

DELANEY, T. S.



Seaman Timothy Samuel Delaney, Number 2080x, having no known last resting-place but the sea, is commemorated on a bronze beneath the Caribou at the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel.

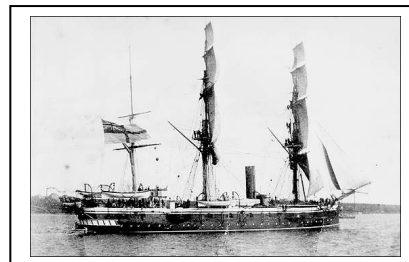
Having decided to answer the call of the naval authorities for volunteers, he relinquished his occupation as a fisherman and thereupon travelled from Bay St. George in the District of the same name to St. John's*, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland where, on April 20 of 1916, Timothy Samuel Delaney reported...to duty ...on the Naval Reserve training ship, HMS Calypso, moored in the harbour (see below).

On that same April 20 he enlisted for the first time into the Reserve (see further below) was signed on to serve for a single year's* war-time service and successfully underwent the required medical assessment on or about that same day. He also likely attested at this time, pledging his allegiance to the King-Emperor, George V.

(Right: George V, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India: as a boy and young man he had served in the Royal Navy from 1877 until 1891 and always retained a fondness for the Senior Service. – The photograph of the King attired in the uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet is from the Royal Collection Trust web-site and taken in or about 1935.)



(Right: At the outset of their career, the ‘Calypso-Class’ ships were apparently considered to be superior vessels. Hybrids - powered by both steam and sail - they were able to police the outer reaches of the British Empire most efficiently and economically. The rapid progress in engine technology, however, was to mean that HMS ‘Calypso’ and her sister-ships would soon be out-classed by newer vessels. – This Royal Navy photograph, taken before 1902 when the drill-hall was reportedly built on her upper deck and the funnel removed, is from Wikipedia)



***In the early days of the War, perhaps because it was felt by the authorities that it would be a conflict of short duration, the recruits enlisted for only a single year. As the War progressed, however, this was obviously going to cause problems and the men were encouraged to re-enlist. Later recruits – as of or about May of 1916 - signed on for the ‘Duration’ at the time of their original enlistment.**



(Right above: The White Ensign has been flown by the Royal Navy in its present form since about the year 1800 although other naval ensigns had existed for at least two centuries. It consists of a red St. George’s Cross – the national flag of England - on a white field with the Union Flag* in the upper canton.)

***The Union Flag is commonly referred to as the ‘Union Jack’; this is, in fact, a misnomer since a flag is referred to as a ‘Jack’ only when flown from the bow of a ship.**

Note: During the years preceding the Great War the only military force on the Island of Newfoundland – apart from a handful of ill-fated local attempts – was to be the Royal Naval Reserve (Newfoundland). Even so, it was to be some thirty years after the withdrawal of British troops from the Dominion in 1870 before the Reserve came into being in 1902.

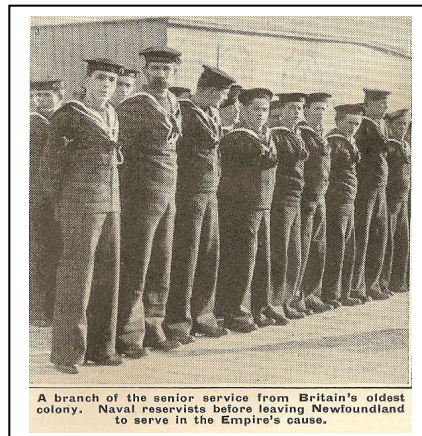
Just fewer than four-hundred men were sought to enroll as seamen – apparently automatically at the rank of Able Seaman - and to present themselves annually in St. John’s for five years in order to train for a period of twenty-eight days per annum. Allowed to report at a time of their own choosing, it is perhaps not surprising that these volunteers – mostly fishermen – were to opt to train during the winter months when fishing work was minimal.



(Right above: Recruits of the Royal Naval Reserve (Newfoundland) seen here in front of HMS ‘Calypso’. The shed-like superstructure seen behind them had been built onto the ship in 1902 to serve as a drill-hall. Whether the vessel was still ‘Calypso’, or had become ‘Briton’ by this time (see further below) is not clear. – photograph from Newfoundland Provincial Archives via Wikipedia)

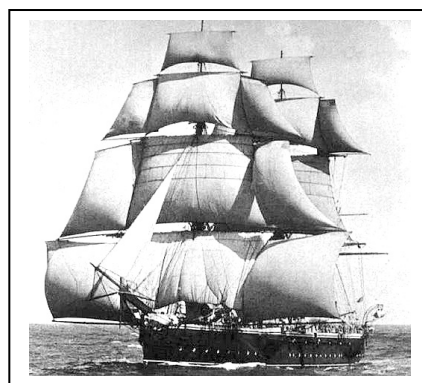
Expenses were apparently defrayed for the most part by the British (Imperial) Government and an attempt was made to ensure the number of recruits would be kept constantly at a maximum. This practice and policy was then to be continued up until the onset of hostilities some twelve years later.

