



Stoker First-class Timothy O'Sullivan, Service Number SS/109468 of the Royal Navy, is interred in Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Cemetery in St. John's: Grave reference, Naval and Military Plot.

How it came to be that Timothy O'Sullivan (elsewhere found as simply *Sullivan* – as was the case with many on the names today preceded by *O'*) came to serve on the Royal Naval Reserve (Newfoundland) training ship, *HMS Calypso*, may be followed on his Service Record, but the *reason* for his transfer may apparently only be surmised.

Born in the region of Ballynamought, county of Cork, southwest Ireland, Timothy O'Sullivan was working as a farm labourer when he decided to enlist – it is suggested at Devonport - which he did for a five-year period on November 27 of 1909.

He was attached to *Vivid II*, a Royal Naval shore-based establishment on England's south coast at Plymouth-Devonport, on the same day perhaps as that was where he had just enlisted. *Vivid II* was the Division of HMS *Vivid* which was dedicated to the training of stokers – much of the Royal Navy was still powered by coal well into the War years - and other engine-room personnel and Recruit O'Sullivan was to remain there for a total of two-hundred two days, until June 17 of 1910.



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

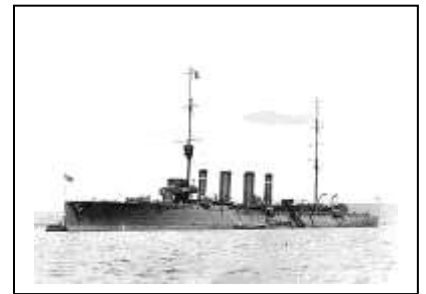
Having left *Vivid II* with the rank of Stoker Second-class, he was dispatched to serve on the armoured-cruiser, HMS *Devonshire*.



(Right: *The image of HMS 'Devonshire' shown here is from the naval-history.net web-site. Launched in 1904 she was soon obsolete and was to leave service in May of 1921.*)

His service on Devonshire was to last until December 7 of 1911 during which period, on May 1, he was to be promoted to the rank of Stoker First-class, the rank that he would carry to Newfoundland.

He was now on December 8 to return to *Vivid II*, likely to await a further posting, orders that soon were to be issued and result in his transfer to HMS *Dartmouth* another armoured cruiser. This vessel was soon to join the Third Battle Squadron but its, and thus Stoker O'Sullivan's, employment during the year 1912 – apart from a brief posting to Gibraltar – is not clear.

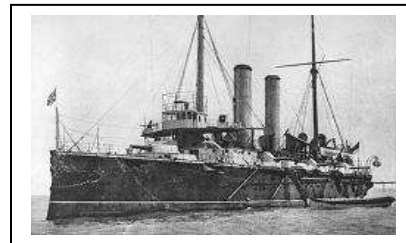


(Right above: *Some ten years younger than 'Devonshire', 'Dartmouth' was to survive the Great War which she spent in service in the Mediterranean, not to be decommissioned and sold for scrapping until 1930. – The photograph is from the 'Wikipedia' web-site.*)

On October 20 of 1912 Stoker O'Sullivan was once more reporting back to *Vivid II*, a posting which on this occasion was to be of some twelve weeks.

It was to be during the following period that, most likely without having been aware of it – although he most surely would have been once he had set foot on the deck of HMS *Calypso* in St. John's two years later – his association began with Newfoundland.

On January 11 of 1913, Stoker O'Sullivan was attached to the elderly Edgar-class cruiser HMS *Endymion*, a vessel which was soon to become an element of the 10th Cruiser Squadron (also known as the *Northern Patrol*) whose task it was to enforce the blockade of Germany by patrolling the area of stormy waters encompassed by Ireland, northern Scotland, Iceland and the Shetlands and Orkneys, a thankless job at the best of times: during the tempestuous winter months, even worse.



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

By November of 1914 the elderly cruisers of the Squadron, too inadequate to battle the conditions of the North Atlantic, were being replaced by larger requisitioned vessels, many of them passenger ships which had been converted and armed for the interception and inspection of suspected blockade-runners.

As Stoker O'Sullivan's *Endymion* and her associated ships were being withdrawn from the Atlantic to later serve in the Mediterranean, these afore-mentioned merchant vessels, termed as His Majesty's Armed Merchant Cruisers, replaced them as the 10th Cruiser Squadron (*Northern Patrol*).

Many personnel of the Royal Naval Reserve (Newfoundland) were to serve on those armed merchant cruisers and, on two occasions – the losses of HMS *Viknor* and HMS *Clan McNaughton* – the Newfoundland sacrifice was to be large.

Stoker O'Sullivan left HMS *Endymion* on November 27-28, 1914, after his posting to her of almost two years, when the ship sailed into Devonport Harbour to be paid off (*decommissioned and taken out of service*) for some six months. On the morrow, November 28, he was to one again return to the familiar *Vivid II*, there to remain for some four months before orders were acted upon for him to travel to the Dominion of Newfoundland and to the capital city, St. John's, where was stationed the Royal Naval Reserve (Newfoundland) training ship, HMS *Calypso*.

His service records show that Stoker First-Class O'Sullivan was taken onto HMS *Calypso*'s nominal roll on April 3 of 1915. However, exactly what his role was to be upon his arrival in St. John's is not clear.

Whatever that role was to be, it was not to be of particularly long duration.



(Right above: *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*)

Perhaps the son of David and Mary (O')Sullivan, but certainly of Ballynamought, County Cork, Ireland, he was also brother of Mary (*Mrs. Mary Donoghue of Little Island, County Cork*).

Stoker O'Sullivan was recorded as having...*died of illness (pulmonary tuberculosis)*...in St. George's Hospital on November 5 of 1915 (this found in the Newfoundland Death Register) and on the same date in Signal Hill Hospital (cited from his own personal service records) – both in St. John's*.

**St. George's Hospital is recorded as having been destroyed in 1892, the year of the Great Fire, its work to be undertaken by the 'Fever Hospital'. At the time of the Great War there were apparently a 'fever' hospital used for infectious disease cases on Signal Hill although it was being less and less used by the twentieth century. It is also recorded that in 1887 the government had opened a fever hospital on Forest Road and it may have been this facility which was to eventually replace the one on Signal Hill and where Stoker O'Sullivan was to receive medical attention – but this is not certain.*

However, why the terms 'St. George's Hospital' and 'Signal Hill Hospital' were apparently still in use at the time of Stoker O'Sullivan's passing is not clear.

Stoker O'Sullivan served with the Royal Navy but was not a seaman of the Royal Naval Reserve (Newfoundland) even though he served with it.

Stoker First-class O'Sullivan was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, to the British War Medal (centre) and to 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 21, 2023.