

## GEDDES, Frederick Elmo

Service Number N/21476

Rank Petty Officer Stoker  
Royal Canadian Navy, HMCS Guysborough

Born June 10, 1917, Vancouver, British Columbia  
Died March 18, 1945, HMCS Guysborough

Occupation Labourer  
Marital Status Married to Patricia; two children

Frederick Geddes never knew his father. Elmo Raymond Geddes had enlisted in Phoenix, BC in 1916, before he was born and is listed on this ghost town's cenotaph. Elmo was seriously wounded in the face and both legs, and had his right leg amputated. He never recovered and was invalided back to Alberta where he died in 1920, when Frederick had just turned three years old.

Frederick's mother remarried. As a young man, Frederick moved to Errington where he worked as a labourer.

Beginning in 1938, he served on eight successive vessels as a stoker, which meant that he laboured in the engine room, the heart of the vessel. He started as a Stoker 2c and was awarded promotions until he was drafted to HMCS Guysborough, a fleet minesweeper in February 1945. Following a refit, the vessel was sailing from Lunenburg, Nova Scotia headed for Plymouth, England.

On March 18, 1945, HMCS Guysborough was sailing alone in the Bay of Biscay near France when it was struck by a Gnat warhead from a German U-boat. It didn't sink immediately. An hour later, the U-boat fired a torpedo that caused the minesweeper to sink quickly. Two crew members died and the rest abandoned ship and sent a distress signal. Several vessels were dispatched but by the time they arrived many men had died of injuries or exposure, among them Frederick Elmo Geddes.

Frederick Elmo Geddes is commemorated at the Halifax Memorial.

Sources: Photo: Dave Clarke  
For Posterity's Sake – A Royal Canadian Naval Historical Project  
Personnel Records of the First World War, Library and Archives Canada  
Books of Remembrance, Veterans Affairs Canada  
Uboat.net / allies

