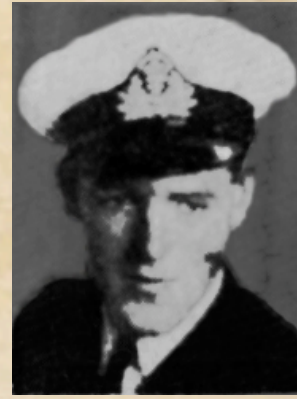


HMCS ALBERNI IAN HUNTER BELL

18 JUNE 1918 - 13 DECEMBER 2001



Ian Hunter Bell was born in Vancouver on June 18, 1918. An entrepreneur by the age of eleven, Ian spent his first 27 years on or by the sea. His early years were spent catching and selling smelts, crabs and salmon in English Bay, swimming with the whales off Gossip Island every summer and working as a bridge messenger on the Empress of Japan travelling the Pacific Ocean at the age of 16. Wanting to keep one foot near

or on the ocean, he joined the naval reserve in his late teens while he started as an Articled Clerk in his father's accounting firm, Robert Bell & Co. in 1937. In high school, as a Navy Cadet on HMCS Discovery, he was introduced to serving Canada as a Naval Commander in WWII. Ian's sea experience and take charge attitude led him to become the Commanding Officer of HMCS Alberni, making him the youngest CO in the Royal Canadian Navy in 1942 at the age of 23. By January 1944 he was appointed Acting Lieutenant Commander.

When HMCS Alberni was torpedoed, Lt Bell leaped out of his cabin at the explosion, planning to dash to the bridge. He was washed over the side as the ship foundered rapidly by the stern, with no time for orders or damage control. There was not even time to release Carley floats, and men, many without time to put on life belts as the ship foundered had to cling to odd pieces of debris. Carried below the surface by the sinking ship, Bell was saved by an air burst from a water tight compartment that exploded as the ship sank, thus carrying him and several others to the surface. Frank Williams, a crewman, grabbed at his clothing and helped support the injured Bell for 45 minutes until they could be rescued.



Bell returned to civilian life after the war returning to his father's firm. He became a CA then later an FCA. He served as Chairman of the Board of Governors of Touche Ross International until his retirement in 1979.

