

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch
of
The Western Front Association

Remembering one of Gloucestershire's Fallen



Armourer William King (132458)
Royal Navy - HMS Viknor

William King was almost 50 years old when he re-joined the Royal Navy at the start of the Great War. Born at Northfleet, Kent on 30 September 1864, his early naval career had been with the Royal Marine Artillery. Serving on board the heavy cruiser HMS *Terrible* he would have visited South Africa, during the Boer War and the China Station.

By 1911 he was in receipt of a naval pension and was living in lodgings at Bridge Street, Cairncross, Stroud, working as an engineers' storekeeper at Dudbridge Iron Works.

Following the outbreak of war the former Blue Star Line passenger ship *Atrato* (recently acquired by the Viking Cruising Company Ltd and renamed *Viking*) was requisitioned by the Royal Navy and converted into an Armed Merchant Cruiser, HMS *Viknor*. The ship was attached to the

10th Cruiser Squadron, operating on blockade duty between Scotland and Iceland. William King was a Petty Officer on board.

On 13 January 1915 *Viknor* was sailing in heavy seas approximately 11 miles west of Tory Island, off the coast of County Donegal. It is believed that it struck one of the mines laid by the German auxiliary minelayer SS *Berlin* in October the previous year, which had caused the sinking of the dreadnought battleship HMS *Audacious*. All *Viknor's* ship's company of 22 officers and 273 ratings were lost, which included 25 men from the Newfoundland Division of the Royal Naval Reserve, who are now commemorated on the Newfoundland Memorial Park, Beaumont Hamel.

Armourer William King is commemorated on Panel 8 of the Portsmouth Naval Memorial.