

SAD END FOR A PROUD SHIP

HMS *Calypso*, built late last century as a sailing corvette for the Royal Navy, today lies at anchor in Lewisporte, Newfoundland, laden with salt and rusting into oblivion.

Calypso was the sister ship of the famous *Calliope*, the only survivor of a storm that hit a fleet of warships of all nationalities in 1889 in the harbour of Apia, Samoa. *Calypso* was also one of the ships in which Canada's first Chief of the Naval Staff, the late Rear-Admiral Walter Hose, served as a midshipman in 1895.

The vessel, designed by Sir Nathaniel Barnaby, a noted naval architect, came down the slips in Chatham, England, in 1883 and, though known as a screw cruiser third class, with a top speed of 15 knots, was basically a sailing ship rigged as a barque.

Many will recall the wooden guns carried by Canadian corvettes in 1939 – unlike *Calypso*, which boasted four six-inch guns, 12 five-inch, two 14-inch torpedo-tubes and six Nordenfeldt machine-guns.



HMS *Calypso*, 1898

Imperial War Museum

Though built entirely of iron, the 235-foot hull was completely covered by planking, which gave the appearance of a vulnerable wooden ship. A protective steel deck just below the main deck could stop the heaviest of shot.

Despite her formidable firepower, however, there is no record that *Calypso* ever engaged an enemy. As a member of the British Training Squadron, she cruised the Caribbean in winter and the Northern waters in summer. In 1890, *Calypso* helped in the evacuation of British Heligoland.

SAVED FROM SCRAP HEAP

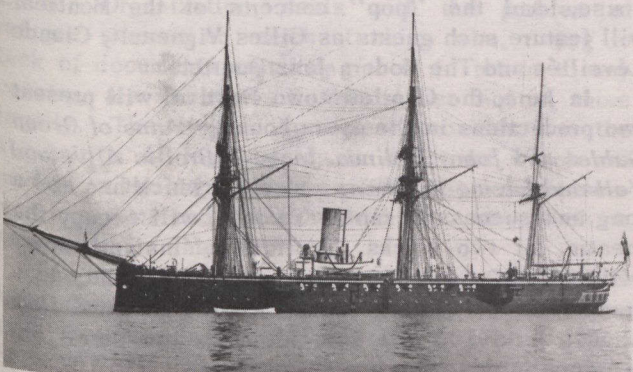
Near the turn of the century, *Calypso* seemed to be doomed for demolishment but in 1902, when the Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve needed a depot training-ship, *Calypso* was chosen and crossed the Atlantic for the last time.

On arrival in St. John's, Newfoundland, the ship was stripped of its rigging and a roof erected over the upper deck to protect the trainees from the elements. *Calypso* took on the appearance of an overgrown houseboat, which the salts of the Second World War dubbed Noah's Ark.

Calypso became the foster-mother of the Newfoundland RNR. Her children were the fishermen from the coves and bays of Newfoundland. She took them in for two months each year, polished them up with the tradition and discipline of the Royal Navy and sent them home to await the call to arms. During the first World War some 1,500 *Calypso* sailors served with the Royal Navy.

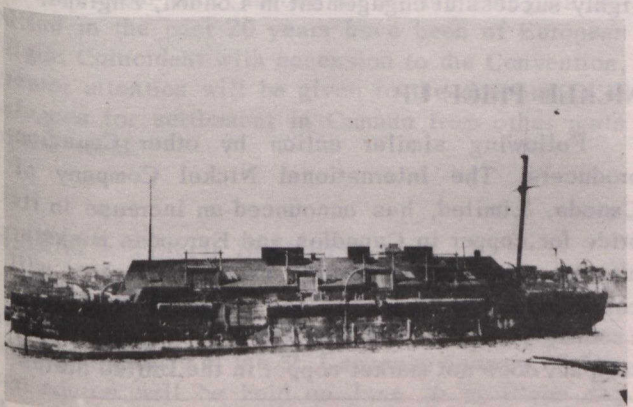
END OF SERVICE

Calypso's best days, spent in St. John's harbour, came to a sudden end in 1922 when the Washington



Imperial War Museum

HMS *Calypso*, 1885



The *Calypso* as a salt hulk.