

MUSEUM MUSINGS FOR MAY 2010

This is a wonderful time of year with the early spring flowers full bloom and the promise of much more blooming and blossoming to come.

This spring marks another important military milestone in our nation's history and that is the one hundredth anniversary of the creation of the Royal Canadian Navy. No ships were ever named after Texada but the island did contribute at least two men to that service during the Second World War. One of them was Petty Officer Frank Russ who died, together with 145 of his shipmates, when HMCS St Croix was torpedoed and sunk in the North Atlantic in September 1943. Frank had already survived one torpedoing, that of HMCS Saguenay, in September 1940. Frank was the son of Ed Russ a well known islander who came to the island in 1895 and was associated with many mining operations over the years. He was a prospector who never gave up on the dream of striking it rich. One storey is that he once discovered the "mother lode" in the mountains north of Powell River. Ed made another dozen trips or so looking for that "lost" mine but never found it again or so the storey goes. He is still remembered as living his later years in a small shake cottage just about where the recycling depot now is in Gillies Bay. Our picture today is of Ed standing with his son Frank in front of his shake covered cottage in Gillies Bay. Two of his good friends were Bill Stromberg and Lorne McLeod who were neighbours of his.

Violet Seaman, in the Powell River News of September 1946 writes of how Ed and his partner Charlie Rabson won \$25.00 in the hand drilling contest on New Year's day 1900 having driven the steel or drill 23 1/8 inches in 15 minutes. In this type of drilling one man holds the steel while the other swings the hammer! A great combination of skill and trust!

Till next time please take care of each other and remember to think and act green.

Norm MacLean

