

ROSE



Seaman James Rose, Number 1444x, having no known last resting-place, is commemorated on a bronze beneath the Caribou at the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel.

Having relinquished his occupation of the time and having travelled from the community of Victoria Village in the District of Carbonear to St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, on December 3 of 1914 James Rose reported...to duty...at the Naval Reserve training ship, HMS *Calypso*, moored in the harbour (see below).

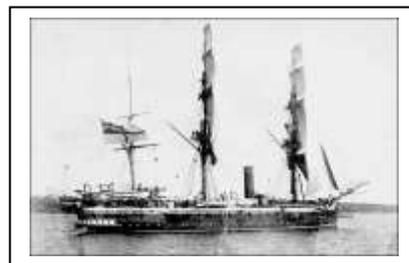


On that same early-December day he enlisted for the first time into the Reserve (see further below), was signed on for war-time service and surely underwent the required medical assessment at or about the same time. James Rose most likely was then also to attest, pledging his allegiance to the King-Emperor, George V.

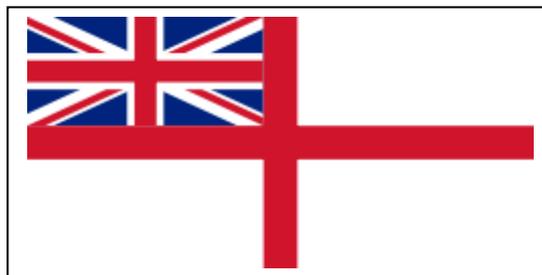
(Right: *George V, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India: as a boy and young man he had served in the Royal Navy from 1877 until 1891 and always retained a fondness for the Senior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



**(Right: 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)**



**\*In the early days 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.**

**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 above: HMS 'Calypso' in full sail. She was to be re-named 'Briton' in 1916 when a new 'Calypso', a modern cruiser, was about to be launched by the Royal Navy. – This photograph, taken by the Royal Navy in 1898, is by courtesy of Admiralty House**

**Two weeks\* after having first reported to Calypso in St. John's, on December 17 – at this point having been promoted from the rank of Seaman Recruit – the now-Seaman Rose was one of a draft of one-hundred fifty-three Naval volunteers to board the steamship *Mongolian* in St. John's Harbour for passage across the Atlantic to the United Kingdom. The ship sailed for the Scottish port-city of Glasgow at four o'clock on that same afternoon.**



SS Mongolian

**\*It appears that in many cases, even if the recruit in question had not already previously been with the Royal Naval Reserve, the required twenty-eight day training period, all or partially, was oft-times waived.**

**(Right above: Built in 1891 for use by the 'Allan Line' for the transport of emigrants from Europe to North America, 'Mongolian' was a slow vessel with a speed of just twelve knots and was, by 1914, becoming obsolescent. She was nevertheless to be bought in 1914 for use by the Admiralty and remained in service until July 21 of 1918 when she was**

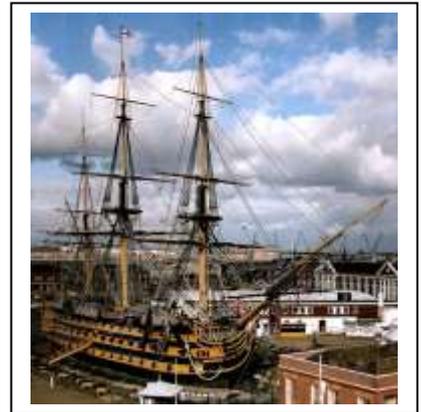
*torpedoed and sunk by U-boat 70 with a loss of thirty-five lives. – photograph from the British Home Child Group International web-site)*

As seen above, Glasgow was to be Seaman Rose's draft's destination. Upon disembarkation the Naval Reserve personnel would thereupon have been either posted directly to a ship or ordered to undergo further training – or to simply wait - at one of various Royal Navy establishments – these for the most part sited around the coast of southern England.

In the case of Seaman Rose, the destination was to be HMS *Victory I\**, the Royal Navy port and facilities of Plymouth-Devonport at almost the other end of the country.

*\*The Royal Navy had a disciplinary system which in certain ways differed from civil – and even Army – law; but for it to be employed, a sailor had to be attached to a ship. While at sea, of course, this posed no problem, but when a sailor was performing duties on land that were not associated directly to a particular ship he still had to be held accountable for any untoward behaviour.*

*The Navy's training establishments were for the most part on land: Devonport (although apparently it was only a shore-base during the Great War), Chatham, and Portsmouth for example, were land bases for many thousands of naval personnel, some of who were permanently stationed there. Thus the practice became to base an elderly or even obsolete ship in the nearby port to be, nominally, the vessel to which this personnel was to be attached. This appears to have been the procedure for the large number of shore bases organized around the coast of the United Kingdom during the Great War.*



*(Right above: HMS 'Victory' is seen here in dry dock in the southern English naval port-city of Portsmouth where she has been since the late 1920s – photograph from Wikipedia)*

*Thus, HMS 'Victory', the base to which Seaman Rose had been ordered after his arrival in the United Kingdom from Newfoundland, was not only all the buildings and facilities on shore, but also HMS 'Victory' the warship, the vessel from which Admiral Nelson had directed the Battle of Trafalgar – although the ship's illustrious history is not limited to that one single incident.*

