

TALES FROM THE GREAT WAR: THE ROSE STREET FOUNDRY AND ENGINEERING COMPANY



Although hostilities were not declared until 11:00pm on August 4th, the Directors of the Rose Street Foundry and Engineering Company had earlier that day received a memo from the Commander of the Naval Base at Cromarty, informing them that all Admiralty work was to be done at short notice as anything required was urgent.

“Also please note that in the event of hostilities being declared the resources of your firm will probably have to be at the disposal of the Admiralty”.

The Manager reported that we had got the order from the Admiralty for the construction of 20 Rafts for the boom-defences of Cromarty, at the price of £581-15/- each, and also the order for the construction of 113 Rafts for the same purpose at the price of £28-15/- each, and one additional Raft at the price of £39-10/-, and that he hoped to complete the work on these in a month or six weeks time.

The Rose Street Foundry,
Inverness. Cromarty.
3rd August 1914

Sir,

During this crisis I expect all work that is taken in hand for the Admiralty will be done at short notice as anything that is required is urgent. Also please note that in the event of hostilities being declared the resources of your firm will have to be at the disposal of the Admiralty. A notice to this effect may be expected from me.

Yours faithfully,
D. M. Mackenzie
Commander

One month later, the Manager reported the first Admiralty orders for the construction of rafts for the boom defences at Cromarty, had been received and that the work would be completed in a month or six weeks' time.

Admiralty work building rafts, steam-pinnaces and other small vessels, made for a healthy order book and workers at Thornbush Slipway were kept busy for the duration of the War. The slipway and its associated workshops were extended to cope with this demand.



TALES FROM THE GREAT WAR: THE ROSE STREET FOUNDRY AND ENGINEERING COMPANY

At the Rose Street premises the workforce was busy producing mine-sinkers, submersible electric motors and saw-benches for the Canadian Timber Corps.



Despite this the Directors felt that the Company's profile would be further enhanced if "Munitions of War were to be manufactured in the Highland Capital" and in July 1915 approached the Ministry of Munitions to this effect. The request was denied on the grounds that the Company was already employed on Admiralty work.



Among the photographs held at the Archive Centre is one of a group of females captioned "R. S. F. Munitions Workers, 1918". All women engaged on war work were entitled to wear a badge denoting this status and were known collectively as "munitions workers". These women were employed in the making of mine-sinkers; they were laid off in September 1918 when the initial order of 1000 was completed.

After WWI, The Rose Street Foundry diversified into the design and manufacture of welding equipment and became known as AI Welders.