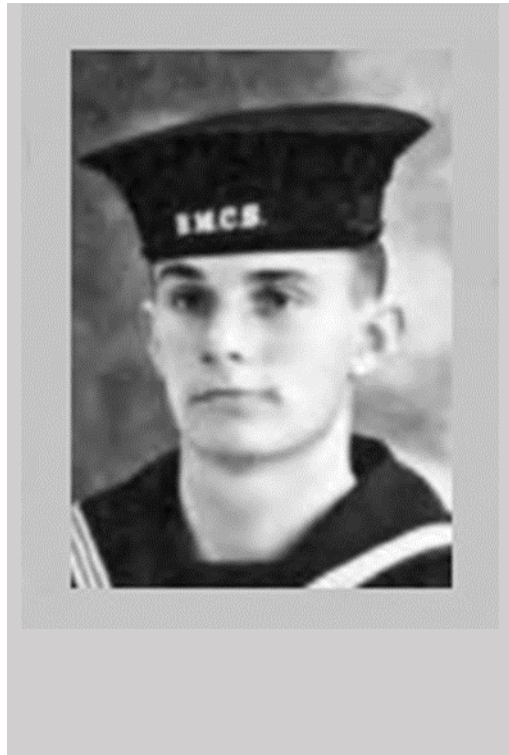


Ordinary Seaman Gordon Tait Elliot V-69859



Able Seaman Gordon T Elliot. Photo: For
Posterity Sake website

- **Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve**
- **Born: Viking AB, 6 August 1925**
- **Enlisted: HMCS *Nonsuch*, 19 August 1943**
- **Civilian Occupation: Student**
- **Death: Killed when HMCS *Magog* was torpedoed on 14 October 1944**
- **Buried: Viking Cemetery, Plot 40, Grave 2**
- **Commemorated: Magog Memorial Statue in Magog Quebec, Naval Museum of Alberta Plaque and HMCS *Nonsuch* Memorial Plaque**

Gordon Tait Elliot was born on 06 August 1925, in Viking, AB. His father was George Edgar Elliot (1897-1928). George was from Renfrew, ON. He served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force during WWI from May 1918 to February 1919. He farmed in the Kinsella area. The farm was between Viking and the hamlet of Kinsella. Gordon's mother was Clara Cornelia (Powell) Elliot (1906-1984). She was raised on a farm in the Innisfree, AB area – about 50 km north of Kinsella.

Clara and George were married in 1925. After Gordon's birth in 1925, his brother Donald was born in 1927 but did not survive infancy, dying in August 1927. Tragedy struck again the following year when Gordon's father died in February 1928. He had travelled to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota for an operation. In July 1928, Gordon's brother George was born.

Gordon, his brother, and his widowed mother continued to live on his grandfather's farm in the Kinsella area. He attended the Rodino school for his early grades. His mother remarried in 1935 to Andrew Daniel (Dan) Laidler. Dan was also from the Innisfree area. Gordon's half-sister Elaine was born in 1936.

Gordon joined the Air Cadets 134 Malta Squadron in Viking in August 1942. He finished his schooling at Innisfree, completing Grade 10 and leaving in June 1943.

A few days after his 18th birthday – on 19 August 1943 – he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR) at HMCS *Nonsuch*, Edmonton's Naval Division. His Attestation papers described him as 5 foot 8 with dark brown hair, brown eyes, and a fair complexion. His occupation was listed as a student, and his religion was the United Church.

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In October 1943, he was placed on Active Service and completed new entry training in Edmonton. In December, he was posted to HMCS *Cornwallis* in Nova Scotia for Seamanship training. At the time, this was the Navy's main training base. He stayed at *Cornwallis* for four months. Fully trained, Ordinary Seaman Elliot was sent to HMCS *Fort Ramsay*, a navy base on the southern shore of Gaspé Bay at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River. The base's primary role was to support Fairmile motor launches that were patrolling for U-boats in the St. Lawrence. It's unknown what duties were given to Ordinary Seaman Elliot during the three months he spent here, but there was plenty of opportunity for a newly qualified seaman to gain experience.



