



Seaman Dugald Steed (also found as *Dugold, Douglas* and *Stead*), Number 1032x, having no known last resting-place, is commemorated on a bronze beneath the Caribou at the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel.

Having received a summons to service from the naval authorities, he thereupon travelled from his place of residence in Catalina to St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland where, on October 15 of 1914, Dugald Steed reported...*to duty...**on the Naval Reserve training ship, HMS *Calypso*, moored in the harbour (see below).



The records show that Dugald Steed had prior to that October 15, 1914, already been a sailor of the Royal Naval Reserve (Newfoundland). Firstly, his Application Form for enlistment into the Royal Naval Reserve has him enrolling on March 14 of 1913 – but there appear to be no subsequent details; and the HMS *Calypso* Drill Register records him as having...*commenced training class 5/3/14...completed training 4/5/14...which suggests that he underwent two twenty-eight day programs in a row.*

Again there appear to be no further details. It must be assumed that he then went home until the events of that summer of 1914 necessitated that he fulfil his obligations and return to St. John's for war-time service which he did in mid-October.



It is not really clear what Seaman Recruit Steed's duties may have been once back on *Calypso* although it is likely that the double training program earlier that year had been more than enough to satisfy the Authorities*.

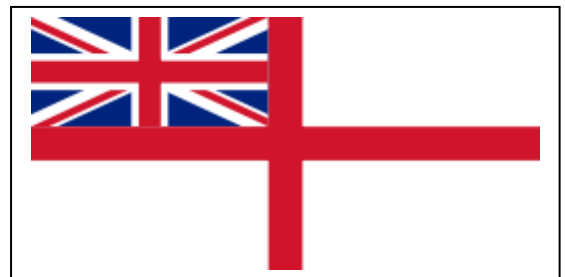
**It appears that in many cases, even if the recruit in question had not already previously been with the Royal Naval Reserve, the required twenty-eight day training period, all or partially, was oft-times waived.*

(Preceding page: *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 short-lived 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.

(Preceding page: 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)

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.

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.



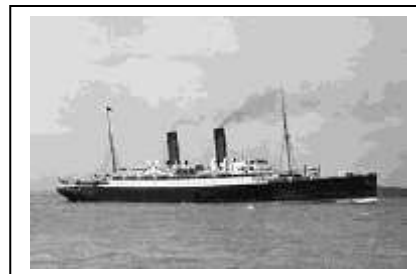
(Right above: HMS 'Calypso' in full sail. She was to be re-named 'Briton' in 1916 when a new 'Calypso', a modern cruiser, was about to be launched by the Royal Navy. – This photograph, taken by the Royal Navy in 1898, is by courtesy of Admiralty House Museum)

Following those afore-mentioned five weeks in St. John's, Seaman Steed, one of a draft of three-hundred nine Naval Reservists and officers, embarked on November 5-6 onto the

Cunard ocean-liner *Franconia* which had arrived in St. John's having sailed from New York on her trans-Atlantic way the United Kingdom.

Their ship then having docked in the English port-city of Liverpool on November 12, several of the Reservists were posted directly to a ship. Others were ordered to undergo further training at various Royal Navy establishments and, likely having journeyed by train, reported to these bases on or about November 13.

(Right: A relatively new vessel, 'Franconia' had been launched on July 23 of 1910. Remaining un-requisitioned as a troop transport until early 1915, it was to be well over a year later that on 4 October, 1916, while heading for Salonika, she was torpedoed and sunk by a German U-boat to the east of Malta. The ship was not carrying troops at the time, but out of her 314 crew members, 12 died. – image from Wikipedia)



It would appear that Seaman Steed was to be one of this latter category as he was transferred to HMS *Pembroke* upon his disembarkation. *Pembroke* was the Royal Naval establishment at Chatham on the River Medway, itself a tributary of the better-known River Thames, in the county of Kent. Not only was *Pembroke* a barracks – it operated as such from 1878 until 1983 – but it was the name given to a number of training establishments – a goodly number during the War - most not far-removed from Chatham, and which were numbered according to the purpose of the training – or otherwise - involved.

***Pembroke I* was the training station for regular seamen and also the location of those holding-barracks from where seamen would sooner or later be attached to one of His Majesty's ships. Thus it was likely *Pembroke I* to which Seaman Steed was to be posted .**

****There was also a series of ships named 'Pembroke', the last several of which were used as depot ships and for harbour service at Chatham. This is the 'HMS Pembroke' found on the cap-bands of the sailors who served there perhaps in their thousands - but many of whom were never to set eyes on the actual ship in question.***

Naval discipline being distinct in some ways from the laws that governed other parties such as the Army and civilians, sailors had to be on the books of a serving naval vessel to be legally subject to naval law and order, even when these sailors were serving on land.

Thus the elderly and obsolescent vessels that plied the waters adjacent to the many naval land establishments – and known as stone frigates – were in theory the home ships of the tens, hundreds, thousands of men who laboured on shore.



Which is why Seaman Steed would have worn an HMS 'Pembroke' cap-band.

(Preceding page: *A few of the impressive buildings of the large Royal Navy complex which was the HMS 'Pembroke' naval establishment at Chatham for just over one hundred years. Today it has been transformed into a university campus. – photograph from 2010*)

Seaman Steed was to be stationed at *Pembroke* for seven weeks less a day, until December 24, at which time he was to be transferred to an elderly vessel, HMS *Royalist*, which in 1913 had been re-commissioned as HMS *Colleen*.

As was the case with *Pembroke* at Chatham, there were two *Colleens*: one was a vessel of that name which was now the depot ship – and administrative centre – for the war-time naval base of the same name, located at Queenstown (today *Cobh*, pronounced as Cove) on the southern coast of Ireland*.

