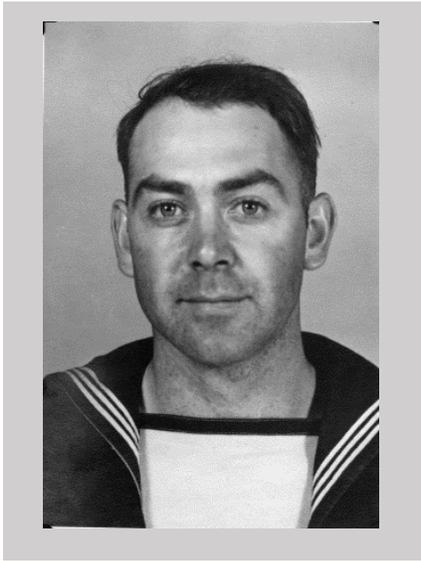


## Leading Seaman Moyle Kitchener Beck, A-4521



Moyle Kitchener Beck,  
RCN Official photo.

- Royal Canadian Navy Reserve
- Halifax Division RCNR
- Civilian Occupation: fisherman/fish curer
- Born 1 July 1916 in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia
- Died 22 February 1945. Missing, Presumed Dead at age 28 when HMCS Trentonian was torpedoed
- Remembered Panel 7, Halifax Memorial

Moyle Kitchener Beck was born in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia to James Enos and Watie Idabell Beck and was the youngest of six children, three brothers and two sisters. Moyle went to school at the Lunenburg Academy and joined the Lunenburg Cadet Corps. At 14 years old, Moyle enlisted in the Lunenburg Regiment on 23 June 1930, remaining active in the Militia until 1933. Tragedy struck the Beck family when Moyle's older sister Gladys passed away on 29 September 1930. Moyle left school at age 15 with eight years of education to seek work, eventually finding permanent employment as a fisherman/fish curer with W.C. Smith Company in Lunenburg. On 8 May 1937, Moyle was married to Bertha E. Beck (maiden name not available) in Lunenburg, their son Robert Kenneth was born the following year.

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HMCS Sherbrooke, Flower class corvette. (RCN Photo)

Moyle travelled to Halifax and enlisted in the Royal Canadian Naval Reserve at HMCS *Stadacona* on 8 May 1941 on his fourth wedding anniversary. Moyle was described by the examining medical

officer as 5 foot, 8 inches and 147 pounds in good health, with light brown hair, blue eyes and a “ruddy” complexion. Due to his experience, he was enrolled as an Able Seaman. Just over a



HMCS Restigouche, River class destroyer, May 1942  
(DND/LAC photo)

month later, Moyle joined his first ship the newly built Flower class corvette, HMCS *Sherbrooke* on 13 June 1941. Following a brief working up period to train the ship’s company of the new corvette, HMCS *Sherbrooke* joined its first convoy, HX-148 on 4 September sailing from Halifax to Liverpool in the UK. By the time Able Seaman Beck left *Sherbrooke* on 30 June 1942, his corvette had escorted twelve Atlantic convoys.

Moyle was assigned to the Torpedo course at HMCS *Cornwallis*, receiving specialized training in Torpedoes, Anti-submarine weapons (Depth charges/hedgehog) and

Minesweeping. Sailors in the Torpedo Branch were responsible for manning the Depth Charge Throwers and Rails, Hedgehog and Torpedo Tubes during an attack and the routine maintenance of this equipment and ordinance, ensuring their ship is ready for action.

Successfully completing the course, Moyle was transferred to the River class destroyer, HMCS *Restigouche* on 8 September 1942. The destroyer was assigned to the Canadian Escort Group C-4 (EG C-4) escorting convoys at the height of the Battle of the Atlantic. In October 1942 Able Seaman Beck’s Anti-submarine training was put to the ultimate test when EG C-4 fiercely fought off a Wolfpack of 15 U-boats in a seven day, running battle across the Atlantic. Fifteen of the 42 merchant ships were sunk, another four were damaged and 150 merchant sailors were killed. *Restigouche* and the other RCN escorts sank three U-boats and damaged another five.

On 15 June 1943, Moyle was promoted to Acting Leading Seaman. By the time he left *Restigouche* on 23 August 1943, the destroyer had escorted 15 convoys, including two convoys in the Mediterranean in support of the North African Campaign.

