

Name- William Henry Peach (Henry Peach) (Harry William Peach)

Community- Arnold's Cove Placentia Bay- St. Marys District

Service Number- 901X

Age Of Enlistment- 25

Next Of Kin- Elsie Guy

Date Of Death- January 13th 1915

Died At War- Yes

Cause Of death- Drowned

Place Of Death- assumed that the ship sunk by a mine, belonged to the Germans

Rank- Seaman

Force- Navy

Unit- The Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve

Division- H.M.S "Viknor"

Cemetery- Beaumont- Hamel (NL) memorial somme france

Grave Reference- Unknown

Additional info- Son of William Henry & Elizabeth Peach Husband of Elsie May Brinson of
Arnold's Cove Placentia Bay

Married- Yes (Elsie Guy)

2 children

Son- Henry, born a few days after father's death.

Daughter- Gladys, died as a baby

H.M.S Viknor was used as a cruising patrol ship in World War 1. On January 13th, 1915 while on patrol, she sank in heavy weather. The ship sunk by a mine, belonging to a minefield laid by the Germans. Not a single soul of the 295 crew was saved. There were 25 Newfoundlanders, 24 bodies were never found. The seaman John Bowen Mercer of Bay Roberts was the only body of 25 that was washed ashore to be buried.



W. H. Peach

DANGEROUS WORK: HMS *VIKNOR*

January 1915

THE BRITISH ADMIRALTY KNEW THAT HMS *Viknor* had been missing for several days and that it was last reported on active duty off Tory Island, northwest of Ireland. That area was considered part of the North Sea patrol, where, according to war analysts, "duties are arduous, exacting and dangerous." But exactly where *Viknor* was and why it had not been heard from or seen was puzzling.

In early January of 1915, *Viknor* was on duty, searching the waters for enemy submarines and cruisers and trying to keep the food and provisions sea route open to England. In attempting to clear the German blockade in the North Atlantic, *Viknor's* complement looked for sea mines—dangerous work in the best of conditions. Harsh weather and heavy seas in recent weeks made the job even more hazardous.

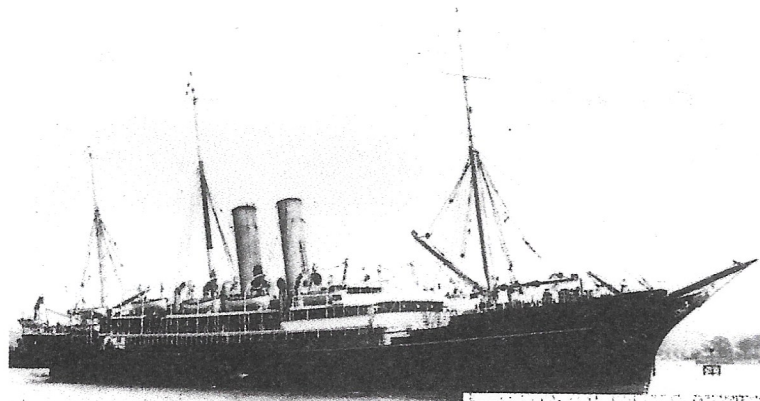
HMS *Viknor*, a 5,386-ton armed merchant cruiser, was originally a Blue Star Line vessel called the *Viking*. With the outbreak of World War I, it had been requisitioned and renamed by the Royal Navy.

Viknor's commander, E. O. Ballantyne, had a crew of twenty-two officers and 273 "ratings." The ratings in this case were Royal Naval Reservists, twenty-five of whom came from Newfoundland and Labrador.

But the *Viknor* had not reported in due time and that troubled the British Admiralty. On January 22, the English newspaper *Yorkshire*

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Post said that the body of a sailor wearing a Royal Mail Company lifebelt had been found off the north coast of Ireland.



The Royal Mail Line steamer *Atrato*, built in 1888, renamed *Viking* and renamed again in 1914 to *Viknor* when commissioned as a war vessel. Two hundred and eighty-two lives were lost when it disappeared. Newspapers of the day state twenty-four Newfoundlanders lost their lives, which was later revised to twenty-five. (*Viknor* photo courtesy Captain Hubert Hall, Shipsearch MARINE, Yarmouth, NS)

EVENING TELEGRAM, ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND, JANUARY 30.

ited,

OKS,

S,

24 Newfoundlanders

PERISH ON THE VIKNOR.