**Ireland at the time of the Great War was a British possession and one of the British Isles. It was to be during the period between the two World Wars that the country became the independent nation that it is today.*

Queenstown – named as such in 1849 for a visiting Queen Victoria – had already by that time been an important naval base since the Napoleonic Wars and was to remain so during the remainder of the years of British sovereignty. As one might surmise, it lost none of that importance during the years of the *Great War*.

As with most of the other vessels which shared their name with a shore-based establishment – *Pembroke*, *Vivid*, *Ceto* etc., HMS *Colleen* was not to venture out into the perils of the high seas. But there was a number of smaller vessels operating out of Queenstown for whom the depot ship was responsible in such matters as financial expenditure – crew's wages for example -, personnel, supplies, armaments et al..



(Right above: *HMS 'Royalist', seen here before becoming HMS 'Colleen', was a hybrid corvette – both sail and steam – built in 1883, and was in many ways similar to HMS 'Calypso' (later 'Briton'), the Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve training-ship. – photograph from Wikipedia*)

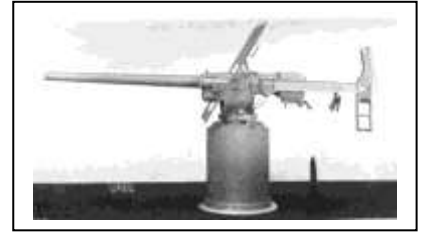
It is not recorded in his files whether Seaman Steed was at any time to work on board the base ship HMS *Colleen*, but although the exact date once again has gone undocumented, he was at some unspecified time to join the crew of His Majesty's Trawler *Bradford*, one of those afore-mentioned *smaller vessels*.

Bradford was a hired trawler, one of hundreds requisitioned by the British Admiralty during the course of the *Great War*. Built in 1896 she was thereupon registered in the English east-coast fishing port of Grimsby as GY. 132.. In 1914 she was refitted for war-time work and equipped with a single six-pounder gun before coming into service with a crew of twelve in November of that year and assigned to Queenstown and to HMS *Colleen*.



(Preceding page: *Royal Navy armed trawlers in the port of Dover during the Great War – from the Imperial War Museum web-site...iwm.org.uk..*)

(Right: *A Quick-Firing Hotchkiss six-pounder gun such as would had been mounted on the fore-deck of the trawler Bradford – from Wikipedia*)



Whether the crew of HMT *Bradford* was ever to fire that gun in anger is not recorded among Seaman Steed's papers, but the vessel and likely he were at least obliquely involved in one of the better-known incidents of the conflict



(Above: *Lusitania on the day of her maiden-voyage arrival in New York City in September of 1907 – The photograph is from Wikipedia.*)

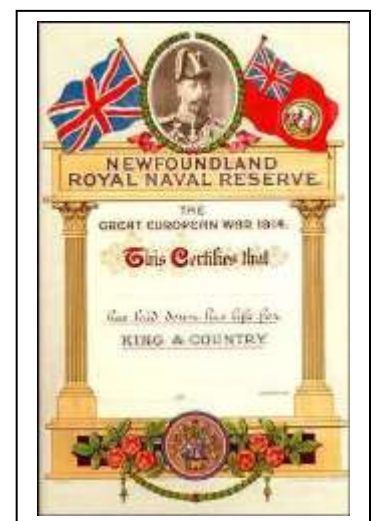
The ocean-going passenger-liner *Lusitania*, owned by the *Cunard Company*, was torpedoed and sunk – in some eighteen minutes – by a German U-boat on May 7 of 1915 at a point some eighteen kilometres off the south coast of Ireland. HMT *Bradford*, on patrol at the time, was to take part in the rescue of survivors. More than eleven-hundred lives were lost.



(Right above: *The burial place of some of – and memorial to – those lost in the sinking of Lusitania is seen here in Cobh Old Church Cemetery, County Cork, Ireland. – photograph taken in 2011*)

Some seventeen months later after the *Lusitania* tragedy, months apparently without incident other than the routine of patrols, on October 26, 1916, HMT *Bradford* once again put out to sea from Queenstown. She was last recorded as seen on that afternoon at twenty minutes to five.

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



(continued)

October 26, 1916, following the custom of the last sighting being recognized as the time of a ship's disappearance, was recorded as the date of death of all her crew except that of Seaman Steed. No reason is cited although it is speculated that the weather did not become exceptionally bad until October 28 – and it was felt to be on that day that *Bradford* must have foundered – which still does not really explain the exception of Seaman Dugald Steed to the rule.

The son of Joseph George Steed, former fisherman, deceased on April 27, 1917, of diabetes, and of Anna Maria Steed (née *Sutton**) of Little Catalina, Newfoundland, he was also brother to Benjamin, Selina-Ellen, Ralph, Julia, Elizabeth and Mary-Maria.

**The couple was married in the community of Little Catalina on December 27. 1888.*

Seaman Dugald Steed was reported as having...*drowned at sea...on October 28, 1916, off the coast of the Old Head of Kinsale, southern Ireland, although the exact date is not certain (see further above), at the age of twenty-two years: date of birth in Little Catalina, Newfoundland, July 25 of 1894 from his enlistment papers, but August 25, 1895, from the Newfoundland Birth Register.*

(Right: The sacrifice of Seaman Dugald Steed is honoured on the Monument which stands in the grounds of the United Church in Little Catalina. – photograph from 2014(?))



Seaman Steed 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 Dugald Steed was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, as well as to the British War Medal (centre) and the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal) (right).



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 20, 2023.