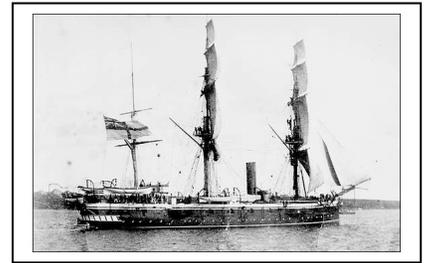
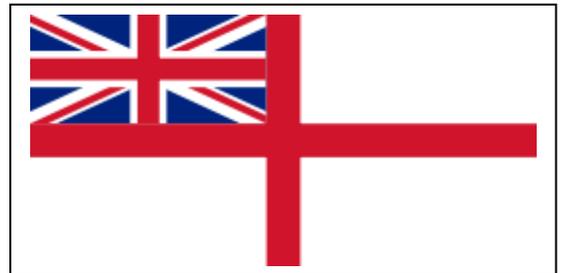


(Right: At the outset of their career, the ‘Calypso-Class’ ships were apparently considered to be superior vessels. Hybrids - powered by both steam and sail - they were able to police the outer reaches of the British Empire most efficiently and economically. The rapid progress in engine technology, however, 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.

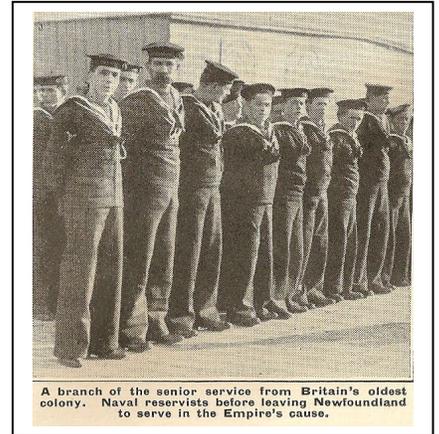
Just fewer than four-hundred men were sought to enroll as seamen – apparently automatically at the rank of Able Seaman - and to present themselves annually in St. John’s for five years in order to train for a period of twenty-eight days per annum. Allowed to report at a time of their own choosing, it 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)

Seaman Hall's scant personal file suggests him leaving for service overseas on or about May 29, three weeks and a day following his enlistment. However, the Discharge Register of the Royal Naval Reserve (Newfoundland) suggests that he was to board the armed merchant cruiser HMS *Calgarian* in St. John's Harbour as one of a draft of eighty-five reservists, on the twentieth day of that June* - it was the seventeenth - and in the company of the two-hundred forty-two men and officers of 'F' Company of the Newfoundland Regiment on its way to Scotland.

(Right: The photograph of Newfoundland military personnel in tenders on their way to board 'Calgarian' is from the Provincial Archives. 'Calgarian' was not a requisitioned troop transport but in September of 1914 had been taken over by the British government to serve as an armed merchant-cruiser. She did, however, as on this occasion, at times carry troops and civilian passengers across the Atlantic. She was later torpedoed and sunk by U-19 off the north of Ireland on March 1, 1918.)



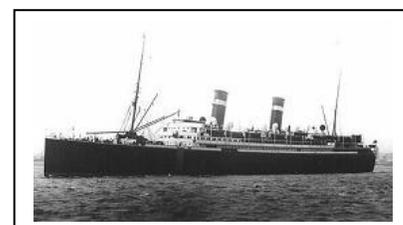
***Apparently the ship took nineteen days to make what was usually the journey of about a week. Not only was *Calgarian* escorting three submarines, but she sailed by way of the Portuguese Azores and then Gibraltar – some of the Newfoundlanders apparently even having the time to cross the straits to spend a few hours in North Africa. She reached Liverpool on July 9.**



(Right above: *The British Crown Colony of Gibraltar in pre-Great War days: The Spanish mainland is in the background beyond the harbour and Royal Navy dockyard. – from a vintage postcard*)

The story follows of HMS *Calgarian* and her trans-Atlantic crossing of June 20 to July 9, 1915...

The armed merchant cruiser HMS 'Calgarian' arrived in St. John's Harbour from Halifax at about six o'clock in the morning of June 17, anchored and almost immediately began coaling. Her log suggests that she had sailed alone rather than in the company of the submarines (see below) since at times 'Calgarian' had been doing sixteen knots and the submarines' top speed was only thirteen.



(Right above: *The photograph of the SS 'Calgarian' is from the naval-history.net web-site.*)

At about five-fifteen of that same evening of June 17 the personnel of 'F' Company of the Newfoundland Regiment came on board as well as eighty-seven naval reservists and a single petty officer.

