

Margaret Martha Brooke , M.B.E., B.H.Sc., C.D., Ph.D., Lt. Cdr., R.C.N. (ret'd)

Born: April 10, 1915, Ardath, Saskatchewan

Died: January 9, 2016, Victoria, BC

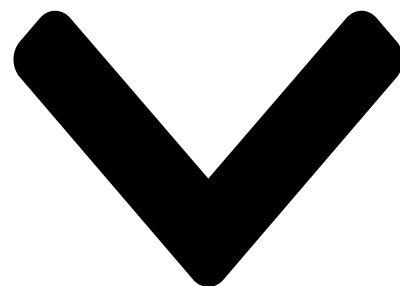
Predeceased by her brother Hewitt Brooke (1973) and sister-in-law Marian Brooke (2010). Fondly remembered by nieces, nephews, great nieces, great nephews, and one great, great nephew of Vancouver, BC and Edmonton, AB.

Aunt Margaret grew up in the small farming community of Ardath, Saskatchewan during the Depression and the “dust bowl” era which endowed her with uncommon strength and discipline. Luckily, Aunt Margaret was the daughter of Maude Brooke who was determined that her daughter would attend university. At the age of 18, in 1933, she moved to Saskatoon with her brother Hewitt to attend the University of Saskatchewan where she earned her B.H.Sc. after which she moved to Ottawa to complete her Dietetic Internship at the Ottawa Civic Hospital and earn her C.D.

In March 1942, Aunt Margaret joined the Royal Canadian Navy in HMCS Unicorn, Saskatoon, SK. She served as a Nursing Sister in RCN hospitals in HMCS Avalon, St. John's NL; HMCS St. Hyacinth, St. Hyacinth, QC; HMCS Naden, Esquimalt, BC; and HMCS Stadacona, Halifax, NS.

While serving at HMCS Avalon in St. John's, NL, Aunt Margaret was returning from leave when her ferry, the “Caribou”, was torpedoed in the middle of the night while sailing the Cabot Strait on October 14, 1942. She spent a harrowing night in the

water clinging to the keel of an upturned lifeboat while desperately trying to save the life of her friend Agnes Wilkie. For her determined and selfless efforts, she was awarded an MBE (military) in January 1943 for bravery. The highest honour a woman could receive in that time period.



Aunt Margaret retired from the RCN in September 1962 and returned to Saskatoon to assist her aging parents. During this time, to broaden her horizons, she returned to the University of Saskatchewan where she earned a B.A. and then a Ph.D. majoring in biostratigraphy and micro-palaeontology. She remained in the Department of Geological Sciences instructing and as a Research Associate until June 1986, when she retired from her fulfilling career as a palaeontologist.

While serving in Esquimalt, BC, Aunt Margaret decided she really belonged on the West Coast and vowed to make Victoria her home. So, upon her retirement, she moved west to fulfil her long-cherished desire. Upon her move to Victoria, she eagerly embraced all it had to offer. Her lovely townhome in Rockland with its private garden, the Newcomers Club, courses at U.Vic., volunteering at Craigdarroch Castle and the Lieutenant Governor's House, frequent visits to local antique shops to buy treasures for her new home, long long walks everywhere, and visits with her nieces, nephews and a multitude of new and old friends kept her life full and invigorating.

On her 100th birthday, Aunt Margaret received a phone call from the Minister of National Defence whereupon she was informed that one of six new Arctic Patrol Ships was to be named the HMCS Margaret Brooke in recognition of her heroism during the

sinking of the "Caribou". Also, Commodore Robert Auchterlonie from HMCS Naden made a personal visit to congratulate her on this announcement. This was the first time a RCN vessel was named after a woman and only the second time, one had been named after a person. As she had always been proud of her years of service in the RCN, receiving this recognition was especially gratifying.

Aunt Margaret was a remarkable woman who lived a remarkable and accomplished life. We will miss her.

A Celebration of Life honouring Dr. Margaret M. Brooke will be held at McCall's Downtown, Johnson & Vancouver Streets, on Sunday, April 10, 2016 from 3-5 P.M. A time to share memories will begin at 3:30 P.M.

In lieu of flowers, donations to a favourite charity would be appreciated.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall's Funeral Home

www.mccallbros.com