

Ordinary Seaman George William Grant V-54171



- **Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve**
- **Born: Prince George BC, 26 September 1923**
- **Enlisted: HMCS *Discovery*, 27 January 1943**
- **Civilian Occupation: Grocery Clerk**
- **Killed when HM MTB 460 struck a mine and sank on 2 July 1944**
- **Buried: Haslar Royal Naval Cemetery, Section E, Line 66, No. 1, Hampshire, UK**
- **Commemorated: HMCS *Discovery* Memorial Plaque; and the Cenotaph in Prince George BC**

George William Grant was born to William Leslie Grant and Catherine Grant on 26 September 1923 at Prince George, BC. He was a member of the United Church. His father was Scottish, and his mother was Russian according to his attestation form upon his enlistment. They were married at Port Novorossish, South Russia on 21 March 1920. George had an older brother by one year, Lieutenant Edward L. Grant, and in 1944 he was serving overseas with the No. 3 CACRU (Canadian Armoured Corps Reinforcement Unit), Canadian Army.

Corporal L.F. Fielder of the Vanderhoof Detachment of the RCMP in his statement dated 16 February 1943 regarding the fitness of George William Grant to serve in the "R.C. Navy", stated the following:

"(2) George William Grant born Sept. 26, 1923 at Prince George, B.C. completed his education during the early part of 1939 in Grade #9, Baron Byng High School [now Prince George Secondary School]"

(3) GRANT travelled to Vancouver, B.C. and obtained employment with Kelly Douglas & Co. Ltd....from 1939 until early 1942. He continued work with British Columbia Plywoods Ltd. ... and remained there until the Fall of /42, then returned home at Prince George, B.C. since that time GRANT has worked for Noughtalling Garage, B.A. Motordrome and G.B. Williams Grocery Store both at Prince George, B.C.

(4) This applicant for the R.C.N. Service is of good habits and character, well behaved honest and conscientious. From information received he has not been

forced to resign or discharged from employment, has no crime record in the district and has never been engaged in any subversive activities.

(5) I have personally known his parents for some considerable time, and both are highly thought of throughout the district.”

George enlisted at HMCS *Discovery* on 27 January 1943 at age 19 as an Ordinary Seaman. At enlistment he was 5' 7½", weighed 160 lbs, had dark brown hair and brown eyes. He was single. His initial training was at *Discovery* from 27 January to 21 April 1943, at which point he was put on active service. On active service, OS George Grant remained at HMCS *Discovery* until 20 July 1943. He was then drafted to HMCS *Naden* in Esquimalt, BC from 21 July to 5 November 1943 for additional seamanship training. On 6 November, OS Grant found himself on a train heading to Halifax, NS to await a seagoing posting. On the east coast, he spent time in HMCS *Protector II* located in Sydney, NS and then HMCS *Stadacona* in Halifax before being dispatched to HMCS *Niobe* in Scotland two days after Christmas on 27 December 1943.

Overseas, OS Grant trained with the Royal Navy Coastal Forces. First at HMS *St Christopher* followed by HMS *Fervent* before he was assigned to Motor Torpedo Boat (MTB) 460 on 6 June 1944 for Operation NEPTUNE – the naval portion of the D-Day landings.

The motor gun boats, torpedo boats and motor launches of the Allied coastal forces employed different tactics and smaller crews than larger warships. They used speed, maneuverability, and their shallow draft to their tactical advantage. These ships generally operated at night, intercepting German convoys, and fighting their enemy counterpart, the E-boats. Smaller crews often meant greater responsibility for individual sailors. There was little room for error in these vessels.

