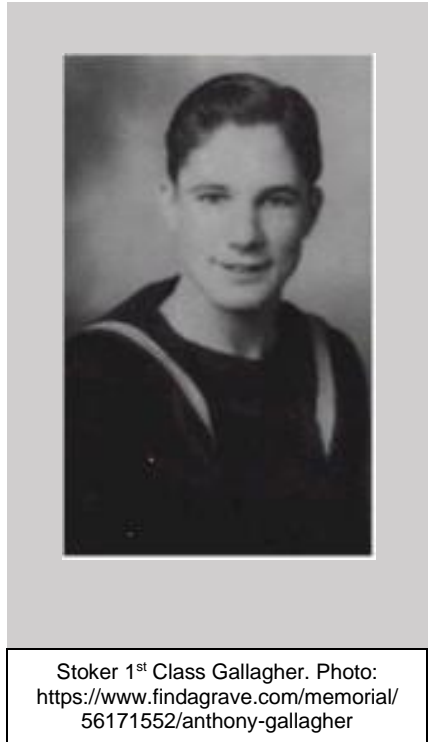


Stoker First Class Anthony Patrick (Valera) Gallagher V-75077



- **Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve**
- **Born: Vancouver BC, 9 March 1925**
- **Enlisted: HMCS *Discovery*, 16 November 1943**
- **Civilian Occupation: Apprentice Mechanic, Hoffars Ltd**
- **Death: Lost at sea when HMCS *Esquimalt* was torpedoed and sank on 16 April 1945**
- **Commemorated: Halifax Memorial, Panel 13; HMCS *Discovery* Memorial Plaque; and the Second World War Book of Remembrance, Page 516 at the Centre Block Houses of Parliament, Ottawa**

Anthony Patrick (he also may have had a third name of either “Valera” or “Salera”) Gallagher was born to Joe and Martha Gallagher on 9 March 1925 at St. Paul’s Hospital, Vancouver, BC. He was of Irish heritage, Roman Catholic, and the middle son of three boys and two sisters. He left high school after two years at age 16 and went to work as an apprentice mechanic at Hoffars Ltd., the West Coast of Canada distributor of the GM Diesel marine engine. Prior to enlistment he resided with his mother at 269 East 14th Street, Vancouver, BC. According to his mother in a statement to the Department of National Defence, Estates Branch, Anthony’s father left the family some time previously.

Anthony enlisted at HMCS *Discovery*, the Vancouver division of the Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve, on 16 November 1943 at age 18 as a Stoker 2nd Class. At enlistment he was described as 5’ 9”, 144 lbs., brown hair and blue eyes. He was single. His initial training was at *Discovery* from 16 November to 13 December 1943, at which point he was put on Active Service. On Active Service, Stoker 2nd Class Anthony Gallagher stayed at *Discovery* from 14 December 1943 to 28 January 1944, when he was sent to HMCS *Cornwallis* in Nova Scotia from 29 January to 7 March 1944 for training. He was then posted to HMCS *Stadacona* in Halifax until 27 March 1944.

On 28 March 1944 Anthony joined the ship’s company of his first and only seagoing ship, HMCS *Esquimalt*. *Esquimalt* was a Bangor-class minesweeper commissioned at Sorel, QC on 26 October 1942 and arrived in Halifax on 21 November 1942. Chronically plagued by mechanical troubles, *Esquimalt* underwent repairs in Halifax until May 1943. She was then assigned to the Newfoundland Force until September 1944 and then transferred to the Halifax Local Defence

Force, and almost immediately underwent a three-month refit. On 12 September 1944, Anthony was promoted to Stoker First Class.

While on Anti-Submarine patrol on 16 April 1945, HMCS *Esquimalt* was torpedoed and sunk by *U-190* five miles off Chebucto Head near Halifax with the loss of 44 of her ship's company, including Stoker First Class Anthony Gallagher. It was the last Canadian warship to be lost in conflict during the war. Stoker First Class Anthony Gallagher was 20 years old.

U-190 surrendered on 14 May 1945 at Bay Bulls, Newfoundland. It was ultimately taken to Halifax and used for tests and finally sunk on 21 October 1947 off Nova Scotia by bombs and gunfire from the destroyer HMCS *Nootka* and the minesweeper HMCS *New Liskeard* and several Fireflies and Seafire aircraft.



Anthony's father, Joe Gallagher, wrote a letter to the Defence Department about a week later enquiring about the details of his missing son. On 7 May 1945, a letter was sent to Mr. Gallagher by the Deputy Secretary of the Naval Board. In that letter, the Deputy Secretary said the following:

"...I regret to inform you that in view of the length of time which has elapsed since your son ... was reported missing from H.M.C.S. "ESQUIMALT", ... the fact that all circumstances surrounding his loss have been carefully reviewed, and no news has since been received to the contrary, the Canadian Naval Authorities have now presumed his death to have occurred on the 16th of April 1945.

H.M.C.S. "ESQUIMALT", a Royal Canadian minesweeper, was torpedoed and sunk by an enemy submarine while on operational duty off the east coast of Canada. One officer and fifteen ratings were killed at the time of the disaster, four officers and twenty-four ratings are missing and now presumed dead, while two Officers and twenty-four ratings survived the sinking.

The following is an excerpt from the report of a Canadian Naval Press Relations Officer who was in contact with survivors of the ill-fated ship:

'Struck by a torpedo on the starboard side, H.M.C.S. ESQUIMALT listed heavily and sank stern first in a few minutes. The ship's list had the seaboard under water and flooded before it could be released from the davits, but carley floats were freed quickly before the ship went down, and those who escaped from the ship gathered on four of those floats.

It was from the four floats that a sister Bangor minesweeper, H.M.C.S. "SARNIA", picked up the survivors nearly six hours later. Many who had reached the floats safely had died of exposure on the floats, from the soaking in the cold sea water, and sixteen bodies were taken aboard the rescue craft.

In spite of the rapidity with which the ship heeled over and slid under the surface there was no panic or confusion”, a surviving officer reported. Everyone he had seen had been calmly and quickly abandoning ship....”

In his Will, prepared when he enlisted, Anthony Gallagher left his estate to his mother, Martha, including his Victory Bonds in which he had invested.

For his service, Stoker First Class Gallagher was awarded: the 1939-1945 Star, Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp, Atlantic Star, and the War Medal. The Canadian Memorial Cross was awarded to his mother.

Stoker First Class Gallagher’s name appears on Panel 13 of the Halifax Memorial in Point Pleasant Park, Halifax, NS; the Memorial Plaque at HMCS Discovery, Vancouver, BC; and the Second World War Book of Remembrance, Page 516 at the Centre Block Houses of Parliament, Ottawa

Prepared By:

Sub-Lieutenant (Ret'd) Roderick H. McCloy (HMCS *Discovery* 1965-1968)
Citizen Sailors Virtual Cenotaph Research Team



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