June 18 was to be spent transferring stores to HMS 'Calgarian' and completing the coaling of the ship. On this day is first mentioned the SS 'Glenalmond', a smaller cargo ship which was to accompany 'Calgarian' across the Atlantic to Gibraltar, the vessel from which some of the above-mentioned stores were to be drawn, and on which a small detachment of eight naval reservists and some few more senior ranks were to travel.

Also noted for the first time in the log of that June 18 was one – the vessel H2 - of the apparently four submarines – 'H1', 'H2', 'H3' and 'H4' - which were to be escorted across the ocean. They had presumably already made the journey from Montreal where they had been built to St. John's where they had been awaiting 'Calgarian'. Where exactly the SS 'Glenalmond' fits into the picture is not clear unless she was the submarines' depot ship or acting as an ocean-going tug.

'Calgarian' sailed out of St. John's Harbour at ten minutes past ten on the morning of June 20, 1915, at a speed of ten – then lowered to eight – knots. This had surely been to allow the submarines, otherwise un-mentioned, to keep pace with the larger vessel.

Proceeding at a reduced rate of speed, often about eight and a half knots, it was not until the afternoon of June 26 that the small convoy of HMS 'Calgarian', SS 'Glenalmond' and the four small submarines reached 'Flores Island' in the Portuguese Azores. During those

days 'Calgarian' had been towing Submarine 'H3', at times its crew being required to repair a broken towline.

The remainder of the afternoon and early evening was spent anchored off 'Flores Island' with the submarines in turn drawing alongside to take on fuel (diesel oil) and supplies. It was a task soon accomplished and – after 'H3's towing-line had once more been repaired – the ships were on their way again at a speed of nine knots just after ten o'clock on that same evening of June 26.



(Right above: 'Delgado Point' on 'Flores Island', close to where the convoy anchored, and then past which it sailed on June 26, 1915 – photograph the cruisemapper.com)

It was not to be until the late morning of July 3 that they arrived at the British possession of Gibraltar situated at the narrow entrance to the Mediterranean Sea. This was to be where HMS 'Calgarian' would part ways with 'Glenalmond' – her eight naval reservists and five higher ranks to transfer immediately to 'Calgarian'*

*The four submarines were now to enter the Mediterranean Sea and proceed to the island of Malta from where they were to operate for the remainder of the Great War – except for H3 which would strike a mine a year later, on July 15, 1916, and be lost with all on board.



(Right: The photograph of 'H4' in Brindisi Harbour in August of 1916 is from Wikipedia.)

Two days only were spent in Gibraltar although a number of those on board were able to leave the ship for 'liberty' on July 4. On July 5, having taken on board coal, supplies and a number of German prisoners-of-war, the ship sailed at eight o'clock in the evening and for the first time in some two weeks was able to proceed at a speed greater than ten knots. She was now en route to Liverpool.

There she arrived without incident of July 9 and at ten minutes past eight of the following morning, HMS Calgarian's record-keeper documented... "Clypso" (sic) Boys left ship.

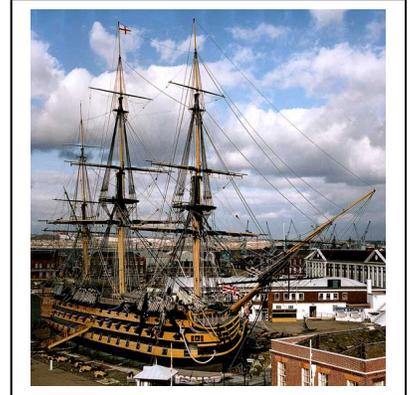
(The above has been adapted from the log-book of the armed merchant cruiser HMS 'Calgarian' for the period of June 13, 1915, to July 9, 1915.)

On July 10 of that 1916, Calgarian having docked in Liverpool, the Naval Reserve personnel would thereupon have been either posted directly to a ship or ordered to undergo further training – or to simply wait - at one of various Royal Navy establishments – these for the most part operating around the coast of England.

In the case of Seaman Hall, not immediately attached to a vessel, Victory I (see below) was the posting to which he was directed and where he was to remain until July 17, seven

days hence, of that same year – although what his occupations were to be during this time is unclear.