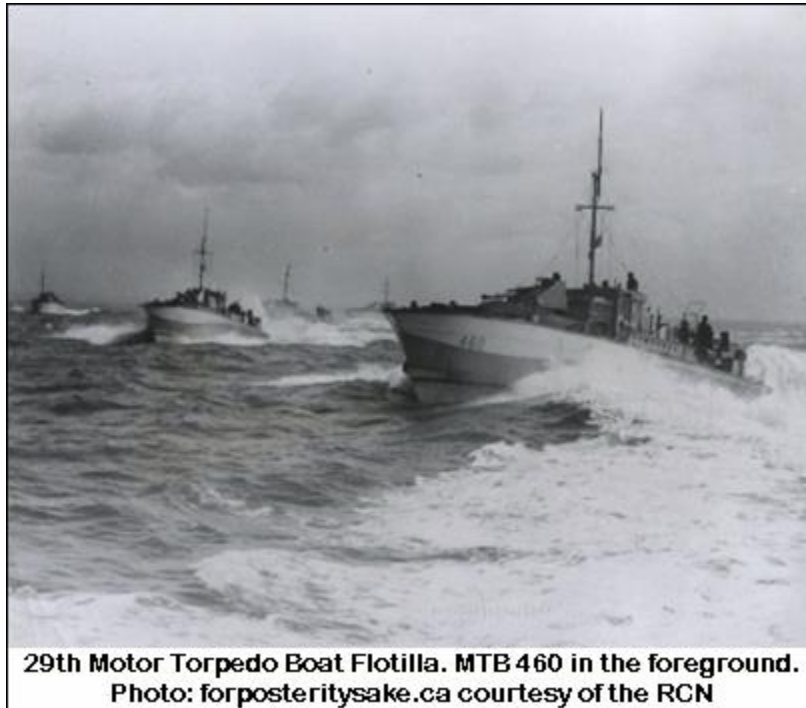
MTB 460 was a "G" type motor torpedo boat with a displacement of 44 tons and a speed of 39 knots. Its complement was 3 officers and 14 men. MTB 460 was part of the 29th Canadian MTB Flotilla and took part in the D-Day landings on 6 June 1944. On D-Day, the Flotilla was tasked with protecting the flanks of the landing beaches blocking enemy harbours.

While OS Grant had spent months training and exercising with Coastal Forces, he was only drafted to his first vessel on 6 June 1944. If training was the "frying pan", then his first 24 hours were equivalent to "jumping into the fire". The primary duty for MTB 460 and the rest of the 29th Flotilla commenced on the afternoon of D-Day; it was to provide close-in protection of the eastern side of the assault lines and anchorages near Point Barfleur. It was not long before they were called into action. From the Naval Museum of Manitoba website:

"7 June 1944: During the early hours of June 7, the E-boats were out in strength, and it was with them that the M.T.B.'s first clashed. There were no less than seven encounters during the night, in which the 55th Flotilla ... and the Canadian 29th Flotilla ... bore the brunt of the fighting. The 29th saw the two Elbings from Le Havre nosing their way into the anchorage. The M.T.B.'s, hopelessly outgunned



and without torpedoes, had no means of attack. All they could do as to let themselves be detected and lead the Elbings away from the assault area on a chase-which ended some two miles off Le Havre. Although denied any choice of offensive action, they had at least diverted an attack; and in the morning their disappointment was tempered by personal congratulations from Sir Philip Vian, Naval Commander of the Eastern Task Force.”



**29th Motor Torpedo Boat Flotilla. MTB 460 in the foreground.
Photo: forposteritysake.ca courtesy of the RCN**

For the remainder of June 1944, MTB 460, and the other boats of the 29th MTB Flotilla, patrolled the 15 km between the eastern edge of the assault area and the German naval base at Le Havre. Every night, three or four MTBs waited until larger Allied ships tracked the German surface ships attempting either to attack the assault area or transport supplies into the port at Le Havre. Typically, there were short, sharp engagements, with the Germans turning back to safety once they realized Allied forces were in place.

On 2 July 1944, while on patrol off the invasion coast of France, MTB 460 struck a mine and was

lost with 10 officers and men, including George Grant. OS George Grant was 20 years old when he died.

OS Grant was laid to rest at Haslar Royal Naval Cemetery located in Hampshire, UK (near Portsmouth) at 1430 on 5 July 1944, along with a shipmate, Able Seaman George Alfred Ashmore V-39231. His military funeral was attended by surviving shipmates and Royal Navy comrades. His grave is located at Section E, Line 66, No. 1. The inscription on his grave reads:

OUR DEAR SON NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN BY MOTHER AND DAD

For his service, Ordinary Seaman George Grant was awarded: the 1939-1945 Star, Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp, France Germany Star, and the War Medal. His mother, Catherine Grant was awarded the Silver Cross on 14 September 1944.

Ordinary Seaman George Grant is remembered on the cenotaph in Prince George, BC; on the memorial plaque in the Chapel at HMCS *Discovery*; and the Second World War Book of Remembrance, Page 320 at the Centre Block Houses of Parliament, Ottawa.

Prepared By:

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Sources:

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<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2438467?George%20William%20Grant>. Retrieved 29 Apr 2022
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Newspaper Article reporting Grant's death
Prince George *Citizen* 6 July 1944



Newspaper clipping from the *Toronto Star*
July 1944

