



PRIVATE M. BALL	31. 3. 1919
1ST BN ROYAL NEWFOUNDLAND REGT	
SEAMAN H. B. BARNES	25. 7. 1918
NEWFOUNDLAND ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE	
SEAMAN A. BRINSTON	1. 7. 1917
NEWFOUNDLAND ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE	
PRIVATE J. CAINES	15. 6. 1918
3RD BN ROYAL NEWFOUNDLAND REGT	
PRIVATE R. COLBERT	7. 6. 1918
3RD BN ROYAL NEWFOUNDLAND REGT	
PRIVATE P. DOBER	23. 10. 1918
3RD BN ROYAL NEWFOUNDLAND REGT	
PRIVATE H. DUNN	3. 4. 1920
1ST BN ROYAL NEWFOUNDLAND REGT	
PRIVATE J. FITZGERALD, MM	23. 8. 1920
3RD BN CANADIAN INFANTRY	
PRIVATE C. FUDGE	12. 6. 1918
3RD BN ROYAL NEWFOUNDLAND REGT	
PRIVATE G. T. FUDGE	22. 6. 1918
3RD BN ROYAL NEWFOUNDLAND REGT	
PRIVATE P. HICKS	18. 6. 1918
3RD BN ROYAL NEWFOUNDLAND REGT	

Seaman Herbert Bramwell Barnes, Number 2096x, while he is commemorated in Mount Pleasant Protestant Cemetery in St. John's, has found a last resting-place in a private cemetery in the Smith's Sound, Trinity Bay, community of Clifton,.

Having decided to answer the call of the naval authorities for volunteers, he thereupon travelled from the Trinity Bay community of Champney's (formerly known as Salmon Cove, and changed to Champney's possibly just prior to 1920) to St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland where, on May 3 of 1916, Herbert Bramwell Barnes

reported...to duty...on the Naval Reserve training ship, HMS *Briton*, moored in the harbour (see below).

On that early-May day he enlisted* for the first time into the Reserve (see further below), was signed on to serve for the...*Duration of the War***...and underwent the required medical assessment on the morrow. 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.)



***At the outset 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.

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.

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.

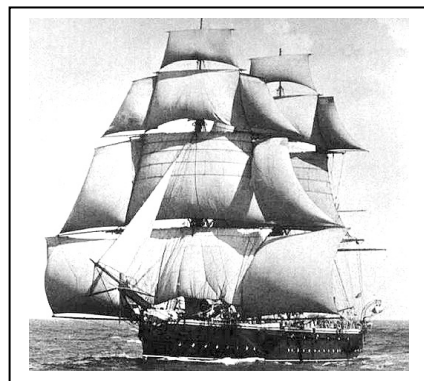
(Right above: HMS 'Calypso' in full sail. She was to be re-named 'Briton' in early 1916 when a new 'Calypso', a modern cruiser, was about to be launched by the Royal Navy. – This photograph, taken of the 'Newfoundland Calypso' by the Royal Navy in 1898, is by courtesy of Admiralty House Museum)

(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)

(Right: The newly-constructed 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)

Sixteen weeks and four days after having reported to HMS Briton, and having been promoted by this time from the rank of Seaman Recruit, the now-Seaman Barnes was to board ship on August 27 for trans-Atlantic passage to the United Kingdom and to overseas service.

The ship was the SS Sicilian at the time making its third – and last - direct ocean crossing of the year from St. John's. On this occasion it was again to carry personnel of the Newfoundland Regiment – a draft of two-hundred forty-two officers and other ranks that was also leaving for overseas service although their destination was to be the Regimental Depot in Scotland rather than Royal Navy establishments in southern England.



