

Berwick Register Feb 6th, 1918:

Capt. Brannen's Great Work.

One of the outstanding characters who lost his life in the great Halifax disaster was Captain Horatio H. Brannen, commander of the S.S. Stella Maris, who was making an heroic effort to reach the burning Mont Blanc and tow her to a place of greater safety before the catastrophe came.

Captain Brannen was born at Woods Harbour, Shelburne county, forty-five years ago, and so was just coming into manhood's fullest prime when his life was so tragically cut off. When a mere lad, he came to Clark's Harbour, Cape Sable Island, and engaged in fishing, where his enterprise and integrity soon won for him a foremost place. He was not content to fish along the smaller lines and soon began to push out into the larger lines of lobster fishing and of deep sea fishing. His enterprise and good judgement soon attracted the attention of others and about the year 1900, he was given command of the S.S. Coast guard, then owned by the Barrington Wrecking Company and engaged in salvage operations in which a good degree of success was attained. The Coast guard, passing to the ownership of the Southern Salvage Company of Liverpool, Captain Brannen went with her into the service of that company. Later, Captain Brannen was given the command of a larger craft, the S.S. Deliverance, in which he continued his work of salvaging.

The most noted wreck upon which Captain Brannen worked was the old S.S. Hungarian wrecked off Cape Sable Island about sixty years ago. After this ship had lain on the bottom fifty-one years, captain Brannen and his crew attempted to salvage her cargo. They worked several seasons upon her and were richly rewarded. Very interesting relics of this famous wreck are to be seen today in the late home of Captain Brannen in Clark's Harbour.

When the Canadian naval ship, the Niobe, foundered off Cape Sable, it was Captain Brannen and his crew who went to her assistance, hauled her off the rocks, fixed her up so that she went to Halifax for repairs in the dry dock.

At the outbreak of the war, the S.S. Deliverance was taken into naval service and Captain Brannen went with her. The boat was engaged in mine-sweeping and so continued until run down and sunk by a Norwegian bark off Portuguese Cove early last season. Captain Brannen stuck to his ship until she was going down when, after a severe struggle he escaped with his life.

After the loss of the S.S. Deliverance, Captain Brannen took command of the S.S. Stella Maris, for the Halifax Dock Graving Company. In this capacity, he went to Newfoundland to rescue the S.S. Chritianafjord and later to the Magdalen Islands and rescued two ships that had got into trouble there.

Captain Brannen had never been discharged from the naval service and, o the morning of the great disaster, he was taking the S.S. Stella Maris into Bedford Basin when he was sent to the aid of the burning ship. Aided by British blue-jackets he was trying to reach the Mont Blanc with a line in the hope of towing her to a place of greater safety when the explosion came.

- Shelburne Gazette.