

## **Major John Robert Grant M.C. (1878-1957)**



John Grant was born in Elora Ontario on 18 December 1878 and obtained his engineering degree from Queen's University. In 1904 he started work as a draughtsman with Hamilton Bridge in Ontario. In 1907 he joined the American Bridge Company and moved to New York where he worked on bridges throughout the United States. He first visited Vancouver in 1906 and in 1910 was asked by the City of Vancouver to prepare plans and specifications for a bridge across False Creek. He then changed employers and from 1910 to the start of the First World War worked on local projects including the river dykes for Delta and Dewdney.

When the war came he went to England and in 1915 joined the Royal Engineers. He was awarded the Military Cross for bravery on 28 December 1917. He was captured by the Germans during their 1918 Spring Offensive. He later escaped from a German Prisoner of War Camp by tunnelling out of the camp but was re-captured and sent to another camp on an island in the Baltic Sea.

After the war he returned to Vancouver. He was the senior engineer during the construction of the Burrard Street bridge between 1930 and 1932 and was responsible for the large lamps at the ends of the span. These are a tribute to WWI prisoners of war, who huddled around similar open fires in their prison camps. The current lamps are 1965 replacements, as the originals had to be removed in 1963 because of corrosion.

When the Second World War arrived he joined the RCE reserves and from early 1942 to late 1945 was the Officer Commanding the 6 Field Company RCE (Reserve). During most of this time he remained active in civil engineering.

His plans for the Granville Street Bridge were accepted in 1949 and he retired in 1954 after its completion. He passed away on 13 July 1957 after a lengthy illness.