(Preceding page: Some sixteen years previously - as of 1899 when 'Sicilian' was launched – the vessel had served as a troop-ship and transport carrying men, animals and equipment to South Africa for use during the Second Boer War. During the Great War she was apparently requisitioned as a troopship on only one occasion: in October of 1914 she was a vessel of the armada which transported the (1st) Canadian Division overseas to the United Kingdom. She otherwise continued to work commercially between Great Britain and Canada for her owners, the Allan Line and later Canadian Pacific, at times carrying soldiery if and when her schedule allowed.

Upon the arrival of *Sicilian* in British waters, the ship proceeded to the south-coast Royal Naval port of Devonport where the first contingent of the Newfoundland Regiment had landed with the (1st) Canadian Division in October of 1914.

(Right: A no-longer bustling Devonport Harbour, today bereft of its former importance – photograph from 2012)



Having arrived in port on or about September 9, from there, while the soldiers now boarded a train for the journey north to Scotland and other sailors were dispatched onwards to their English destinations, Seaman Barnes remained *in situ* to report to the Royal Navy complex of HMS *Vivid*, established there at Plymouth-Devonport.

***Vivid I* (the establishment had several Divisions) was a training ground for seaman recruits and also one of the holding barracks for already-trained seamen awaiting a posting to one of His Majesty's ships and it was *Vivid I* to which Seaman Barnes was then attached for a period of just less than six months.**

***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 only a shore base and a holding-barracks for seamen awaiting postings during the Great War), Chatham, and Portsmouth for example, were terrestrial facilities 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.

HMS 'Vivid', the base to which Seaman Barnes had been ordered after his arrival in the United Kingdom from Newfoundland, was not only all the buildings and facilities on shore, but also a small, elderly, nondescript depot ship (originally HMS 'Cukoo', built 1873), to which all the naval personnel was attached and was the name to be emblazoned on the bands of their cap.

These establishments were at times divided into sections: the holding barracks at 'Vivid I' was where the seamen (as opposed to engine-room personnel, for example, who were sent to 'Vivid II') such as Seaman Barnes were likely initially to be stationed – as well as potential signallers and telegraphers – to await service on one of His Majesty's ships.

(Right: A main gateway to the once-Royal Navy establishment at Plymouth-Devonport – photograph from 2011(?))



It was not to be until one-hundred seventy-two days following his attachment to *Vivid I* – a period which also comprised the days spent crossing the Atlantic Ocean – that a summons called Seaman Barnes to duty.

The *duty* in question was to be served at HMS *Ganges*, a combination of a land-based complex and an elderly ship, in earlier days known as HMS *Elephant* then *Minotaur*. The complex was based in the county of Suffolk in the small village of Shotley and also in the not-distant port of Harwich on the North Sea.



(Right above; The photograph of HMS 'Ganges II' (ex-HMS 'Minotaur') which reverted to simply HMS 'Ganges' for the duration of the Great War is from the RN Communications Branch Museum/ Library web-site via Google.)

Seaman Barnes was to be attached to *Ganges* for two periods: From February 2 of 1917 until October 31 and then from November 27 of the same year until February 23 of the next. However, what his tasks were to be, on HMS *Ganges* the ship or the shore-based facilities of the same name, is not clear.

During the intervening twenty-five-day period of November 1 to November 26, he was apparently to serve on a ship – the name appears to have been *Ireswith*, perhaps *Ipswich* – but the author has been unable to establish the existence of the first and unable to confirm Seaman Barnes' presence on the second which, in any case, was apparently not serving in that area at the time.

Harwich was a busy place during the *Great War* with a flotilla of cruisers and destroyers located there for offensive action against the Germans located in occupied Belgian harbours on the other side of the North Sea some hundred fifty kilometres distant. There was also based in Harwich a defensive force of paddle-steamers and fishing trawlers and drifters converted for use as mine-sweepers, one of these more likely to have been Seaman Barnes' vessel – although not found in his files.



