

No Picture Available



John Charles Tucker

Seaman

Royal Naval Reserve (Newfoundland)

Royal Navy

Service # 895X

World War I

Born: 22 March 1886

Died: 25 June 1917

Place of Birth: Ship Cove, Port de Grave, Newfoundland

Parents: John George and Sarah Fanny Tucker

John was in his mid to late 20's when he enlisted in the Royal Naval Reserve Newfoundland and subsequently served in the Royal Navy of Great Britain.

He was married to Mary Ann French of Coley's Point, Newfoundland and they had a son, Lewis born in August 1913.

As a seaman, John was posted to the HMS *Laurentic*, a passenger liner that in 1914, mainly due to its speed was converted to an armed merchant cruiser (AMC) and fitted with eight 6-inch and two 6-pounder naval guns. As an armed troop ship *Laurentic* saw service in the Kamerun Campaign, and also the African theatre.



HMS Laurentic

In 1917 German mines sank *Laurentic* off the northern coast of Ireland. Her crew successfully abandoned ship, but 354 of them died of hypothermia in lifeboats. The *Laurentic* was carrying about 43 tons of gold bars when she sank. Most of the 3,211 bars were salvaged by 1924.

Account of the sinking:

“At 1700 hrs Laurentic left Buncrana in a bitterly cold blizzard. There were reports that a U-boat had been sighted near the mouth of Lough Swilly. Laurentic was due to rendezvous with a destroyer escort off Fanad Head, but her commander, Captain Reginald Norton, chose to proceed without it.

At 1755 hrs, just north of the lough, Laurentic struck a mine that had been laid by SM U-80. It exploded abreast

of *Laurentic's* foremast. 20 seconds later a second mine exploded abreast of her engine room, which disabled her dynamo and pumps. The crew were unable to transmit a wireless distress message but fired a distress rocket. Both explosions were on her port side, to which she soon listed 20 degrees, making it hard to launch the lifeboats.”

John was among the dead, killed as a direct result of enemy action, his body was not recovered.

John is commemorated on the Newfoundland Plaque at Beaumont-Hamel, France. There is also a Memorial Stone in his memory at St. Luke’s Old Anglican Church Cemetery in Port de Grave.

Meanwhile, his family back home received the dreaded news. His wife Mary Ann, now a single mom was left to raise their son on her own. Some help was provided for the family through the Ministry of Pensions

The 1921 Newfoundland general census shows Mary Ann 33 and son Lewis 8, living in Ship Cove, Port de Grave.

1935 and 1945 census entries find Mary Ann living in Ship Cove, Port de Grave. She never remarried and then on July 12th, 1964, passed away at her residence of a heart attack.

MINISTRY OF PENSIONS
CLAIMANT

Service No. TUCKER
(Other Labels)

Clerical Name Mary Ann

Wife's Name TUCKER John Charles

Regimental Official } No. 375 Rank Rating } Sergeant

Regimental Step } RN Relationship to man } Widow

Registered No. 75006

OS/W

Ministry of Pensions, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada