

John Edward STONE



Born: 10th April 1894, Torquay, Devon
Occupation: Serving sailor
Enlisted: Devonport: 24th February 1913
Unit: HMS Blake
Rank/number: Stoker: No.K18080
Death: Died, 15th November 1918
Detail: Four days after the war ended John died of the Spanish Flu in the pandemic that would kill millions worldwide. The disease swept through his ship, *Blake*, which was based at Rosyth in Scotland. In just four months ten of the crew died. John's coffin was carried by Royal Navy seamen at his funeral in Padstow Cemetery on Wednesday 20th November 1918.

Age at death: 25

Military info: John, a porter, enlisted in the Royal Navy a year before the war. Aged 19, he was 5ft 5ins tall, with brown hair, grey eyes and a fresh complexion. His initial rank was Stoker 2nd Class, the equivalent of a private in the army. When he died he was one rank higher. Throughout his five years in the service he saw service in a number of ships. For his initial training he was posted to the shore base Vivid 2, where he stayed from 24th February 1913 to 1st September the same year. He spent a few weeks on the armoured cruiser *Defence*. Around this time John went absent without leave and spent 14 days in detention. On 14th October 1913 he returned to *Defence* and the following February became Stoker 1st Class. The *Defence* was flagship of Rear-Admiral Ernest Troubridge, commander of the Mediterranean Cruiser Squadron, and he would have a lead role in the botched pursuit of the German battlecruiser *Goeben* and light cruiser *Breslau* in the first month of the war in August 1914. The escape of the German warships would have major implications for the allies and wrecked Troubridge's career. Two years later *Defence* blew up with the loss of all 900 crew at the Battle of Jutland on 31st May 1916. Fortunately, John was not on the ship at the time, possibly on leave. On 28th August 1916 John was posted to *Blake*, an old cruiser converted into a depot ship for the 11th Destroyer Flotilla, based with the Grand Fleet at Scapa Flow. *Blake* would have stayed at Rosyth. Early in 1917 John, then aged 24, married Sarah Juliff, a girl from Torquay, Devon. Their time together would be tragically short.

Grave/memorial: John is buried in Padstow Cemetery, and is also commemorated at St Petroc's Church, Padstow and on the Padstow War Memorial.

Family info: Father: John Stone, born Torquay, Devon in 1872. Labourer. Mother: Hannah Folland, born St Blazey, Cornwall in 1874. They married in 1894 - 6 children.



This information was researched by Peter Smith, who is currently writing a book about Padstow's part in the Great War. Anyone wishing to correct errors or supply additional information can write to him at 24 Mallard Drive, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5PW. Also phone 01825 762226 or email smithpeter24@gmail.com

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