

VANCOUVER MARITIME MUSEUM NEWS RELEASE

- March 22, 2004

It is with great sadness that the Vancouver Maritime Museum learned of the passing of Bill Cashin. I first got to know Bill through the events surrounding the St Roch II Voyage of Rediscovery in 1999-2000, when we reenacted portions of the ship's epic voyages of 1940-1942 and 1944. Bill, as one of the original crew from the 1944 voyage, was an active participant in many of the ceremonies, but more importantly, as one of those who joined us on the 2000 voyage. I specifically recall landing at Cambridge Bay in the summer of 2000 with Bill, and an Inuit elder approaching him to ask if he was the same "Billy" that the elder had known more than fifty years ago. He recognized Bill after all that time, a fact that delighted Bill to no end, and they went off to reminisce. There were a few others who remembered Bill, and that time in Cambridge Bay, it seemed to me, was an important reminder to Bill, as well as all of us there, that the legacy of great events like the St Roch voyages, are best measured in the memories of those individuals who participated in making that history.

With Bill's passing, we lose some of those memories. But for those of us who had the opportunity and the privilege to spend time with him, and to share, he leaves a legacy, a legacy that we here at the Maritime Museum will share with those who come to see St Roch and learn about the ship and its voyages through the stories of those who sailed and made history aboard it. In this fashion, some of Bill Cashin will live on, enshrined with St Roch for future generations.

James P. Delgado, FRGS, RPA

Executive Director

postscript

In Bill's time with the RCMP and aboard St Roch, he entered the domain of Neptune to become a mariner, one of his many experiences in life. It is one of the traditions at the service for a mariner to read a poem by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, about the final "crossing of the bar," a sailor's term for the time when a ship leaves port and crosses over the sandbar that marks a river's mouth. We offer Tennyson's poem now, and feel it particularly fitting for this particular mariner, Bill Cashin, in that Tennyson also penned a poetic epitaph for another Arctic mariner and explorer, Captain Sir John Franklin, a "heroic sailor soul."

This is for Bill Cashin, mariner, explorer, son of the North, father and friend:

Crossing the Bar by Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,
But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound or foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.
Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell;
When I embark;
For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.