HMS ‘Victory’, like most of the so-called stone-frigates (naval establishments on shore), was three entities: it was a training establishment originally, and also a holding-barracks for seamen not only in training but awaiting a posting to one of His Majesty’s ships, its facilities initially set in the naval city and port of Portsmouth*; thirdly, it was also the ship to which the majority of the land-based personnel would have been, at least officially and bureaucratically – if not physically - attached**. At Portsmouth this vessel was HMS ‘Victory’, the warship from which Admiral Nelson had directed the Battle of Trafalgar – although her illustrious history is not limited to that one single incident.



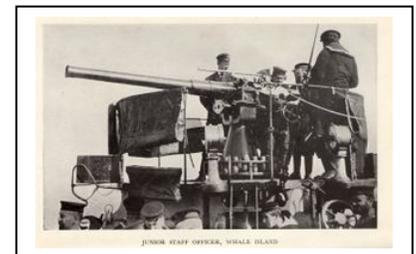
****The large influx of personnel due to the War necessitated further Divisions and functions being transferred to other areas of the United Kingdom.***

(Right above: HMS ‘Victory’ in dry dock in the southern English port-city of Portsmouth where she has been for a century – photograph from Wikipedia)

*****Naval discipline differed in some ways from civil and even Army law, and those in naval uniform, even though based on land and perhaps never to go to sea, had to be on the books of a real ship for that discipline to be applied. Thus a normally small and obsolescent vessel was used for this purely bureaucratic purpose.***

Having passed those seven days at Victory I, Seaman Hall was ordered dispatched to service at the Royal Navy Gunnery School on the nearby Whale Island: HMS Excellent*, from where on a fine day Portsmouth Harbour may be seen.

****HMS ‘Excellent’ was the name – and also still is 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 adjacent: Drill on a naval gun on Whale Island during the period of the Great War – from Wikipedia)

And 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: The Royal Navy Memorial on the coast at Portsmouth whence may be seen ‘Whale Island’ – photograph from 1917)

Which is why Seaman Hall would, after *Victory I*, have worn an HMS *Excellent* cap-band – although not for very long as, only thirty-three days afterwards, he was to be transferred to the Royal Navy base at Gibraltar, HMS *Cormorant*.

His Service Records show that on August 21 of 1915 Seaman Hall was transferred, at least officially, to service with HMS *Cormorant* where he was to remain for more than a year, until September 13 of 1916.

There were at the time two hired fishing-vessels on the Royal Navy's books named *Cormorant* but they were also numbered: *Cormorant III* and *Cormorant IV*, the enumeration made to avoid any problems of identification. But there was a third vessel, the un-numbered *Cormorant*, the harbour-service and base-ship stationed at the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea at Gibraltar.



Seaman Hall's *Cormorant* not being numbered, this is surely the one on which he was to serve during that winter of 1915-1916...except that all the other shore-based facilities – barracks, armouries, dock-yards etc. – were also a part of HMS *Cormorant*, and thus he may never have set foot on the ship itself.

(Right above: *The image of HMS 'Cormorant' is from Wikipedia. She was one of five such vessels built for the Royal Navy and commissioned in and about 1878 for use in the surveillance of Britain's numerous trade routes. Stationed as far afield as Australia, the Pacific and Canada's west coast, in 1889 she was ordered to Gibraltar to play several roles for some sixty years, until 1949 when she was ultimately scrapped.*)

There appears to be no record of Seaman Richard Hugh Hall's duties on board *Cormorant* – or elsewhere - at Gibraltar, and after those fifty-five weeks at HMS *Cormorant* he was back – or soon to be back - in England, on the nominal roll of another Royal Navy shore-based establishment, *Pembroke I*.

HMS *Pembroke** was the Royal Navy establishment at Chatham on the River Medway, itself a tributary of the better-known River Thames, in the county of Kent. Not only was it a barracks – it operated from 1878 until 1983 – but it was the name given to a number of training establishments, mostly not far-removed from Chatham, which were numbered according to the purpose of the training – or otherwise - involved.

Pembroke I was the training station and holding-barracks for regular seamen and it was, as seen above, *Pembroke I* to which Seaman Hall was to be attached.

**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 who were never to set eyes on the actual ship in question.*

Thus these 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 ashore.

