

George Douglas WOOD



Born: 1897, Edinburgh, Scotland
Occupation: Naval cadet, Maritime Marine
Enlisted: Merseyside: 4th August 1914 (Royal Naval Reserve)
Unit: HMS India
Rank/number: Midshipman RNR
Death: Killed in action, 8th August 1915
Detail: George was drowned at sea after his ship, the British armed merchant cruiser *India*, was sunk by the U-22 off the island of Bodo in the North Sea. The vessel, with its crew of 301, was hit by a torpedo fired by Kapitan Hoppe inside the territorial waters of neutral Norway.

The subsequent Norwegian protests were too late to help the 160 who died.
18

Age at death:

Military info:

On the outbreak of war George was 17 and studying to be an officer in the Maritime Marine at HMS *Conway*, a training ship, based on the Mersey at Liverpool. He arrived there two years earlier after an education at Edinburgh Academy. George joined the Royal Naval Reserve and on 24th March 1915 he was appointed Midshipman (temp) RNR and posted to *India*, a pre-war P&O liner. Early in 1915 she was commandeered by the Royal Navy who fitted her with guns and converted her for use as an Armed Merchant Cruiser. Her captain was Commander William Kennedy, RN. George was appointed his ADC. The *India*, painted grey and carrying deck-mounted guns, joined the 10th Cruiser Squadron in May and began patrolling off Norway. Her task was to ensure neutral ships carrying war supplies did not breach Britain's naval blockade of Germany. In June the *India* docked at Glasgow and George visited his old school. "No-one who spoke with him then could fail to be struck by his keenness and enthusiasm for the profession which he had chosen," recalled the Edinburgh Academy magazine. "Boy as he was, he showed already a confidence and capacity beyond his years." But the war was about to get serious for George. On 10th July the *India* was attacked by a sub, but the torpedo missed. Her luck ran out on 8th August as she patrolled off Vestfjord. At 5.25pm a torpedo hit the ship and George was never seen again.

Grave/memorial: George is commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial in Kent and also at St Petroc's Church, Padstow and on the Padstow War Memorial.

Family info: Father: George Wood, born Roxburgh, Scotland in 1854. Boot manufacturer. Mother: Annie Bastard, born Padstow, Cornwall in 1860. Wed in 1895, they had 2 sons. George is cousin of Arthur Cross, also on Padstow Memorial.



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

+Lest we forget+