*It was also the name which all the sailors attached to HMS 'Victory' were to have emblazoned on the bands of their afore-mentioned caps.*

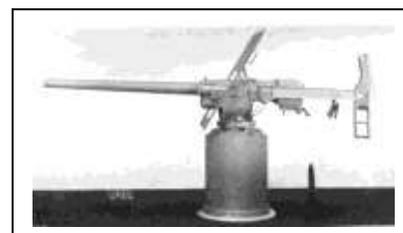
*Furthermore, these establishments were at times divided into sections: 'Victory I' was where personnel (as opposed to the engine-room personnel, for example, in 'Victory II') such as Seaman Rose were to be stationed while awaiting a posting to one of His Majesty's ships.*

That awaited posting came on May 6 of 1915, some five months following Seaman Rose's arrival in Portsmouth, and it was apparently a transfer only on paper to the Royal Naval

Reserve Trawler Section as a Deck Hand. He was to remain at *Victory I* with still no ship on the figurative horizon.

On August 8, after a further two months wait, he was then posted to *Victory III* which appears to have specialized in finances and accounting. Maybe it was also a holding-barracks since he was to be attached – soon afterwards one presumes, although there is no precise date available - to a hired trawler.

HMT *Marton* was a ten year-old vessel of some two-hundred thirty tons which had worked out of the fishing-port of Fleetwood in north-western England. Armed with a single six-pounder quick-firing gun, she went into war-time service in June of 1915 and was to be employed as a mine-sweeper working out of the River Tyne in the north-eastern part of England.



(Right above: *This is apparently a pre-War (or post-War) photograph of a peace-time 'Marton' as there is no gun to be seen affixed to her fore-deck as there would have been when Seaman Rose was serving on her. – image from the Trawlers 1915-1939 web-site)*

(Right above: *A Quick-Firing Hotchkiss six-pounder gun such as would have been mounted on the fore-deck of the trawler 'Marton' – from Wikipedia)*

Seaman Rose remained based on the Tyne until the final day of that September when he was transferred to southern England to the Portland Peninsula and to the Naval Base there, HMS *Research*. But it appears that HMT *Marton* was to travel with him as he was to serve on her for another five months, from October 1, 1915, until March 9 of the next year.



He was also then to remain at Portland, perhaps while *Marton* went north to the Tyne once more. Thus, as of March 10, Seaman Rose was to serve on HMT *Ethel*, another hired vessel which may have been a sister-ship of *Marton* as her description implies.

(Right above: *Minelaying from a German surface vessel during the Great War: these were for the most part contact mines. U-boats were also used for this purpose – from the NavWeaps web-site)*

North Shields is a community and port situated on the north banks of the estuary of the above-mentioned River Tyne. During the *Great War* it was the site of yet another trawler base, HMS *Satellite*, where Seaman Rose was subsequently to serve on a succession of three trawlers as of the month of August, 1916: *John Donovan*, *Island Prince* and *Euston*, all very much alike – in fact, two of them were fishing-vessels in peace-time which sailed out of the same North Shields - and all working as mine-sweepers.

Seaman Rose was on HMT *John Donovan* from August 1 for five and a-half months up until mid-January of 1917; he then sailed for a mere twelve days of the *Island Prince* until that January 31; and finally it was His Majesty's Trawler *Euston* on which he was to set foot on February 1, 1917.

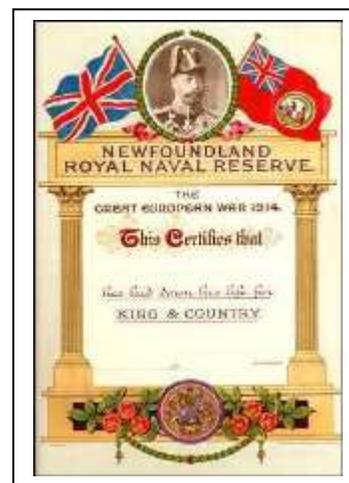


(Right: *The photograph of HM Trawler 'Euston' is from the wrecksite.eu web-site via Google.*)

The vessel was to detonate a mine at ten-thirty in the morning of February 12, 1917, as she was at work near the *Longmoor Buoy* off the coastal town of Hartlepool and sank immediately. The device had been laid by a German submarine, the U-boat 30, earlier on that same day.

Of the thirteen crew-members, only two were saved.

(Right: *A Memorial Scroll, a copy of which was distributed to the families of those who had sacrificed their life while serving in the Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve*)



The son of James Rose, labourer and fisherman, and of Dorcas Rose (née *Clarke*\*, deceased...after a long illness...on March 11, 1893), he was also brother to Herbert, Gilbert and to Henry-Charles.

*\*The couple had been married on December 6, 1883.*

Seaman James Rose was recorded as having died on that February 12, 1917, at the reported age of twenty-four years: date of birth in Victoria Village, Carbonear, Newfoundland, November 15 of 1892 (from the Newfoundland Birth Register).

*Seaman Rose served only in the Royal Navy and was not in the service of Canada as is cited in some sources, notably the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.*

Seaman James Rose was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, as well as to the British War Medal (centre) and the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal) (right).



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](mailto:criceadam@yahoo.ca). Last updated – January 20, 2023.