

Thus far an image of Seaman Park's grave in Lark Harbour is not available.

Seaman Augustus Percival Park, Number 2413x, lies in St. James' Anglican Cemetery in the community of Lark Harbour, Bay of Islands, Newfoundland.

Augustus Park was to relinquish his occupation, likely that of a fisherman, and to travel from Lark Harbour, to St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland in the spring of 1918. On May 11 of that year he reported...*to duty*...at the Naval Reserve training ship, HMS *Briton*, moored in the harbour (see below).

On that above date he enlisted into the Reserve, committing his services for the...*Duration of the War**...and underwent the requisite medical assessment at the same time. It was also likely then that he would have pledged his allegiance to the King-Emperor, George V. Now there was to be a period of training apparently abbreviated from the habitual twenty-eight days.

(Right: George V, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India: as a boy and young man he had served in the Royal Navy from 1877 until 1891 and always retained a fondness for the Senior Service. – The photograph of the King in the uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet is from the Royal Collection Trust web-site, taken circa 1935.)



**At the outset of the War, perhaps because it was felt by the authorities that it would be a conflict of short duration, the recruits enlisted for only a single year. As the War progressed, however, this was obviously going to cause problems and the men were encouraged to re-enlist. Later recruits – as of or about May of 1916 - signed on for the 'Duration' at the time of their original enlistment.*



(Right above: The White Ensign has been flown by the Royal Navy in its present form since about the year 1800 although other naval ensigns had existed for at least two centuries. It consists of a red St. George's Cross – the national flag of England - on a white field with the Union Flag* in the upper canton.)

****The Union Flag is commonly referred to as the 'Union Jack'; this is, in fact, a misnomer since a flag is referred to as a 'Jack' only when flown from the bow of a ship.***

(Right below: At the outset of their career, the 'Calypso-Class' ships were apparently considered to be superior vessels. Hybrids - powered by both steam and sail - they were able to police the outer reaches of the British Empire most efficiently and economically.

The rapid progress in engine technology, however, was to mean that HMS 'Calypso' and her sister-ships would soon be out-classed by newer vessels. – This Royal Navy photograph, taken before 1902 when the drill-hall was reportedly built on her upper deck and the funnel removed, is from Wikipedia)

Note: During the years preceding the Great War the only military force on the Island of Newfoundland – apart from a handful of ill-fated local attempts – was to be the Royal Naval Reserve (Newfoundland). Even so, it was to be some thirty years after the withdrawal of British troops from the Dominion in 1870 before the Reserve came into being in 1902.



Just fewer than four-hundred men were sought to enroll as seamen – apparently automatically at the rank of Able Seaman - and to present themselves annually in St. John's for five years in order to train for a period of twenty-eight days per annum. Allowed to report at a time of their own choosing, it is perhaps not surprising that these volunteers – mostly fishermen – were to opt to train during the winter months when fishing work was minimal.

(Right: Recruits of the Royal Naval Reserve (Newfoundland) seen here in front of HMS 'Calypso'. The shed-like superstructure seen behind them had been built onto the ship in 1902 to serve as a drill-hall. Whether the vessel was still 'Calypso', or had become 'Briton' by this time (see further below) is not clear. – photograph from Newfoundland Provincial Archives via Wikipedia)



Expenses were apparently defrayed for the most part by the British (Imperial) Government and an attempt was made to ensure the number of recruits would be kept constantly at a maximum. This practice and policy was then to be continued up until the onset of hostilities some twelve years later.

Of course, the purpose of having a reserve force at any time is to provide a trained force ready at any time to serve at a time of need or crisis. Thus in August of 1914, upon the Declaration of War by the government in London, hundreds of those men of the Royal Naval Reserve (Newfoundland) were to make their way to St. John's, from there to take passage overseas to bolster the ranks of the Royal Navy.



(Right above: Naval reservists from Newfoundland, during the early days of the Great War, before their departure for the United Kingdom - from The War Illustrated)

An elderly vessel, HMS 'Calypso', having become surplus to the Admiralty's needs, had been provided to the Dominion of Newfoundland by the Royal Navy in 1902 for training purposes. After some debate it was eventually decided that she would be permanently moored in the harbour of the capital, her superstructure reduced, and a wooden shelter built on her upper deck to provide training facilities and living quarters for the prospective naval recruits.

(Right: HMS 'Calypso' in full sail. She was to be re-named 'Briton' in 1916 when a new 'Calypso', a modern cruiser, was on the point of being launched by the Royal Navy. – This photograph, taken by the Royal Navy in 1898, is by courtesy of Admiralty House Museum.)



There appears to be no documentation of when exactly it was that Seaman Park departed from Newfoundland to arrive in Halifax or whether it was intended that he serve there or to traverse the Atlantic to England.

There is only a suggestion among his papers that his arrival in Nova Scotia was on or about June 1 of that 1918.

Whatever the case, he surely was to fall sick soon afterwards., to be admitted into the Military Hospital in Halifax. He is recorded as having passed away in that city – while still on the nominal roll of HMS Briton – on June 27 of that 1918.

The son of Robert Park, fisherman, and of Katherine (also found as Catharine) (also née *Park) of Lark Harbour, Bay of Islands, he was also brother to William-James, Robert-Henry, Sarah-Catharine, Mary-Jane, John-Edward, Hubert, to Amy-Elizabeth and also to Dan, Mary-Jane and Lillian Sheppard – all three adopted.**

****The couple had married on June 8 of 1884 in the community of Curling.***

Seaman Augustus Percival Park was recorded as having *died of sickness* on June 27, 1918, in Halifax Military Hospital: date of birth in Lark Harbour, Newfoundland, October 10, 1896 (from his enlistment papers) but also October 18 of the same year (from a copy of Newfoundland Vital Statistics).

Seaman Augustus Percival Park was entitled to only the British War Medal for his *overseas service* – since Canada was a foreign country at the time.



The above dossier has been researched, compiled and produced by Alistair Rice. Please email any suggested amendments or content revisions if desired to criceadam@yahoo.ca. Last updated – January 21, 2023.