

## APPENDIX 12

### Archibald BORTHWICK aka Harry DEAN

Who Harry DEAN was is still a mystery. Information on his Discharge A card indicates that he was Canadian and he may have been born in 1908. The one thing that can be said for certain is that he did not die on 22 October 1941 aboard the RFA Darkdale. Despite being on the crew list and on the list of those who perished, sent by Master CARD to the Ministry of Defence, <sup>1</sup> Harry DEAN was not on board. The man who signed up to join the voyage was in fact Archibald BORTHWICK.

Archibald's story begins with his birth at five minutes past midnight on the 12 April 1908 at 74, Ann Street, Greenock.<sup>2</sup> His parents were James BORTHWICK, a railway plumber and Mary nee DOHERTY. His parents were married by declaration and under the warrant of The sheriff substitute of Renfrew and Bute on the 22 January 1901.<sup>3</sup> James' father, George BORTHWICK also worked on the railways as a shunter.

Archibald was one of ten children though two of his siblings had died before 1911.<sup>4</sup> Those still alive were his older brothers George and John, his younger brothers James, Robert and Vincent and his sisters Agnes and Anne.<sup>5</sup>

By 1921 George and John BORTHWICK had joined their father working for the railway as porters. It may be that Archibald would have followed the same path. However, in 1929, according to a letter written to the Ministry of Defence by his mother, Archibald met a sailor down on his luck and bought his Discharge A card. That sailor was Harry DEAN and Archibald assumed his identity to use the card.<sup>6</sup>

For the next 12 years Archibald lived as Harry DEAN. The first record of Archibald using the name DEAN on a voyage is on the immigration record of the ship the Prometheus which arrived in London May 1931 and has Harry DEAN listed as a passenger, a sailor, with the home address care of BORTHWICK Greenock.<sup>7</sup> His Discharge A card, stamped on 28 May 1931, states that no

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<sup>1</sup> Registry of Shipping and Seamen. Coast Trade Official Log Books and Crew Agreements. 165991 RFA Darkdale. BT110/1212/16. National Archives (Great Britain), Kew, England : accessed 16 October 2023

<sup>2</sup> Births (CR) Scotland. Greenock, Renfrew. 12 April 1908. BORTHWICK Archibald. 564/2 287. <https://www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk> : accessed 23 October 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Marriages (CR) Scotland. Greenock, Renfrew. 22 January 1901. BORTHWICK James and DOHERTY Mary. 564/1 15. <https://www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk> : accessed 13 October 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Census Records, Scotland. Greenock, Renfrew. 02 April 1911. BORTHWICK James (head). 564/2 37/15. <https://www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk> : accessed 13 October 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Census Records, Scotland. Greenock. Renfrew. 19 June 1921. BORTHWICK James (head). 564/2 6/16. <https://www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk> : accessed 20 October 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Registry of Shipping and Seamen. Coast Trade Official Log Books and Crew Agreements. 165991 RFA Darkdale. BT110/1212/16. National Archives (Great Britain), Kew, England : accessed 16 October 2023

<sup>7</sup> Passenger Lists for *Prometheus* arriving London. DEAN Harry. 28 May 1931. Collection : UK and Ireland, Incoming Passenger Lists, 1878-1960. Bt26; Piece: 963; Item: 79. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 8 December 2023.

previous discharge card was available. It is plausible that Harry disposed of the card he used to join the voyage so that he could get a new one matching his physical description. He is described on this card as being between 5 foot 1 inches and 5 foot 6 inches with a wan complexion, brown eyes and fair hair.<sup>8</sup> Another discharge card, stamped in on the 20 March 1935, shows him to have made fourteen voyages between 1930 and 1936.<sup>9</sup>

On 21<sup>st</sup> 1934 Archibald was married using the identity of Harry DEAN in Stirling, Scotland. His bride was Margaret BRYCE a 28-year-old mill worker.<sup>10</sup> Harry gave his father's name as James DEAN a railway guard and his mother as Mary Dean nee DOHERTY.

The marriage lasted seven years before a notice of divorce appeared in the Sunday Post of 22 June 1941 for "Harry Dean otherwise Archibald Borthwick, fitter, 22 Greenock against Margaret BRYCE or Dean 77 Dalrymple St, Greenock.<sup>11</sup> Archibald had signed onto the Darkdale on 20 May 1941 for her second voyage, having previously served on the British Zeal. Therefore, the ship had already left for St Helena when the divorce announcement was made public.