Moyle returned to HMCS *Stadacona* in Halifax to take his Leading Torpedo Course but was removed from the course before completion and assigned to HMCS *Trentonian*, joining the recently commissioned Revised Flower class corvette at Liverpool, NS. on 9 January 1944. *Trentonian* would spend January, finishing construction and there was time for Moyle to return to Lunenburg on leave with his wife and young son. Leading Seaman Beck’s experience in battle helped train the new sailors in fighting U-boats. When the



Sailors in HMCS *Trentonian* with their "Catch-of-the Day" after dropping a single depth charge off the Grand Banks in April 1944. Moyle Beck is leaning forward with the white shirt.  
(Roger Litwiller Collection, courtesy Bruce Keir, RCNVR)

corvette completed its working up program in Bermuda, the Anti-Submarine department received a high rating of efficiency. Certified "In All Respects Ready for Sea," *Trentonian* joined its first North Atlantic convoy, HX-283 consisting of 62 merchant ships. On 23 April 1944, *Trentonian* departed Halifax for the UK. The corvette would play an active role during the Invasion of Normandy and the operations in support of the liberation of Europe.

On the night of 11-12 June 1944, *Trentonian* was involved in a deadly friendly fire incident off the coast of France, when an American destroyer fired on Moyle's ship and the Cables ship that *Trentonian* was escorting. The corvette was not damaged, despite several near misses, while the cablelayer bore the brunt of the attack, extensively damaging the ship, killing three and wounding 30 sailors.



HMCS Trentonian, Revised Flower class corvette, off the Juno Beaches in June 1944.  
(Painting by Marc Magee)

*Trentonian* spent the rest of 1944 escorting convoys from the UK to the invasion area and later the French port of Cherbourg. Leave was given to *Trentonian's* sailors in the French port shortly after it was liberated. In an interview with this author, one of LS Beck's shipmates stated that Moyle routinely traded his shore leave so he could spend additional time with his wife and son when his ship would eventually return to Canada.

The start of 1945 continued to be busy for *Trentonian*, with escorting convoys from the UK to France and assisting a merchant ship on fire in the Irish Sea in January. In February plans were being made for *Trentonian* to return to Canada for a much-needed refit. On 22 February, *Trentonian* was escorting a 14 ship convoy, BTC-76 in the English Channel near Falmouth. Shortly after the dense fog lifted, one of the large liberty ships in the convoy exploded and began to sink. *Trentonian* gained a sonar contact and raced between the columns of ships in the convoy to make an attack on the U-boat. Suddenly a massive explosion erupted from *Trentonian's* stern, devastating the after section of the corvette and sending large junks of steel debris crashing down on its decks. *Trentonian* had been mortally torpedoed by U-1004, sinking in only 10 minutes. Six of *Trentonian* ship's company were killed, 96 sailors survived, including 14 wounded.



Sailors in HMCS Trentonian on the corvette's foc's'le, ready to assist a burning merchant ship in the Irish Sea in January 1945.  
Moyle Beck is top left.  
(Roger Litwiller Collection, courtesy Bruce Keir, RCNVR.)

Leading Seaman Beck's action station was directly above the torpedo hit at the starboard side depth charge thrower. His commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colin Glassco, RCNVR reported that although Leading Seaman Beck's body

was not recovered and he is officially listed as Missing, Presumed Dead, Beck was killed instantly in the explosion and his body went down with his ship.

Lt. Glassco remarked in a letter to Mrs. Beck, "During my short association with him I soon came to appreciate his qualities as a seaman. He was at all times cheerful and efficient in carrying out his duties, and his loss is deeply felt by all of the Ship's Company."



HMCS TRENTONIAN Memorial Stone in Trenton, ON.  
Roger Litwiller photo

For his Service in the Royal Canadian Navy Reserve, Leading Seaman Moyle Kitchener Beck was awarded: 1939-45 Star, Atlantic Star & Clasp, Africa Star, Canadian Volunteer Service Medal & Clasp and War Medal.

Moyle's wife Bertha and his mother Watie were presented with the Memorial Cross.

Leading Seaman Moyle Kitchener Beck, RCNR is commemorated on the Halifax Memorial on Panel 7, page 494 of the Second Book of Remembrance at the Peace Tower in Ottawa, and the War Memorial in his hometown of Lunenburg, NS. The loss of his ship, HMCS

*Trentonian* and the six sailors killed is honoured in the corvette's namesake community of Trenton, ON. on a stone bench adjacent to the cenotaph.

#### Prepared by:

Roger Litwiller, Citizen Sailor Virtual Cenotaph Research team and Canadian Naval researcher, and author of *White Ensign Flying, Corvette HMCS Trentonian*.



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