Of course, the purpose of having a reserve force at any time is to provide a trained force ready at any time to serve at a time of need or crisis. Thus in August of 1914, upon the Declaration of War by the government in London, hundreds of those men of the Royal Naval Reserve (Newfoundland) were to make their way to St. John's, from there to take passage overseas to bolster the ranks of the Royal Navy.



(Right above: Naval reservists from Newfoundland, during the early days of the Great War, before their departure for the United Kingdom - from *The War Illustrated*)

An elderly vessel, HMS 'Calypso', having become surplus to the Admiralty's needs, had been provided to the Dominion of Newfoundland by the Royal Navy in 1902 for training purposes. After some debate it was eventually decided that she would be permanently moored in the harbour of the capital, her superstructure reduced, and a wooden shelter built on her upper deck to provide training facilities and living quarters for the prospective naval recruits.



(Right above: HMS 'Calypso' in full sail. She was to be re-named 'Briton' in 1916 when a new 'Calypso', a modern cruiser, was about to be launched by the Royal Navy. – This photograph, taken of her by the Royal Navy in 1898, is by courtesy of Admiralty House Museum)

(Right: The C-Class cruiser 'Calypso' of 1916, seen here on an un-recorded date during the later years of the Great War, was to be sunk by an Italian submarine in 1940. – from *Wikipedia*)



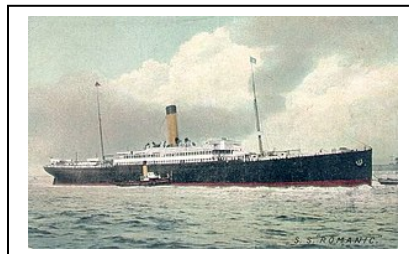
Fifty-nine days after having first reported to *Briton* in St. John's, on June 18, 1916, he was apparently promoted from the rank of *Seaman Recruit* to that of *Seaman* while at the same time the records suggest that he was to depart from St. John's to cross the Atlantic.

At twenty minutes past six in the evening(?) of that June 20, having traversed the island of Newfoundland by train and then the Cabot Strait on the *SS Kyle*, the forty-three recruits of the latest draft of the Royal Naval Reserve (Newfoundland) – Seaman Delaney among that detachment – disembarked at North Sydney, Cape Breton, to undergo the short medical assessment required of all desiring entry into Canada.

From there the draft was to take a train of the *Union Railroad* to Québec City where on June 23-24 it was to take ship on the *SS Scandinavian* for passage to the United Kingdom. At this period, *Scandinavian* was plying its commercial routes and the Newfoundland Reservists – and the 12th Canadian Field Ambulance – were not on board because she was a troopship but because there was room available, their transit from St. John's likely booked by the *Reid Newfoundland Company*, Newfoundland Agent for the *Allan Line*.

(Right below: *Launched in 1898, the vessel was first known as 'New England' before being sold to the 'White Star Line' to be re-christened 'Romanic' as seen in the image. In 1912 she was bought by the 'Allan Line' and re-named 'Scandinavian', the name she retained for the rest of her service. – the image from an old post-card via Wikipedia*)

The ship arrived in the English port-city of Liverpool on July 3 whereupon the Canadians were transported to the Canadian military establishment of *Shorncliffe* in the county of Kent. Those of the Newfoundland personnel who were not immediately to join a vessel were dispersed to one of the several naval shore-based complexes around the southern English coast, there to train or perhaps simply to await a posting to one of His Majesty's ships.



In the case of Seaman Delaney, he was ordered to report to *HMS Victory I* in the naval city of Portsmouth where he was now to remain for some two months - although exactly what his occupations, apart from waiting, were to be during this period of wearing a cap-band emblazoned *HMS Victory* is not clear.

**The Royal Navy had a disciplinary system which in certain ways differed from civil – and even Army – law; but for it to be employed, a sailor had to be attached to a ship. While at sea, of course, this posed no problem, but when a sailor was performing duties on land that were not associated directly to a particular ship he still had to be held accountable for any untoward behaviour.*

The Navy's training establishments were for the most part on land: Devonport (although apparently it was only a shore-base during the Great War), Chatham, and Portsmouth for example, were land bases for many thousands of naval personnel, some of who were permanently stationed there. Thus the practice became to base an elderly or even obsolete ship in the nearby port to be, nominally, the vessel to which this personnel was to be attached. This appears to have been the procedure for the large number of shore bases organized around the coast of the United Kingdom during the Great War.