Archibald was a pump man on the Darkdale earning £12.02 shillings and sixpence with an allowance of 2 pounds a month. He had named his mother Mary, then living at 11 Cornhaldrich St, Greenock, as his next of kin so it was Mary who was notified of his death.<sup>12</sup> Mrs Borthwick apparently received the letter with her son's name as Harry DEAN.

Amongst papers attached to the Crew Agreement of the Darkdale which deal with the aftermath of the sinking there is a letter dated 12 March 1942 which Mrs Borthwick wrote to the Ministry of Defence as follows

"Dear Sir.

My sons name was Archibald Borthwick the name Harry Dean was adopted in 1929 when he first went to sea. The reason for the change of name as explained to me in his first letter home was that he had purchased a Seaman's discharge book from a seaman in straitened circumstances. Once started the name had to be continued to correspond with the name on the discharge book.

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<sup>8</sup> Registrar General of Shipping and Seaman. British Merchant Seamen. DEAN Harry. 28 May 1931. Discharge No Canadian 3068. Collection : Britain, Merchant Seaman 1918-1941. National Archives (Great Britain), Kew, England. <https://findmypast.co.uk> : accessed 16 December 2023.

<sup>9</sup> Registrar General of Shipping and Seaman. British Merchant Seamen. DEAN Harry. 20 March 1935. Discharge No Canadian 3068. Collection : Britain, Merchant Seaman 1918-1941. . National Archives (Great Britain), Kew, England. <https://findmypast.co.uk> : accessed 16 December 2023.

<sup>10</sup> Marriages (CR) Scotland. Falkirk, Stirling. 21 May 1934. DEAN Harry and BRYCE Margaret. 479/16. <https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk> : accessed 13 October 2023.

<sup>11</sup> *Sunday Post*. (1941) Scottish Divorce Decrees. *Sunday Post*. 22 June. p. 2c. <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk> : accessed 21 December 2023

<sup>12</sup> Deaths (CR) Scotland. 22 October 1941. DEAN Harry. 031/MR 454 <https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk> : accessed 21 December 2023.

Yours truly signed Mary Borthwick”<sup>13</sup>

There followed several letters between the Admiralty and the Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen as to whether they should change the name of the deceased from Harry DEAN to Archibald BORTHWICK. The fact that the change of name had occurred in 1929 and that the original discharge card had been issued to a Canadian complicated the issue. Eventually it was decided that the CR 1 form, the official form of notifying a seaman’s death, would include the name Archibald BORTHWICK. <sup>14</sup>

It is Archibald’s name that appears on the merchant seaman memorial on Tower Hill <sup>15</sup>and on the Jamestown memorial tablet which was erected in 1961. <sup>16 17</sup> Before this memorial was created a Memorial roll was drawn up to be displayed in St James’s Church Jamestown St Helena. The first draft was produced from the crew list of the Darkdale and had Harry DEAN’s name on it. This was changed to Archibald BORTHWICK on advice from the St Helena government.<sup>18</sup> Archibald is also commemorated on the Scottish National War Memorial, Edinburgh.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Registry of Shipping and Seamen. Coast Trade Official Log Books and Crew Agreements. 165991 RFA Darkdale. BT110/1212/16. National Archives (Great Britain), Kew, England : accessed 16 October 2023

<sup>14</sup> Registry of Shipping and Seamen. Coast Trade Official Log Books and Crew Agreements. 165991 RFA Darkdale.(Correspondence) BT110/1212/16. National Archives (Great Britain), Kew, England : accessed 16 October 2023

<sup>15</sup> Commonwealth Grave Commission. Tower Hill Memorial. 22 October 1941. BORTHWICK Archibald. MV Darkdale (Glasgow) Panel 34. <https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead> : accessed 16 September 2023.

<sup>16</sup> Monumental Inscription. St Helena, Jamestown. 22 October 1941. BORTHWICK Archibald. Photo added by Chris White. Find a Grave Memorial: ID 215968692. <https://www.findagrave.org> : accessed 16 December 2023.

<sup>17</sup> Historicalrfa.uk. The Story of the Darkdale Part 3. <https://historicalrfa.uk/the-story-of-the-darkdale-part-3/> : accessed 26 September 2023.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Monumental Inscription, Scottish National War Memorial, Edinburgh. 22 October 1941. BORTHWICK Archibald. <https://www.snmw.org/roll-search/> : accessed 16 October 2023.