(Right: Some of the impressive buildings of the large Royal Navy complex which was a part of 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)

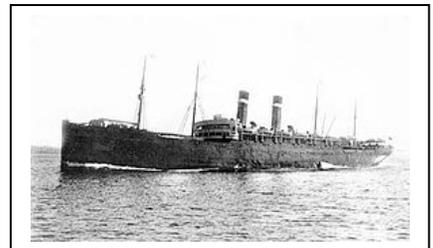


A further seven months were now to pass before Seaman Hall received his next posting: it was to HMS *Idaho*, this, since August of 1916, the name given to the Auxiliary Patrol and *Q-ship* Base at Milford Haven in the Principality of Wales. He was officially attached to *Idaho* as of April 25 of 1917.

However, while Seaman Hall was to spend all that time *on the books* of *Pembroke I*, he had not always been physically present there. The passenger list of the SS *Southland* of the *White Star-Dominion Line*, sailing from Portland, Maine, via Halifax and which would arrive in Liverpool on December 17 of that 1916, records that Seaman Richard Hugh Hall had disembarked from the vessel on that day as one of a detachment of fifty-two Newfoundland Reservists, some returning through Halifax *to duty* in the United Kingdom after furlough at home, with others of course sailing overseas for the first time.

Seaman Hall had apparently been one of those fortunate enough to have been deemed deserving of a period of leave at home.

(Right: The photograph of the Red Star Line – later White Star-Dominion Line - ship 'Vaderland', later 'Southland' – is from the Wikipedia web-site.)



Once in the United Kingdom and as was the practice as seen further above, Seaman Hall and his travelling comrades-in arms, if not posted directly to a ship, were dispersed to the various Royal Navy establishments around the coast of England. Thus Seaman Hall found himself back at HMS *Pembroke I* at Chatham.

There he was to spend more than four months awaiting a posting before being ordered transferred to HMS *Idaho at Milford Haven on April 24-25 - as recorded in a previous paragraph.**

****As was the case at 'Victory' and 'Pembroke', there was also a ship of the same name to which the base personnel was attached; she was a requisitioned steam yacht, HMS 'Idaho', armed with a single one-pounder quick-firing gun and which was used at Milford Haven during the Great War as a local patrol vessel and apparently later as a tug-boat.***

***Idaho's* role at this time was also to act as a base ship, to be responsible for the personnel, the arming, fuelling, provisioning, maintenance as well as the finances of a flotilla of smaller boats, usually trawlers and drifters and the such-like which operated out of the Haven.**

But once again there appears to be no documentation available recording the duties and tasks allocated to Seaman Hall during his tenure there whether on land or afloat. This applies equally to the smaller craft of the above-mentioned flotilla, no name being recorded on Seaman Hall's service record - as it usually was if and when a seaman was attached to one of them.

On June 20 of that same 1917 Seaman Hall officially returned from *Idaho* to *Pembroke I* where he was once again to await His Majesty's pleasure to be assigned to one of His ships. On this occasion the wait was to be of one-hundred six days duration.

Discovering HMS *Wallington* is a bit complex and anything that the author has entered here deserves confirmation from other sources. Before the *Great War* it was the name of a trawler which was later to be requisitioned as a Boom Defence Vessel in December of 1914, and which had later served as a mine-sweeper, until 1919,

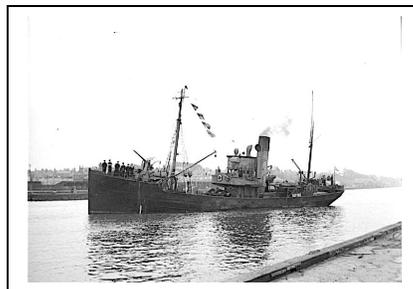
It was also to be the name of an elderly cruiser, HMS *Wallaroo*, which became *Wallington* after the conflict, in 1919, when it became the depot ship for the naval base of the same name: *Wallington*.

It was the aforesaid naval base, HMS *Wallington*, to which Seaman Hall was to be dispatched. In fact, it was not a single entity but a composition of smaller establishments situated on the River Humber, on England's east coast, in such places as Grimsby, Immingham, Kingston-upon-Hull and Barton-on-Humber. Each of these ports was to have its own flotilla of small craft which sailed in the defence of the coast as patrol vessels, inspection vessels, escorts and mine-sweepers.

Having joined HMS *Wallington* on October 6 of 1917 – although exactly which particular facility appears not to have been recorded – it was not until New Year's Day of 1918 that he was to join a ship, His Majesty's Trawler *Prefect*. A vessel of three-hundred tons built in 1916, she had been hired by the Admiralty upon her completion and armed with a four-inch gun, a twelve-pounder gun and a single 7.5-inch naval howitzer, a new anti-submarine weapon. In March of 1916 she had entered into war-time service. The vessel was to survive the conflict and would serve in a like role during the Second World War some twenty years later.



