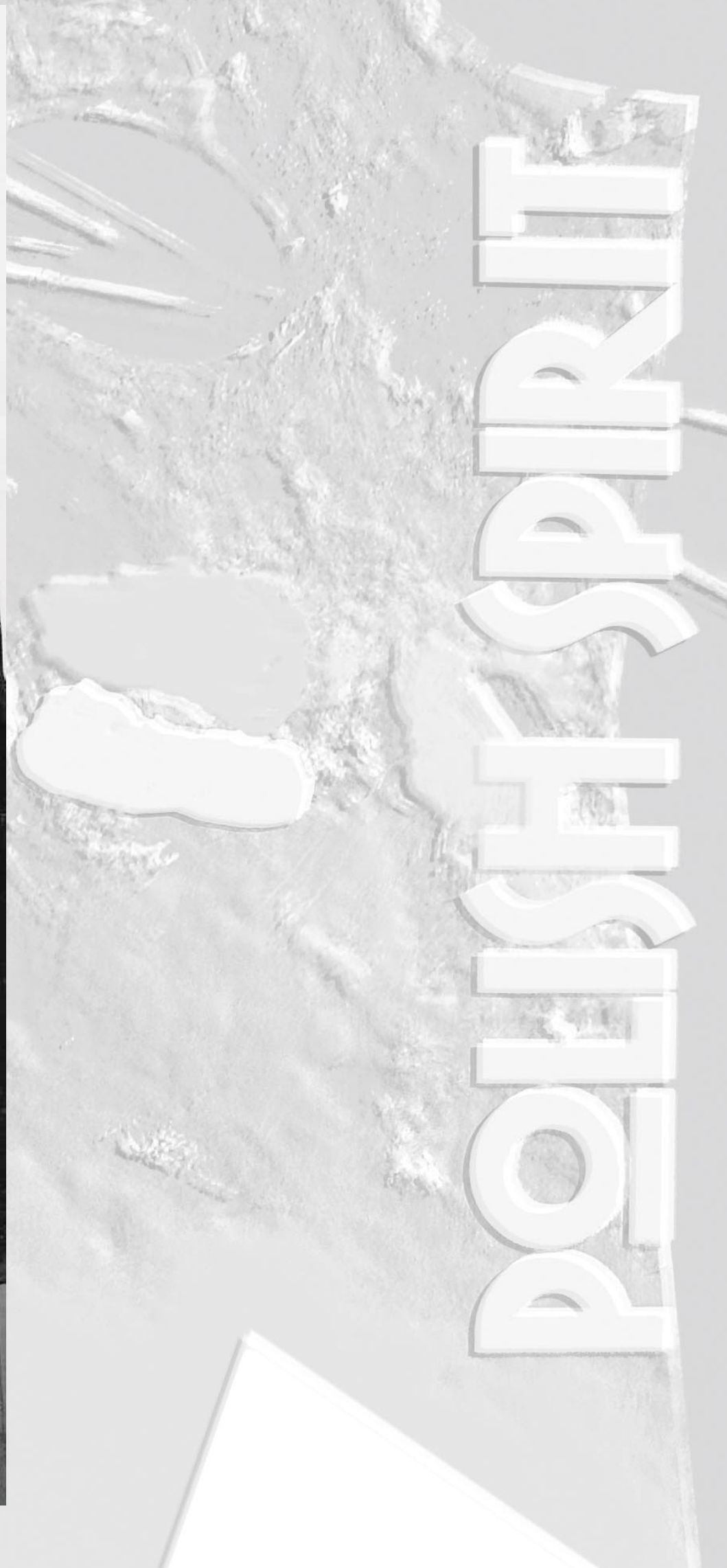


Admiral Romuald Nalecz-Tyminski (1905-2003)

Rear Admiral



He didn't want to be a hero, but he certainly was in Dieppe.

Joe Ryan, veteran of the Royal Regiment of Canada

Canadians in World War Two, Romuald Nalecz-Tyminski of the Polish Navy was hailed a hero both in Canada and in his native country.

Born in Szenderow, Poland, Nalecz-Tyminski graduated from the Polish Navy Academy in Torun in 1928. For the next decade, he served on some Navy ships and worked in the Navy's training structures, at the same time pursuing the career of an avid athlete, involved in boxing, pentathlon, yachting and fencing. Winning the championship of the Polish Armed Forces in fencing in 1938, he prepared to compete in the 1940 Olympics, which were cancelled because of the war. Its outbreak caught him on board the Navy's training sailing ship Iskra on way to Casablanca. He managed to make his way to Britain and, named second in command of the Polish destroyer Blyskawica, took part in the 1940 Norwegian campaign.

On August 19, 1942, after the failed Allied attack on the French port Dieppe, Nalecz-Tyminski, defying British orders to stay back, commanded his destroyer Slazak straight at the beach, firing with all its guns before turning abruptly to scoop at least eighty-five of the stranded Canadian soldiers. For his gallantry and ship-handling skills, Nalecz-Tyminski was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. He then commanded the Slazak through further war operations, including Sicily, Salerno and the D-day landing in Normandy. In 1945, he was put in command of the light cruiser Conrad, Polish Navy's largest ship.

After the war, unwilling to return to the Soviet-dominated Poland, Nalecz-Tyminski served as captain in the Pakistani Navy 1951-58, and then for twenty years held the position of Port Director and President of the Freeport Harbour Co. on Grand Bahama Island. Moving to Canada in 1980, he helped form the Canadian Branch of the Polish Naval Association, and was an active and venerated member of the Royal Regiment of Canada's Veterans' Association.

In May 2000, Nalecz-Tyminski visited Poland where, in recognition of his war services, he was named Honorary Rear Admiral by Poland's President. Among his distinctions are the Silver Cross of Polonia Restituta order, three Crosses of Valour, and the Sea Cross.

Photos from top left clockwise:

• Admiral Romuald Nalecz-Tyminski • Free time on the board of destroyer ORP *Slazak* • British pilots rescued by ORP *Slazak* crew – in the British Navy and RAF, she had the nickname *Shepherd* • Admiral as a celebrity during veterans gathering • ORP *Slazak*

All photos – private archives