In August 1944, Ordinary Seaman Elliot was posted to his first (and only) operational ship, HMCS *Magog*. She was a River-class frigate that had been recently commissioned in May 1944. She was built at Canadian Vickers in Montreal. She was named after the town of Magog, QC. The river-class frigates significantly improved the anti-submarine capabilities of convoy escorts. They had better armaments and much more range than the corvettes that preceded them. *Magog* carried a complement of 157 men.

HMCS *Magog* was part of Escort Group EG-16 of the Western Local Escort Force (WLEF) and worked out of Halifax, NS. These ships would typically sail to a rendezvous point in the Atlantic Ocean, meet with a westbound convoy, and escort the merchant ships to various Canadian or American ports.

On 14 October 1944, HMCS *Magog* was sailing near Pointe-des-Monts, QC, at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River. She was escorting convoy – GONS-033 – a local convoy sailing from Sydney, NS, to Quebec City (the G signified Gulf of St. Lawrence). This was only the second convoy in HMCS *Magog*'s brief career.

On his 66th day serving in *Magog*, Ordinary Seaman Elliot was on lookout duty at the stern when his ship was struck by an acoustic torpedo fired by a German U-boat, U-1223. Ordinary Seaman Gordon Elliot was killed instantly. He was 19 years old.

His shipmates recovered his body from the river. He was identified by his RCN life jacket number. Two other RCNVR sailors also lost their lives. They were Petty Officer Davis of Toronto, ON and Able Seaman Kelly of Charlottetown, PE

HMCS *Magog* lost about 65 feet of her stern. Extraordinary efforts by HMCS *Magog*'s crew prevented the heavily damaged ship from sinking. She was towed to a ship repair facility in Quebec City but was declared a total loss and never repaired.

In 1947, Herb C. Montgomery – who had been one of the ship's officers – wrote an essay reflecting on that day. He described Ordinary Seaman Elliot's loss:

“Only eighteen years old and just recently drafted aboard the ship, the lad never shaved in his life; it certainly didn’t add up.” Gordon’s remains were transported back to Alberta. They were accompanied by a shipmate, Petty Officer Bailey. He was buried in the town cemetery in Viking - the only person from WWII to be buried there. He was one of a relatively small number of Canadian combat casualties to be buried in Canada.



For his service, Ordinary Seaman Gordon Tait Elliot was awarded the 1939-45 Star, the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp, and the War Medal 1939-45. His mother, Clara, was awarded the Canadian Memorial Cross.

He is commemorated on the Magog Memorial Statue in Braves Park, Magog, QC, the Naval Museum of Alberta plaque, and the HMCS *Nonsuch* plaque.

Prepared By*:

David Mitchell, former Able Seaman, HMCS *Tecumseh*, Citizen Sailors Virtual Cenotaph Research team

*All stories are edited by the project crew and sometimes altered to conform to the Citizen Sailors Virtual Cenotaph format, length and content parameters.



Sources:

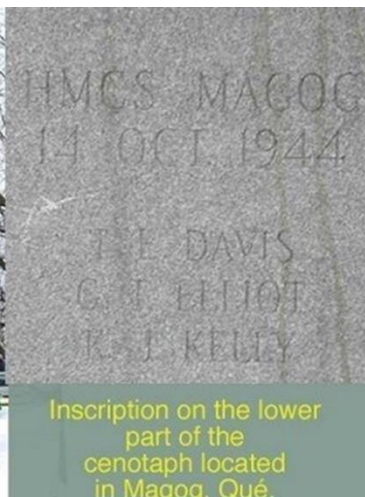
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- Library and Archives Canada Service via Ancestry.com – record for military service
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Other photos:



HMCS *Magog* after being torpedoed. About 65 feet of her stern is missing. Photo credit: Wikipedia