Messages Received
Previous to 9 A.M.

TWENTY-FOUR NEWFOUNDLANDERS WENT DOWN WITH THE VIKNOR.

LONDON, Jan. 20.
The casualty list issued, but which shows that the British armoured mer-

bridge of Ventol. These two attacks were repulsed.
During the night of Jan. 23th, Dan- kirk was bombarded by aviators, who caused some insignificant losses, but killed or wounded few persons.
On the night of Jan. 25-26, two of our aviators launched numerous bombs upon the enemy's works in the region of Laon, Laiffe and Bolognes.
On the morning of the 27th a cer-

It could only have come from the *Viknor*. Then eight similar lifebelts were found. At Ballycastle Beach, northern Ireland, four bodies had drifted ashore and three more washed in near Larne. On January 26, the British Admiralty issued this statement:

We regret to announce that the armed merchant vessel HMS *Viknor*, which has been missing for several days, must now be accepted as lost with all officers and men.

COURAGE AT SEA

The cause of its loss is uncertain, but as bodies and wreckage have washed ashore on the north coast of Ireland, it is presumed that during the recent bad weather *Viknor* either foundered or, being carried out of its course, struck a mine in the sea which the Germans are known to have laid there.

Today one can see markers for the twenty-five Reservists in towns all over Newfoundland: nine were from Conception Bay, five from Bonavista Bay, four from Trinity Bay, two lived in St. John's, and five were from other parts of the island. Only one body of a Newfoundlander was found: Seaman John Bowen Mercer of Bay Roberts. The south coast was also represented in the losses aboard *Viknor*: Henry W. Peach, one of four married Reservists, lived in Arnold's Cove, Placentia Bay. He was the son of Mrs. Elizabeth Peach and had sailed from St. John's to Europe on the troop ship *Franconia*.



In November 2006, I went to Arnold's Cove to look at the cenotaph. It is one of the few memorials which identify the ship on which a Newfoundland hero died, in this case W. H. Peach and HMS *Viknor* (spelled here as *Vicnor*).

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Most of *Viknor's* deaths are commemorated at the Beaumont Hamel Memorial in France. As well, names are inscribed on markers in many towns in Newfoundland, including Arnold's Cove, where there is a tall marble obelisk bearing Henry Peach's name and stating that he went down on HMS *Viknor* in the North Sea.

Lost on HMS *Viknor*, mid-January 1915

| <u>Reservist</u> | <u>Next of Kin</u> | <u>Hometown</u> |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Barnes, Enos | married | Change Island |
| Brace, Albert | mother Mary Brace | Chance Cove, TB |
| Coates, George | father Philip Coates | Fogo |
| Dyke, Gilbert | mother Louisa Dyke | Salvage Bay |
| Greening, James | mother Jane Greening | Summerville |
| Jackson, Thomas | mother Alice Jackson | Brigus |
| Jerrett, Levi | William and Mary Jerrett | St. John's |
| Kelly, Albert | father John Kelly | Cupids |
| Lewis, Philip | mother Melina Reynolds | Bay de Verde |
| Martin, Sandy | mother Rebecca Martin | St. John's |
| Mercer, John Bowen | mother Lizzie Russell | Bay Roberts |
| Morgan, Fred | father Joseph Morgan | Seal Cove, CB |
| Morgan, William G. | mother Sarah Morgan | Port-de-Grave |
| Parsons, John | ? | Shearstown |
| <i>wife</i> <i>ELISE</i> <i>MAE</i> <i>BRINSTON</i> Peach, Henry W. | mother Elizabeth Peach | Arnold's Cove |
| Ralph, Charles | father Stephen Ralph | Flat Island, BB |
| Rowe, Charles | uncle Reuben Clarke | Trinity |
| St. Croix, William | guardian Fred Walsh | Trepassey |
| Smart, Edward | mother Fanny Smart | Alexander Bay |
| Sparkes, Eli | mother Mary J. Sparkes | Shearstown |
| Stringer, George | father William T. Stringer | Little Heart's Ease |
| Walsh, Douglas | mother Minnie Hutchings | Cow Head |
| Warren, Albert | mother Mary A. Warren | Gooseberry Island |
| Youden, George | married | Georgetown, Brigus |
| Youden, Thomas | married | Brigus |

ELISE MAE GAY + *TIM*
Henry William Peach m 1912
+ 2 M, Charles Brinston

