



Douglas Gordon Spurrell

Royal Naval Reserve (Newfoundland)

Royal Navy

Service No. 189396

World War II

Born: 29 May 1917

Died: 16 Mar 1983

Place of Birth: St. Johns, Newfoundland

Parents: William J. Russell and Gertrude R. Spurrell

Born in 1917, Douglas was born prior to his parents marrying, which did happen sometime later.

The 1935 Newfoundland general census shows William at 52, Gertrude at 40 (now married) and children Arthur 24, Douglas 18, Dorothy 8, Mary 7, Annie 5, and Fred 3, all listed with the surname

Russell. It seems that William (Douglas's biological father was married twice.)

The entries in the 1945 census tell a slightly different story. William is now 60 and Gertrude 52. The family entries show Dorothy at 19, Mary 18, Annie 15, Fred (George) 13 and Douglas at 28, single but entered as stepson and using the surname, Spurrell. This may indeed have come about upon his enlistment, as his original birth certificate carried the name Spurrell.

Douglas was one of the 175 men of the 3rd Naval Contingent that embarked St. John's, Newfoundland on January 14th, 1940, and arrived at Liverpool, England, seventeen (17) days later on January 31st, 1940. The troop transport vessel was the HMHS Newfoundland.



HMHS Newfoundland

The Newfoundland was a British Royal Mail Ship that was requisitioned as a hospital ship in the World War II. She was sunk in 1943 in a Luftwaffe attack off southern Italy.

Douglas appears in June 1943 listed as a passenger on the SS Fort Townshend, having departed St. John's, Newfoundland, St. John, New Brunswick and arrived in New York City. According to the ship's listing, Douglas was described as being single, 5' 11" tall, with a fair complexion, brown hair, and blue eyes. His calling or occupation is "British Navy seaman."

Douglas is found on a voters list in 1957. He is living in St. John's, Newfoundland and working as a civil servant.

Douglas was married twice. His first wife was Deborah Edith Johnson. They had one son together. Deborah passed away in 1984 in Auburn, New York at the age of 63.

His second wife was Margaret A. Vidito of Nova Scotia, Canada.

Douglas passed away in March 1983 at his residence in Aurora, York, Ontario, Canada. He is buried in the Aurora Cemetery there.

Below are several clippings from The Bay Roberts Guardian from the dates indicated:

31 October 1942.

APPRECIATION

This week we received a letter from Seaman Douglas G. Spurrell, R.N., of Coley's Point, in which he expresses his appreciation and thanks to the Bay Roberts Comforts Committee, and also the public who have helped the Committee to send gift parcels to those serving in the forces. He says it certainly shows that the people of Bay Roberts and vicinity don't forget the lads. Douglas said the last two parcels (a carton of cigs. and one parcel containing soap, razor blades and tooth paste, etc.) came just in the right time, as these things were very scarce at the place where he received them.

03 April 1943.

To my many friends of Bay Roberts and Coley's Point:

I really can't express myself as I would wish to thank you for the receptions and entertainments given in my honor during my short stay. I only wish I could have stayed a little longer so that I would have an opportunity to visit all my good friends who invited me to their homes. My leave has been a very pleasant and enjoyable one and I will leave to return to duty with happy thoughts and memories. Let's hope that we shall all meet again soon with Peace reigning the whole world over.—D. G. SPURRELL.

MET FOLKS FROM HOME

Just recently Douglas Spurrell, who is serving in the Royal Navy, and stationed somewhere in the U.S.A., wrote his mother at Coley's Point, telling her that he had just spent several days leave at Boston, Cambridge, Revere, and Everett where he met some former residents of Bay Roberts, Coley's Point and Shearstown. Among those whom he visited and had conversation on the phone were: Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Bursey, Mrs. Martin, who is a sister of Mrs. Arthur Bursey, Mrs. William Bursey, also Warren Beatrice, Winnie and Herman Bursey; Mrs. Hussey, is a sister of Richard Bradbury; Mrs. J. Thistle, formerly of Carbonear; Barbara Parsons; Miss Ida Parsons, formerly of Brigus Road; Mrs. Joseph Snook (Blanche Snow); Mrs. John Snook, (Maud Bradbury); Mrs. Ed. Snook, daughter of John Badcock of Shearstown. Douglas also spent an evening with Mr. Allan Spencer and family. He certainly enjoyed meeting these friends from Bay Roberts and vicinity.



DOUGLAS G. SPURRELL, A.B.
Bay Roberts, who went overseas
with the 3rd Naval draft and is
now on active service.