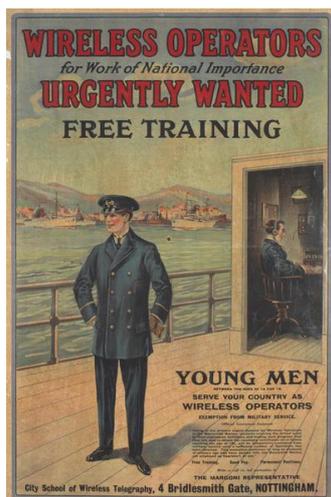


George Arthur Arnold



At the outbreak of WW1 the Royal Navy was desperately short of trained wireless operators. As merchant ships sailed into port, their wireless operators were 'commandeered' and transferred to the Royal Navy. This in turn created a critical shortage in the Merchant Navy. In answer to a Government's advertisement, an army of young men (some just 16 years old) came forward to train in Morse code and the operation and maintenance of wireless apparatus. Wireless aboard all ships was now a necessity and it was also essential to carry two or more operators to keep a constant vigil.

Before the war George was an Assurance Collector. He died on 6th April 1917 - a wireless operator.



YOUNG MEN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 16 AND 18, SERVE YOUR COUNTRY AS

WIRELESS OPERATORS
EXEMPTION FROM MILITARY SERVICE

'Owing to the present urgent demand for Wireless Operators in the Mercantile Marine, students entering the school prior to their eighteenth birthdays, and making such progress that they are able to obtain the necessary certificates on or before reaching the age of 18 1/4, will be temporarily exempted from military service until a sufficient number of Operators has been obtained. This exemption continues so long as students of military age who have passed into the Mercantile Marine are employed as Operators at sea.'

Free Training. Good Pay. Permanent Positions.

George may well have been one of the young men who replied to this advertisement.

On April 6th, 1917, SS Powhatan, on a voyage from Sabine Texas to Kirkwall, with a cargo of oil, was torpedoed and sunk in the Atlantic Ocean by the German submarine U-66 25 miles NW of North Rona, in the Outer Hebrides. 36 persons were lost, including George. George, born in 1891, lived with his mother and father, Charles Arnold and Emily nee Warby, at 38 Eve Road, Isleworth. His father was a slater, and his brother Charles was also an Assurance Collector. It is not clear when George changed his job to become a Mercantile Marine. He left £387 1s to his father Charles. George's name is recorded on the Tower Hill Memorial in London which commemorates the men and women of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets who died in both World Wars without a known grave. George was awarded the Mercantile Marine War Medal and is remembered on the All Souls' Memorial, Northcote Road, St Margarets.



SS Powhatan