

ST JAMES CHURCH TAUNTON
WORLD WAR 1 MEMORIAL PROJECT

John Huddy

Name: John Huddy

Rank: Lieutenant

Service Number: ?

Regiment: Royal Naval Reserve

Battalion/Unit number: HMS Bayano

Date/year of Birth: 1st March 1886

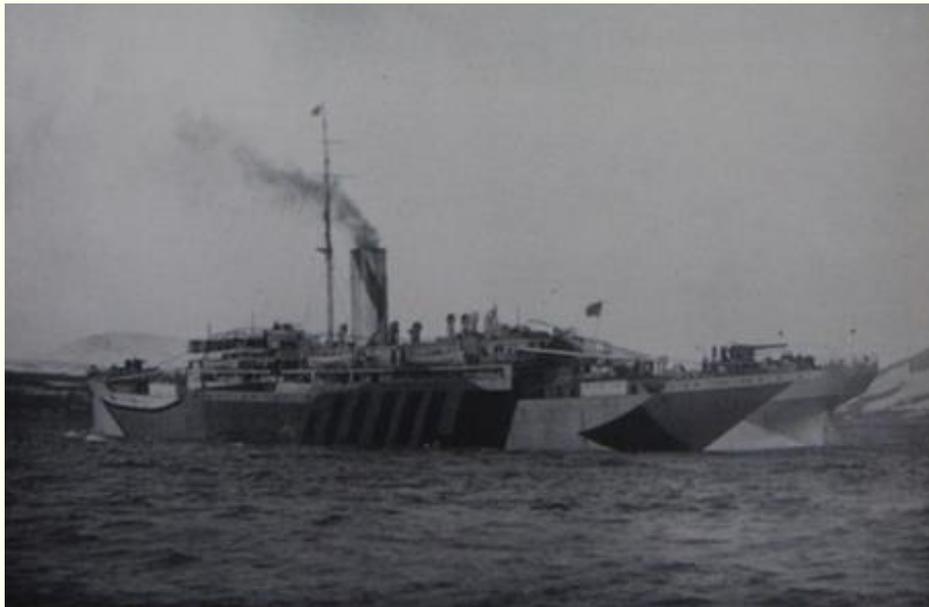
Place of Birth: Dowlish Wake, nr. Ilminster

Place of Residence: Weir Lodge, Staplegrove Road, Taunton

Date of Death: 11th March 1915

Place of Death: Off Corsewall Point

Burial/Memorial: Portsmouth Naval Memorial



John was born on 1st March 1886, the son of farmer Edmund Huddy and his wife Rosa England. He had four older sisters Mabel, Helen Flora and Rosa and two younger brothers, Edward and Charles both of whom fought in the Great War. Edward was killed on the Somme in 1916.

John attended Taunton School and in the 1901 census he is a boarder there. In 1914 his address is given as Weir Lodge, Staplegrove Road, which was where his widowed father was living in 1911.

Edward probably entered the Merchant Navy on leaving school - Ancestry notes a Certificate of Competency dated 10th October 1907, but the link to the certificate is inaccurate. The fact that he was in the RNR would support this.

John Huddy served aboard HMS Bayano, as an RNR Sub Lieutenant. Bayano was an armed merchant cruiser carrying 2 six inch guns, formerly owned by Elders and Fyffes. Built in 1913, it was requisitioned by the Navy in November 1914 and captained by Commander Henry Carr. John was confirmed in his rank on 22nd February 1915. On 13th March 1915 the Bayano was torpedoed by a German U boat U27 commanded by Kommander Wegener 3 miles off Corsewall Point, Stranraer. The ship was on the way from the Clyde to re-coal in Liverpool. The ship sank in under three minutes and 196 men lost their lives, many off duty sleeping below decks. Only 4 officers and 22 men survived - attempts to rescue them being thwarted by the presence of the German U boat. (Casualty list reported in the Times 13/15/18.3.1915).

Rough Translation of Record from the U boat commander's log book:

"05:00 March 13 1915 Big dimmed merchantmen = first taken for a warship = driven from the inner fjord forth in sight. Assault. Bow torpedo meets steamer in the front third. Firing Range 2-300m, the size of the steamer about 8000t, dimmed, nationality unknown. Steamer sinks with bow high in approximately 10 minutes. Three boats with torch fire to water."

"Grosser abgeblendeter Handelsdampfer = erst für Kriegsschiff gehalten = vom inneren Fjord her in Sicht. Angriff gefahren. Bugtorpedo trifft Dampfer im vorderen Drittel. Schussweite 2-300m, Grösse des dampfers etwa 8000t, abgeblendet, Nationalität unbekannt. Dampfer sinkt mit Bug horan in etwa 10 Minuten. Drei Boote mit Fackelfeuer zu Wasser."

(Great War Forum)

U27 was later sunk by the Q ship Baralong and her surviving crew shot out of hand in an incident later described as a war crime.