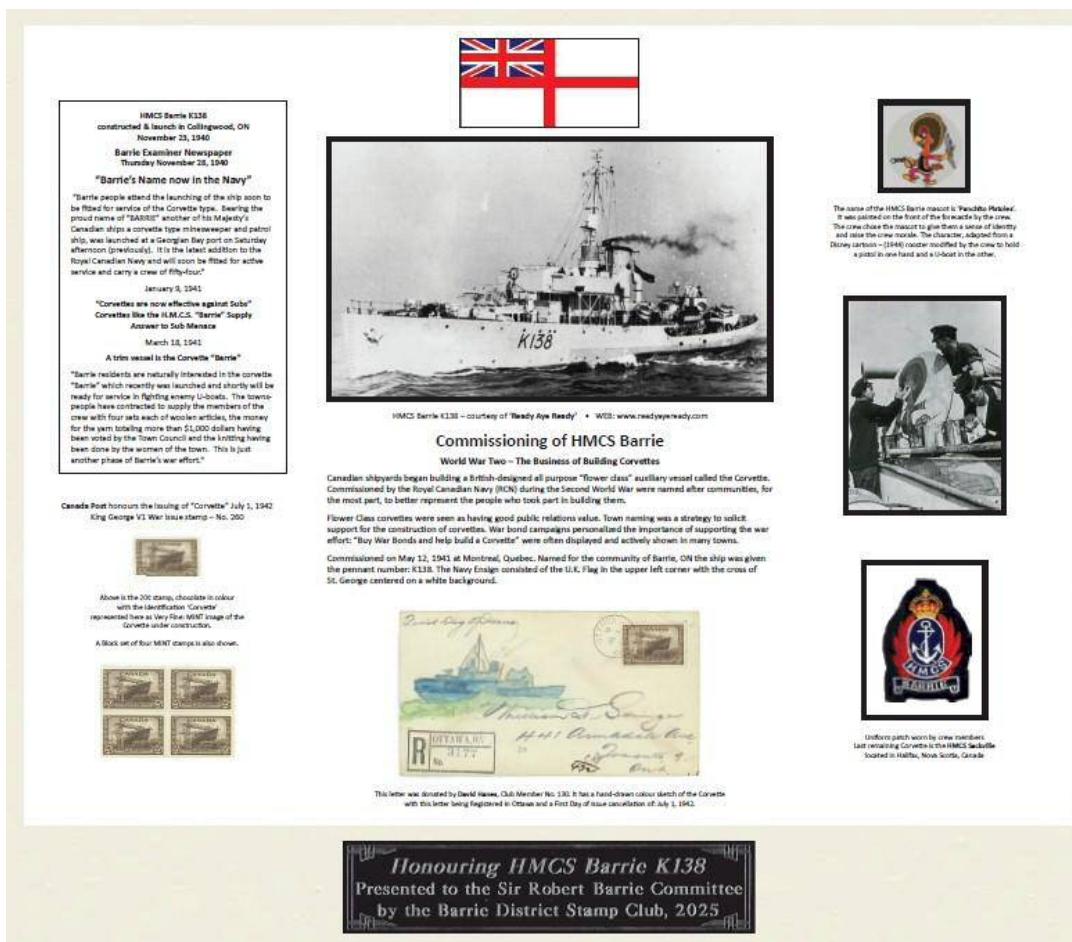
As philatelic collectors, our Barrie District Stamp Club discussed a small project in the form of a complementary picture frame to be gifted to the Sir Robert Barrie Committee – curators of Sir Robert Barrie memorabilia. A project was developed to honor this ship, the Corvette stamp and people of Barrie who contributed to its tour during 1941-1945. The resemblance to HMCS Barrie model at City Hall was a nice coincidence.

Dave Hanes CD, member offered his rare collectible envelope: an artistic representation of a “Corvette” ship specifically registered and cancelled in Ottawa, Ontario with the First Day of Issue – July 1, 1942.



FDI envelope – Courtesy of Dave Hanes CD

These items were arranged as a collage with a brief descriptive history surrounding HMCS Barrie K138. The completed framed collage was presented to the Sir Robert Barrie Committee, Deputy Mayor R. Thomson - Councilor and Barrie Council on November 19th, 2025. The occasion was the annual 'Awards and Recognition' to citizens and groups in Barrie. This framed collage will be displayed within the Mayor's reception area next to paintings of HMCS Barrie and HMS Dragon.



There were several people involved in assisting me with research, gathering pictures and meetings with members of the Sir Robert Barrie Committee. I visited the Collingwood Museum and Library being assisted by: Melissa Shaw, Museum Supervisor; assistant Joshua Skelton and at the Library by: Suzanne McLean – Local History Librarian.

Additional support was offered by Deb Exel-Barrie Archives and the Heritage Barrie Committee. I also wish to thank the Barrie District Stamp Club Chapter 73 of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada (RPSC) for their continued fulfillment of this project.



Barrie Awards and Recognition - 19-11-25 Sir Robert Barrie - Club and Heritage-group

L-R: Bill Sergeant, Ted Kupka, Rob Clarke, Jean Maurice Pigeon, Willy Schlatter, Rob Thompson Deputy Mayor/Councillor, Diane Chislett, Dave Hanes CD, Clare Rempa, Anne-Marie Kungl

Visit Barrie City Hall Rotunda area and request to view the framed collage and impressive canvas paintings!

HMCS SACKVILLE K181 - The Last Canadian Corvette - a floating museum berthed in Halifax, NS:
www.cnmt.ca (Canadian Naval Memorial Trust)

For Inquiries to learn more on collecting historic Canadian stamps and many more, see our Web Portal:
www.barriedistrictstampclub.ca

Credits: Robert Clarke; Barrie District Stamp Club Chapter 73 RPSC; Heritage Barrie; Sir Robert Barrie Committee