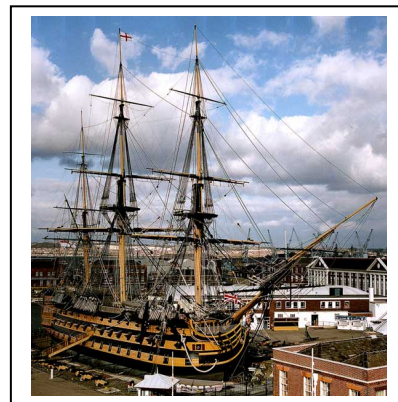
Thus, HMS 'Victory', the base to which Seaman Delaney had been ordered after his arrival in the United Kingdom from Newfoundland, was not only all the buildings and facilities on shore, but also HMS 'Victory' the warship, the vessel from which Admiral Nelson had directed the Battle of Trafalgar – although the ship's illustrious history is not limited to that one single incident.

It was also the name which all the sailors attached to HMS 'Victory' were to have emblazoned on the bands of their afore-mentioned caps.

(continued)

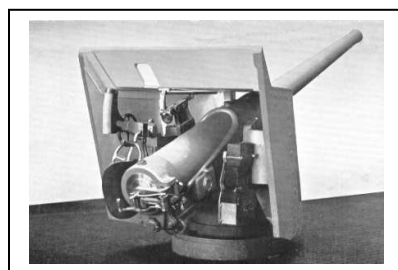
Furthermore, these establishments were at times divided into sections: ‘Victory I’ was where the seamen (as opposed to the engine-room personnel, for example, in ‘Victory II’) such as Seaman Delaney were to be stationed while awaiting a posting to one of His Majesty’s ships.

(Right: HMS ‘Victory’ is seen here in dry dock in the southern English naval port-city of Portsmouth where she has been since the late 1920s – photograph from Wikipedia)



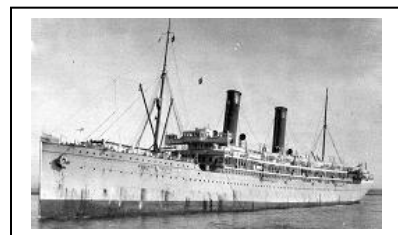
On August 18 Seaman Delaney was dispatched to serve on was an armed merchant cruiser the *Armadale Castle*, a fairly large ship of some thirteen-thousand tons which had been requisitioned by the British Admiralty in the first month of the *Great War*. Converted and armed with eight 4.7-inch naval guns she had gone into service almost immediately.

Some sources give the impression that HM Armed Cruiser *Armadale Castle* then joined the other ships of the 10th Cruiser Squadron (also known as the *Northern Patrol*) on inspection duties in the North Atlantic. In fact, it was only to be in early 1917 that she assumed that task and also, later, convoy duties.



(Right: An example of the naval gun with which *Armadale Castle* had been equipped prior to sailing on her war-time duties – from Wikipedia)

Her first two years were to be spent off the south-west coast of Africa today and the territory known today as the county of Namibia, but in 1914 and into 1915 it was known as the German Colony of South-West Africa which was to be taken by South African forces in 1915, thus freeing *Armadale Castle* for duties elsewhere.



(Right above: The photograph of ‘*Armadale Castle*’ is from the naval-history.net web-site.)

In late 1914 and most of 1915 the British ship was busy transporting supplies, many of them for the South African forces intent on taking German South-West Africa, and in transferring German prisoners and refugees back to South Africa. The number of inspections of shipping appears to have been minimal – maybe there were not many of them to be found. And it would appear that the very presence of HMS *Armadale Castle* was of prime political importance since a great deal of time was spent...showing the flag... in anchorages stretching from *Walfisch Bay*, on the coast of South-West Africa, southward to Cape Town, South Africa.

In December of 1915, the South-West African Campaign over, the attention of *Armadale Castle* was switched to the other, the south-eastern, side of the country and the continent. The vessel’s log-book shows a number of voyages made between Zanzibar and nearby

Kenya and, again, southward to Cape Town. Finally, at the end of June, Simons Bay and Simonstown, South Africa, were reached and thus began a twelve-week period of repair, maintenance, cleaning and painting.

This was the scene into which Seaman Delaney was to sail on an unspecified ship from the United Kingdom and to report half-way through the month of August. And it was also the scene in which he was subsequently to remain until the end of the third week of that September of 1916.

Seaman Delaney was then to spend an uneventful few weeks at sea with an eleven-day interlude en route to the ship's destination; that destination was Liverpool which would be eventually reached on November 12. On her route his ship was to traverse the Atlantic and put into Halifax, Nova Scotia, where those eleven days were spent, for the most part in the safe enclave of the Bedford Basin.

