

HENRY SIZELAND RIGG



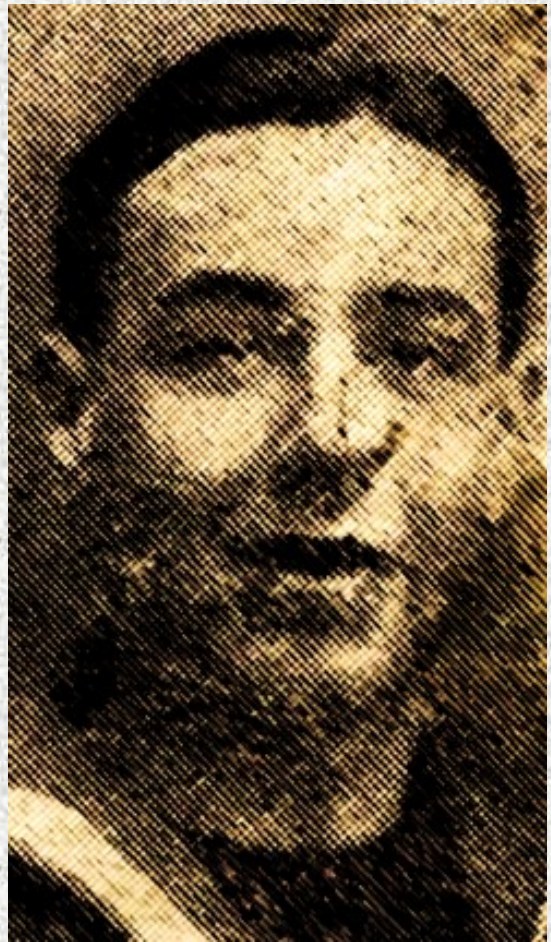
24th November 1917

1897-1917 Age 19

Signalman Tyneside Z/10802, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve.

Henry Rigg was born on 17th December 1897, the son of John Leonard Rigg (who was known by his middle name) and Anna Sizeland who was from Norfolk. The Rigg family were from Rawdon where for several generations they had been butchers. In the 1911 Census Henry's father was described as a 'Master Butcher' and he ran the firm's branch on Yeadon's Ivegate. Henry was the second of five children born to Leonard and Anna, one of whom died in infancy. He must have been a clever boy for whereas his elder brother worked in a woollen mill, Henry was described in 1911 as 'student Grammer school', the parental pride shining through despite the mis-spelling of 'grammar'. He is an example of the bright boys Headmaster William Keeling brought into the school in large numbers on council scholarships in the early part of the twentieth century. When Henry started in Third Modern upper in 1910 he was eleven. At the end of each of his first three years he either was awarded the prize for the form and the division or came second, and he won the Modern Languages prize in 1912. He left in July 1914 aged sixteen after a year in the Remove Science and Mathematical Form. He then went to work for the Bradford District Bank in its head office foreign department, for which his facility for foreign languages fitted him.

Henry was not old enough for military service until he reached eighteen at the end 1915, and he was then conscripted into the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve on 24th August 1916. His record shows that he was 5 ft. 5 in. tall, his hair was black, eyes brown



and his complexion was dark. His physical development was good for the era as his chest was 34". After training at 'H.M.S. Victory VI', which was at Crystal Palace in South London, he trained as a signaller. His character was rated as 'Very Good' and his ability as 'Satisfactory'. He was assigned to the Tynemouth Division, and was posted to the S.S. 'Dunrobin', a small armed merchant ship. On 24th November this vessel was fifty miles off the Cornish coast en route from Almeira in Spain to the Tyne in north-east England with a cargo of iron ore and grapes. The ship was struck by a torpedo from the German submersible torpedo boat U.53. Clearly no warning had been given and the 'Dunrobin' went down with all hands. Around thirty men were drowned. U.53 sank nine vessels and damaged another in the course of this voyage, although it carried only seven torpedoes. One of its victims, the U.S.S 'Jacob Jones', was the first United States destroyer to be sunk in the war.

Henry Rigg's body could not be recovered for burial and his name is recorded on the Chatham Memorial, and also on his parents' tombstone.



Acknowledgements:

Rigg's photo is from <<https://www.aireboroughhistoricalsociety.co.uk/memories/1914-1918-aireborough-boys-part-2.aspx>>. The family was researched using Ancestry.com. For the family business, see <<http://www.jbwilkinson.co.uk/about-us/>>. There are butchers named Rigg in Rochdale, Yorkshire and beyond—an interesting path I have not been diverted into. Henry's years at B.G.S. are from the Annual Reports 1910-1914. For Keeling, see <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/72786>> accessed 23-11-2017. For Henry's employment, <<https://www.rbsremembers.com/remembers/our-fallen/r/henry-rigg.html>>.

For Henry's military service see <<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=gbm%2fadm337%2f81%2f00205&parentid=gbm%2fadm%2f337%2f045940>>, for the British Royal Naval Reserve Roll. For his death see also http://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/14880451.Rawdon_memorial_book_honours_WW1_dead/. For the S.S. Dunrobin, <<https://wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?2645>> names 28 crewmen but says there were 31, while <<http://www.hhtandn.org/hartlepool-ships-and-shipping/shipbuilding/3062/William%20Doxford%20%26%20Son/ship/2020/harefield>> states 27 drowned. The German submersible U.53 had an interesting history—see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Type_UB_III_submarine> and <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SM_U-53> and <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Jacob_Jones_> consulted 23-11-2017.

This biography was researched and composed by Nick Hooper in November 2017. For further information, contact Nhooper1956@googlemail.com, or see <<http://www.bradfordgrammar.com/former-pupils/bradford-grammar-school-in-ww1/>>.

Above) U.53 at Newport, Rhode Island, U.S.A. in October 1916, before the United States entered the war. It only operated to a depth of 50m. In addition to its torpedoes it carried two 88mm deck guns.

Below) S.S. Dunrobin.

