



**William Parsons**  
**World War I**  
**Royal Newfoundland Regiment**  
**Regimental No. 5231**

**Born:** July 4, 1898

**Died:** October 22, 1944

**Place of Birth:** Shearstown

**Parents:** William and Sarah (nee Bradbury) Parsons

William enlisted in the Royal Newfoundland Regiment in May 1918. At that time, he was 20 years old, stood 5' 3 ½ "tall, weighed 126 lbs and had blue eyes. He gave his trade or calling as fisherman and his faith as Church of England.

His official service record indicates that he served for 1 year 77 days or 442 days in all. Record entries are short, comprised of:

1. Embarked St. John's to Halifax on board the S.S. Columbella 22 July 1918



The armed merchant cruiser Columbella at anchor off Portsmouth in 1918, by [William Lionel Wyllie](#)

2. To Newfoundland for demobilization on 24<sup>th</sup> of June 1919
3. Arrived Newfoundland 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1919
4. Demobilized on 4<sup>th</sup> of August 1919

William enlisted in May and prior to being shipped to Halifax in July, Married a young lady by the name of Sarah Ann Parsons on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1918. She was just sixteen (16) and surprisingly had the exact name as his mother. William, himself was only 20 at the time. He should have gotten permission to marry from a senior officer, now being a soldier but he did not and claimed later that he did not know he had to.

As instructed, he did ask the army's permission, after the fact and after producing the appropriate documents, including a letter signed by E. Andrews, rector of the Coley's Point Methodist Church confirming the marriage was granted permission to marry. William was now a married man.

William spent some time overseas, as confirmed by his presence at Hazeley Down Camp, Winchester, England in early 1919.

He returned to Newfoundland in July 1919 and was officially discharged that same month according to discharge Certificate No. 3501.

Back home, William is found in the 1921 Newfoundland census records as being single and living at home with his parents. The entry noted William as 24 and sister, Sarah as 18. This entry is incorrect as; Sarah was his wife, not his sister. Unfortunately, his young bride had developed tuberculosis which proved fatal and she died in June of '21.

The next year, William married Eliza Butler on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1922. At the time of the 1935 Newfoundland general census, the Parsons family are living in Shearstown. William is 38, Eliza 34 and they have six (6) children. Henry is 13, Violet 10, Susie 8, Baxter 6, Ernest 2, and Roy less than a year old. The family would eventually include two more children, Shirley and Florence.

William died in October of 1944 at the General Hospital at St. John's. Cause of death that appears on his death certificate notes he died of a fractured rib and a collapsed lung. He was forty-seven (47). He is buried in St. Marks Anglican Cemetery at Shearstown.

Here is his obituary notice that published on November 4, 1944, in the Bay Roberts Guardian newspaper.

## **OBITUARY**

### **Wm. Parsons, Shearstown**

On Sunday, Oct. 22, Wm. Parsons of Shearstown, beloved husband of Eliza Parsons, passed peacefully away at the General hospital.

On Friday, Oct. 20, the deceased had met with an accident that proved fatal while working at Smeaton's Quarry, Birch Hill. He was conveyed to the General hospital where his condition was found to be critical, and on Sunday at 8 p.m. he passed away.

Leaving to mourn are his wife, five sons and three daughters, two brothers and two sisters, to whom deepest sympathy is extended in their very sad bereavement.

Funeral took place on Tuesday, Oct. 24 to the C. of E. Church and cemetery at Shearstown. Rev. H. Torrville officiated.

"Sleep on dear husband, your work is o'er;  
Your willing hands will toil no more;  
Kind you were, both good and true,  
No friend on earth we'll find like you."