



News Release

For Immediate Release

22 October 2019

Unmarked Graves to Receive Headstone at Ross Bay Cemetery

About the Dedication

On October 25, 1918, the SS *Princess Sophia*, a CPR steamship, went down with an estimated 367 passengers and crew on board. It was the worst loss of life in a shipwreck in the Pacific Northwest. Twenty-one of those who perished are buried at Ross Bay Cemetery and there are memorial stones for two others. For the 101st anniversary of the loss of the SS *Princess Sophia*, the Maritime Museum of BC will dedicate a gravestone in Ross Bay Cemetery for three members of the Smith family who were returning to Victoria at the end of the riverboat season. William Peter, Sr., 47 and his two sons had gone north for the first time and were employed by the White Pass & Yukon Route on the SS *Dawson*. The brothers were deckhands and their father was a fireman on the ship.

William Peter, Sr. had ranched at Shawnigan before moving to Victoria, where he had been employed as an engineer at the Union Club for many years. William Peter Jr., was 17 and had gone overseas with the 103rd Battalion when he was only 15 and was eventually returned home when it was discovered he was underage. Roland Henry was 15 at the time of the tragic sinking.

David Leverton, Executive Director of the Maritime Museum stated that, "It has taken over 100 years to recognise the final resting place of Mr. Smith and his two sons. Unfortunately many bodies were never recovered from the disaster. Anyone visiting Ross Bay Cemetery will no longer walk past these unmarked graves. "

Last year during the 100th Anniversary of the tragic sinking, the Maritime Museum of BC dedicated a gravestone to William and Sarah O'Brien and their five children at Mountain View Cemetery in Vancouver.

Event Details

The dedication will be at Ross Bay Cemetery on October 25, 2019 at 10:00 a.m., followed by a reception at the Maritime Museum of BC at 634 Humboldt St. at 11:00 a.m.

The grave site is close to the cemetery entrance at Memorial Crescent and May Street.

- 30 -

For further information, please contact:

David Leverton, Executive Director
Maritime Museum of BC
250-385-4222 ext. 101
dleverton@mmbc.bc.ca