When HMS *Armada Castle* left Halifax she was to be an escort for four troop-transports carrying some ten-thousand Canadian troops overseas service. Once again, *Armada Castle* plus her charges reached port without incident.

Seaman Delaney reportedly left the ship – *Armada Castle* was now to spend ninety-seven days in port – on December 19, although this may have only been on paper as, on the morrow, the same papers show him to have travelled to the south of the country to report to HMS *Excellent*.

HMS *Excellent* was the name of the Royal Navy's Gunnery School which had been established in a ship of the same name in 1829, the vessel being permanently moored just outside Portsmouth dockyard. As the years passed the ships were to be replaced, but each in turn was to be named HMS *Excellent*.



(Right above: *Recruits at drill on a naval gun on 'Whale Island' during an early period of the Great War – from Wikipedia*)

And also as the years passed, the use evolved of the nearby 'Whale (originally *Whaley*) Island' as facilities were constructed on it. In 1885 the Gunnery School was moved from the ship of the time to be re-established on the island itself.



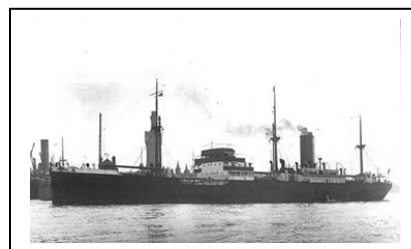
(Right above: *The Royal Navy Memorial stands on the coast at Portsmouth from where may be seen 'Whale Island' – photograph from 1917*)

Whatever was the training in gunnery that Seaman Delaney ingested while on *Whale Island* is not entirely clear: but it was of short duration, only eleven days. And then he was dispatched to a further naval establishment, HMS *President III*.

This Royal Navy establishment had initially been in London where the original – floating – *President* had been opened to serve as a drill-ship for recruits of the Royal Navy Volunteer

Reserve. *President III*, one of several Divisions to emerge as the *Great War* progressed, was to deal primarily with finances and accountancy, its offices at times located outside the capital city.

However, it is unlikely that Seaman Delaney was to become much involved with accounting, and it may be that neither was he to see anything of London as the next report has him serving on a cargo ship: *SS Sycamore* – but that was to be more than six months later on.



(Right: *The photograph of the cargo-ship Sycamore is from the Old Ship Photo Galleries web-site.*)

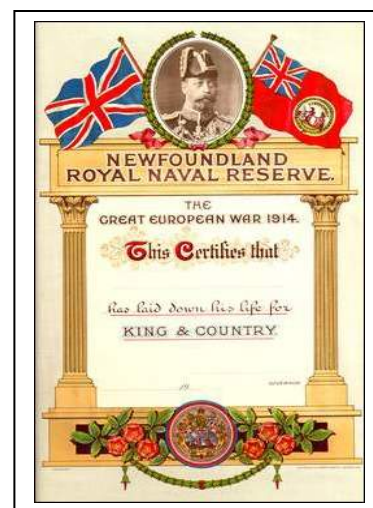
There appear to be few details about the sinking of the *Johnston Line* vessel, *SS Sycamore*, on August 25, 1917: The ship of some six and a half-thousand tons was sailing from Baltimore, Maryland, with a mixed cargo much of which was copper and cotton, to the port of Liverpool. She was not far off the north-western coast of Ireland, some one-hundred sixty kilometres from Donegal, when she was torpedoed without warning by the German submarine U-61.

The vessel sank and eleven of its crew perished.

The son of Joseph Delaney, fisherman and farmer, and of Lucy (also spelled as *Lucie*) Delaney (née *Blanchard**) of Sandy Point (South-Side), District of St. George, Newfoundland, he was also brother to Marie-Adelaide, Euphrosina-Frances, Joseph, Albert, Susie, Margaret and to Roderick.

**The couple had been married at Sandy Point on November 15, 1885.*

Seaman Delaney died on August 25 of 1917 in the sinking of the *SS Sycamore* at the reported age of twenty-two years: date of birth in Sandy Point, Newfoundland, May 16, 1895 (from the 1911 Census).



(Right: *A Memorial Scroll, a copy of which was distributed to the families of those who had sacrificed their life while in the Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve*)

Seaman Delaney served only in the Royal Navy and was not in the service of Canada as is cited in some sources, notably the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Seaman Timothy Samuel Delaney was entitled to the British War Medal (centre) and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).



The above dossier has been researched, compiled and produced by Alistair Rice. Please email any suggested amendments or content revisions if desired to criceadam@yahoo.ca. Last updated – January 22, 2023.