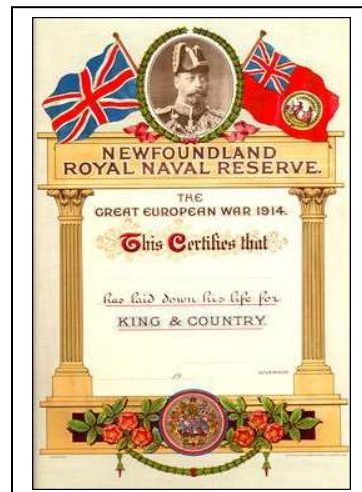
(Right above: Paddle-minesweepers at Harwich on April 15 of 1918 – from the Harwich and Dovercourt History web-site via Google.)

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February 24 of 1918 saw the name of Seaman Barnes' added to the nominal roll of *Pembroke I*, another Royal Navy shore-based establishment, this one situated in the naval town of Chatham on the River Medway, a tributary of the better-known River Thames, and downstream to the east of London.

He was to remain on the nominal roll at Chatham until April 4-5, perhaps to await a further posting in British waters or, as it would seem, until the Authorities were able arrange his passage back to Newfoundland to serve at HMS *Briton*.

It may well have been by this time, of course, that he was exhibiting the symptoms of the malady to which he would soon succumb, and that he was to be invalided home.



On that aforementioned April 4-5 he was once again bureaucratically transferred, on this occasion to HMS *Briton*, which suggests that this was the date on which either he arrived back in Newfoundland or, more likely, was placed on board a ship in the United Kingdom for passage back to Newfoundland – possibly on *Mauritania* which departed Liverpool on April 8, to arrive in Halifax on April 15.

(Right above: 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)

The son of William James Barnes, fisherman, and of Melina (also found as *Melinda*) Barnes (née *Hiscock*), of the community of Salmon Cove West (later *Champney's West*), Trinity Bay, Newfoundland, Seaman Barnes was also brother to Annie and to Alfred*.



(Right above: The photograph of the SS 'Mauritania' seen here in war-time dazzle camouflage is from the 'Wikipedia' web-site.)

Seaman Herbert Bramwell Barnes is reported as having died in the General Hospital in St. John's from pneumonia on May 25, 1918, at the recorded age of twenty-four years of age: date of birth in Salmon Cove West, Trinity Bay, Newfoundland, August 15, 1894 (from his enlistment papers and the Newfoundland Birth Register).

Seaman Barnes 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.

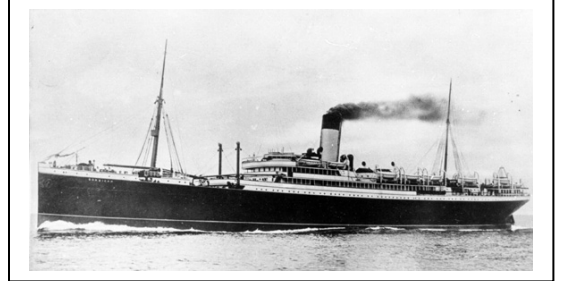
Seaman Herbert Bramwell Barnes was entitled to the British War Medal (left) and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

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****His younger brother Alfred, Number 8213, was to serve in the Newfoundland Forestry Corps. He had enlisted on May 28, 1917, as a recruit of the Fifteenth Draft at the age of twenty years and eight months, and had likely sailed for the United Kingdom on overseas service in July of that same year.***

Having served overseas in Scotland, on January 30 of 1919 he boarded the Canadian Pacific Line ship 'Corsican', then making its first post-War crossing from Liverpool en route eventually to St. John, New Brunswick. Nine days after sailing, at six o'clock in the evening on Saturday, February 8, the vessel arrived in St. John's, Newfoundland, with over a thousand service-men on board, Private Alfred Barnes among that number.



(Right above: The image of the SS 'Corsican', an 'Allan Line Ship' before the Company's sale to 'Canadian Pacific', is from the 'Maritime History Archive' (the Captain Harry Stone Collection) web-site.)

Officially...taken on strength...by the Regimental Headquarters in St. John's as of February 7, he was to be discharged some two months later, on April 23 of that 1919.

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.