

“Her name was “Daybreak”.

The S.S. DAYBREAK



**Nineteen seventeen it was – during perilous days,
The freighter S.S. Daybreak loaded deep with maize,
Steamed along on Christmas Eve near the Southern Rock,
Off the coast of County Down abeam of Strangford Lough,
No notice or forewarning, a torpedo found its mark,
It came and blew the nose right off – plunging all in dark
The vessel’s screw rotating during its descent,
Her boilers then exploding as underneath they went.**

**U – Boat Eighty Seven had loosed her lethal load,
To meet this helpless target on a winter’s ocean road,
One and twenty brave men - the total of her crew,
Murdered in the Irish Sea by folk they never knew,
It was seen by witnesses or perhaps we’d never know,
What occurred to brave men dragged down far below,
Entombed there now forever, thirty fathoms deep,
Akin to unsung mariners in Davy Jones’s keep.**

Joe EARL

The late John Bailie of Newcastle townland was the boat contractor attending the South Rock Lightship for 42 years before retiring in 1955. Part of his contract was that if the crew were short-handed he would remain on board. He described the loss of the steamer Daybreak on 24 December 1917, one mile east of the lightship-

'I remember being on the South Rock as a temporary, 2s/6d a day and feed yourself. On Christmas Eve 1917 about midday the Daybreak loaded with maize was torpedoed and 21 were lost. Her nose was cut clean off. It happened so quick her propeller was going round in the air as she sank. You talk about explosions, boilers bursting one after another.'

IN MEMORIAL :

GREENWAY, Boatswain (Bosun) THOMAS, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 24 December 1917. Age 47. Son of the late James and Mary Greenway; husband of the late Nora Greenway. Born at Kinsale.

BARRETT, Ordinary Seaman, JAMES, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 24 December 1917. Age 18. Son of Patrick and Hannah Barrett, of Fisher St., Kinsale, Co. Cork.

O'CONNOR, Able Seaman, WILLIAM, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 24 December 1917. Age 39. Son of Michael O'Connor and the late Ellen O'Connor; husband of Ellen O'Connor (nee McCarthy), of Higher St., Kinsale, Co. Cork. Born at Browns Mills, Kinsale.

Casualties of S.S. DAYBREAK, WW 1

Commonwealth War Dead 1914-1918

ARCHANGEL ALLIED CEMETERY, Russian Federation

ROSS, Ordinary Seaman, JOHN HAMILTON, J/51016, S.S. "Daybreak.", Royal Navy. Killed by an internal explosion of the vessel 8 November 1916. Age 21. Son of Mr. O. B. and Mrs. M. H. Ross, of Canton, Helensburgh, Dumbartonshire. Grave Ref. C. 9. (Coll. Grave).

CHATHAM NAVAL MEMORIAL, United Kingdom

VERNEY, Able Seaman, SAMUEL, London Z/5790, S.S. "Daybreak.", Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. Killed in action with submarine 24 December 1917. Age 19. Son of Sophia Kempley (formerly Verney), and John James Kempley (stepfather), of 41, Baythorne St., Mile End, London. 27.

PLYMOUTH NAVAL MEMORIAL, United Kingdom

SUMNER, Signaman, FRANK, Bristol Z/105, S.S. "Daybreak.", Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. Killed in action with submarine 24 December 1917. Age 18. Son of Edith Sumner, of Fenny Compton, Leamington Spa and the late Elijah Sumner. 25.

TOWER HILL MEMORIAL, United Kingdom

BARRETT, Ordinary Seaman, JAMES, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 24 December 1917. Age 18. Son of Patrick and Hannah Barrett, of Fisher St., Kinsale, Co. Cork.

BIANCHI, Fireman, PAOLO, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 24 December 1917. Age 37. Son of the late Giorgio, and Consdata Bianchi; husband of Elena Bianchi, of 52, Sda Sta Maria, Casal Zebbug, Malta. Born in Malta.

COLLINS, Able Seaman, W, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 24 December 1917. Age 35. Born at St. Johns, Newfoundland.

DOBSON, Second Mate, JOHN EDWARD TOMLIN, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 24 December 1917. Age 30. Born at Polruan, Cornwall.

FREDERICKSEN, Able Seaman, T, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 24 December 1917. Age 19. Born in Denmark.

GOMEZ, Able Seaman, JACINE, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 24 December 1917. Age 35. Born in Portugal.

GREENWAY, Boatswain (Bosun) THOMAS, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 24 December 1917. Age 47. Son of the late James and Mary Greenway; husband of the late Nora Greenway. Born at Kinsale.

GULWELL, Mess Room Steward, ERNEST, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 24 December 1917. Age 17. Son of George and Phoebe Gulwell (nee Reed), of 44, Arthur St., Cadoxton, Barry, Glam. Born at Tewkesbury.

HARROP-GRIFFITHS, Second Engineer, JOSEPH, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 24 December 1917. Age 23. Son of David Harrop-Griffiths and Charlotte Harrop-Griffiths, of Brondeg, Pontardulais, Glam. Born at Pontardulais.

HOLLAND, Ship's Cook, JAMES ALLCOCK, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 24 December 1917. Age 45. Son of the late James Allcock Holland and Betsy Holland. Born at Birkenhead.

KENNEDY, Fireman, JOSEPH, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 24 December 1917. Age 33. (Served as BONNER), Son of Joseph Kennedy, of 26, Thomas St., Londonderry, and the late Catherine Kennedy (nee Banner).

MUSCAT, Fireman, MICHAEL, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 24 December 1917. Age 39. Son of the late Guisepe and Rosa Muscat; husband of Carmela Muscat (nee Carnane), of 103, Sda Reale, Casal Zebbug, Malta. Born at Bona.

O'CONNOR, Able Seaman, WILLIAM, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 24 December 1917. Age 39. Son of Michael O'Connor and the late Ellen O'Connor; husband of Ellen O'Connor (nee McCarthy), of Higher St., Kinsale, Co. Cork. Born at Browns Mills, Kinsale.

OWEN, First Mate, WILLIAM, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 24 December 1917. Age 39. Son of the late Owen and Charlotte Owen; husband of Mariah Owen (nee Davies), of Coed Hyfryd, Bethesda, Carnarvonshire. Born at North Llanllechid.

PEPPER, Ordinary Seaman, THOMAS, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 8 November 1916. Age 18. Son of Henry Pepper, of 7, Lavender St., Dame Agnes St., Nottingham. Born at Nottingham.

POPE, Master, S F, "Daybreak.", Mercantile Marine. 24 December 1917.

POSTLETHWAITE, Steward, TOM BENNETT, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 24 December 1917. Age 62. Husband of Mary Postlethwaite (nee Robinson), of Brookside, Applethwaite, Keswick, Cumberland. Born at Keswick, Cumberland.

WILKINS, Fireman, W, S.S. "Daybreak" (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine. Drowned, as a result of an attack by an enemy submarine 24 December 1917. Age 27. Born at Southampton.

[Remembered with Honour](#)

GREENWAY, Boatswain, Thomas, S.S. Daybreak (West Hartlepool), Mercantile Marine