

# International Ice Patrol honours Titanic victims

By DAVENE JEFFREY Staff Reporter  
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Canadian Forces chaplain Leonard Bednar blesses wreaths for members of the United States Coast Guard International Ice Patrol at the Titanic gravesite at the Fairview Lawn Cemetery on Thursday. (Ted Pritchard / Staff)

Victims of one of the world's worst shipping disasters were remembered Thursday by an organization tasked with preventing a similar tragedy.

The International Ice Patrol held a supertime memorial service at Fairview Lawn Cemetery to honour those lost when the Titanic went down 98 years ago.

"Out of such a tremendous calamity there came some good," said Scott Rogerson, commander of the International Ice Patrol, during the early evening ceremony.

With many international partners, the patrol has been on the lookout for icebergs in the transatlantic shipping lanes ever since.

"For ships that have heeded our warnings of all known ice, there have been no collisions," Rogerson said during an interview following the service.

Thursday marked the 98th anniversary of the shipping tragedy that saw 1,500 people lose their lives in the frigid Atlantic, 1,300 kilometres east of Halifax.

The White Star Line ship, believed to be unsinkable, was on its maiden voyage. Of the 2,200 people on board, only 700 survived. More than 200 bodies retrieved from the sea were brought back to Halifax and 150 were buried in or around Halifax. Most of them, 121, lay in Fairview Lawn Cemetery.

The last known survivor Millvina Dean died last May in Southampton, England. She was just eight months old when Titanic sank.

"The onus is on us to never forget the tragic event," Rogerson said.

The patrol will drop three wreaths into the Atlantic today from a U.S. Coast Guard plane in memory of the Titanic victims.

A 16-member unit of the U.S. Coast Guard, the patrol deploys a team to Newfoundland every two weeks during iceberg season, which runs January to August. It issues a daily report for mariners in the Grand Banks area.

The patrol works closely with the Canadian Coast Guard and the Canadian Ice Service, which is operated by Environment Canada, Rogerson said.

More than two dozen people attended the memorial including three members of the First Armdale Boy Scout Troop and their leader Peter Koskolos.

"Scouting is a worldwide organization and it's good for us to get out and participate in events like this," Koskolos said. "It's also a way to show the boys a bit about our history."

The patrol will be back at the Fairview cemetery in 2012 to participate in the 100th anniversary of the Titanic's demise.

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