(Right: A quick-firing naval twelve-pounder (the weight of the shell) and twelve hundred-weight (1200 lbs. the weight of the barrel and breech) gun, here seen adapted for use in 1941. – photograph taken at the Royal Artillery Museum 'Firepower' at Woolwich in 2010)

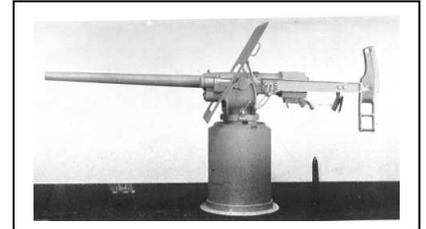


Having completed an uneventful three months on board *Prefect*, Seaman Hall was to immediately transfer to a second hired trawler. On April 1, 1918, he officially stepped onto the deck of HMT *Lochiel*, also based at *Wallington*.

(Preceding page: A 'Castle-Class trawler' of the Great War. During the War, 1456 such vessels were requisitioned from ports around the British Isles and even elsewhere, of which two-hundred sixty-four were to be lost. – an official Royal Navy photograph from the Imperial War Museum via Google)

(Right below: A Quick-Firing Hotchkiss 6 pounder gun such as would have been mounted on the fore-deck of the trawler 'Lochiel' – from Wikipedia)

She was a trawler which had been built eight years before Prefect and which had seen civilian fishing service. Weighing sixty tons less than Seaman Hall's previous ship, *Lochiel* was armed more lightly, with a single twelve-pounder gun and also a single six-pounder weapon. Even so, she was apparently sufficiently equipped to be chosen as the 'Senior Officer' of the armed trawler section of an escort group.



Such was the case at four in the morning of July 24, 1918, when five such trawlers and four destroyers were to leave the Humber en route northward to the River Tyne with a convoy of thirty-eight merchant ships. The expected time of arrival was nine o'clock in the evening of that same day.

At a quarter past four on that afternoon HMT *Lochiel* was, without any warning, blown up, perhaps by a mine, perhaps by a torpedo – the exact cause has apparently never been ascertained. In fact it has been surmised that had it been the latter, *Lochiel* would not have been the target and had perhaps in fact sailed into the path of a torpedo destined for another ship.

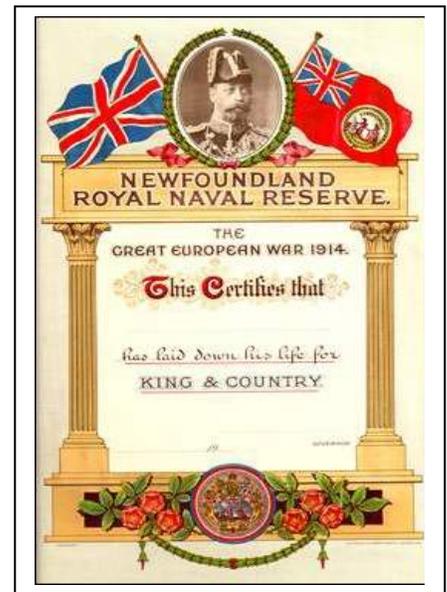


Twelve crew members died in the incident.

(Right above: The photograph of Seaman Richard Hugh Hall - his cap-band suggesting that he was serving on a torpedo-boat at the time, although no mention of this is to be found in his files – has been donated by the Hall Family of Campbell's Creek, Newfoundland, to the Virtual War Memorial, Veteran's Affairs Canada.)

The son of Alexander Hall, railway worker, fisherman and farmer and of Elizabeth Hall (née *Jennings**) of Highlands before Campbell's Creek, District of St. George on Newfoundland's west coast, he was brother to John-Clement, Patrick-J., Dorothy, James-A., Charles-L., and to Mary.

*The couple had married in the community of Grand River, Codroy, on September 3 of 1894.



Seaman Richard Hugh Hall was recorded as having been...*killed in action*...on July 24 of 1918 at the *reported* age of twenty-five years: date of birth at the Highlands, District of St. George, Newfoundland, July 8, 1893 (recorded on his enlistment papers) but July 15, 1895 (from the 1911 Census) and also July 8, 1895 (from a copy of Newfoundland Vital Statistics).

(Preceding page: *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*)

Seaman Hall 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 Richard Hugh Hall was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, as well as to the British War Medal (centre) and 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.

