

David Emmanuel Scott (1865-1914)



My grandfather, David Emmanuel Scott, was born on 5 April 1865 in Westmoreland Jamaica, died 24 August 1914 in Scapa Flow. David joined the Royal Navy in Jamaica in 1892 and served on the Depot Ship HMS Urgent.

David came to Britain around 1900 and took a labouring job at Silvertown Glass Works in East London. In 1905 he married Jane Pilgrim and they had four children: Walter born 1906, Ethel born 1907, George born 1910 and Marjorie born 1914.

At the outbreak of war in 1914, in spite of his age, David enlisted with the RNVR (Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve) and, after induction was assigned to HMS Hogue in Scapa Flow (Orkney Islands). David died in a boating accident in Scapa Flow.

A letter sent from Jane to David on the day he died indicates the real poverty that she was subjected to after David was enlisted:

'My Dear Husband very many thanks for your welcome letter but by the tone I do not think you have received my last letter which was sent-away last Saturday week. There was a note from Ethel and also one from Wallie also a newspaper. It is a shame I think they ought to let you have your letters. I am sending your insurance card and separately your will. I went to the Brotherhood meeting on Sunday (David was a member of the Plaistow Brotherhood of the Wesleyan Church) and saw Mr. Wilding and he told me to go to Mr Hyde at Mansfield House to see if I could get some benefit so I shall certainly go. It is a shame the way they are treating sailor's wives to what they are soldier's wives. A soldier's wife is getting one shilling and a penny a day for herself and tuppence a day for each child and those that live in London are getting three shillings and sixpence a day extra. That brings some of their money up to over a pound a week besides what the husband allows and half pay from their firms whereas a sailor's wife has to be content with £2 a month. I do not think that's fair. Isn't a sailor's wife as good as a soldier's then again they have made my paysheet out for the 14th of August when you went away on the second and we can't draw anything until the end of the month so I suppose we have got to live on nothing until then. Well dear no more at present. With much love from your loving wife and family until we meet again. God bless you and keep you and give you a safe return. We all pray for you even little Marjorie. I feel sure you will be returned



to us again and perhaps we shall be all the more happy after being separated for a time. Good night dear Husband.'

After David's death Jane was initially denied a war widow's pension on the grounds that David had not served for long enough.

David and Jane Scott's children:

Walter Scott b. 1906



Ethel Scott b 1907



George Scott b 1910



Marjorie Scott b 1914



Jane never remarried but she successfully raised her four children. Walter and George served in WWII; Walter in signals and George in the artillery in North Africa. After fighting at el Alamein George, my father, was wounded in the invasion of Sicily and shipped home.

Ethel was an athlete and represented Great Britain in the 1930 Women's world games in Prague. I believe she was Britain's first international black female athlete. "Little Marjorie" excelled at school and joined the Civil Service where she worked until she retired.

With thanks to Mr David Scott of Collingham for submitting 'My Story' May 2018.