

William Henry MUTTERS

Born Dawlish, 1 March 1869

Died Battle of Jutland, 31 May 1916, aged 47

Private, Royal Marine Light Infantry, Service No: PLY/16964 (Dev) H.M.S. QUEEN MARY

James Mutters (1820-1901) born in Exeter, married Mary Ann Voysey (1824-1893) born in Dawlish, in 1848.

In 1851 they lived in Park Row, Dawlish with their first of nine children, Mary Jane Mutters (1850-1904).

By 1861 at the same address were Mary Jane, James (1855-), John V (1857-), Sarah Ann ** (1859-1930), and George V (1860 -). Their father was an agricultural labourer.

By 1871 there were four more children, Thomas (1863-), Joseph (1865-), Charlotte (1867-) and **William Henry** (1869-1916). All children were born in Dawlish.

*** Sarah Ann Mutters married Robert Bearne (1850-1901) and their son, Arthur Henry Bearne (1882-1914) was lost at sea in the Battle of Coronel on 1 November 1914 (see separate entry for Arthur Henry Bearne).*

By 1881 James Mutters was a general labourer and Mary Ann was a charwoman. Living at home with them at 6 Park Row were John V, George V, William F, all general labourers, Charlotte, an errand girl and **William**, still at school.

(William F is very probably Thomas William (1863-) who appears as William Thomas Mutters after his marriage to Sarah Andrews in Q4,1884. In subsequent census entries he is recorded as William Mutters and working as a Mason's labourer and then a mason. They had four children, the youngest being Olive (1893-) who is referred to as the next of kin in the Royal Navy and Royal Marine War Graves Roll, see below.

William enlisted with the Royal Marines in London on 1 April 1889 at age 20. His previous occupation is shown as "Boot repairer".

He was sent first to the Royal Marines' Recruit Depot at Walmer, Kent, and then to the Plymouth Division, R.M.

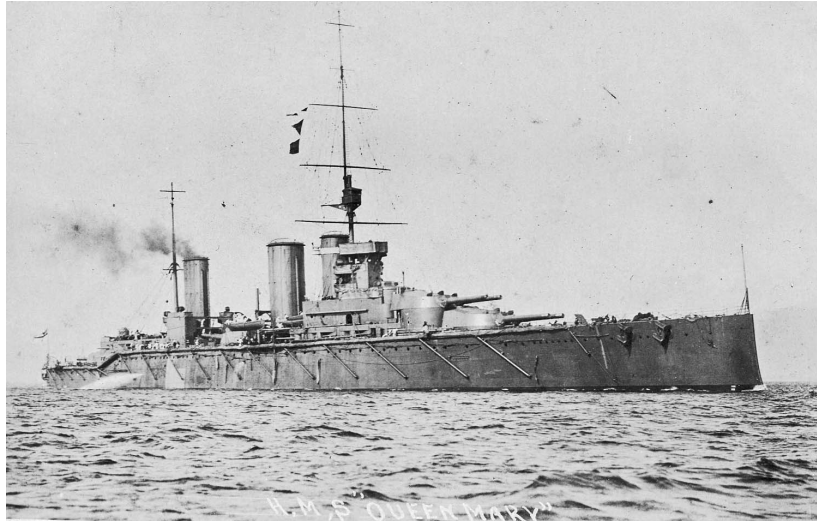
He signed on for 12 years and spent much of the time at sea in pre-Dreadnought battleships, H.M.S. ANSON (7/5/1890-4/7/1893), H.M.S. EMPRESS OF INDIA (1/5/1894-11/12/1895), H.M.S. MAGNIFICENT (12/12/1895-16/8/1897), and a cruiser H.M.S. FLORA (18/8/1898-31/12/1900), South African Guardship.

On 1 January 1901 he was sent ashore at Port Stanley "per order of Commodore dated 28 Feb 01". He remained there until 22 March 1901 as his first twelve year agreement was about to expire.

While **William** was in the services his parents were living at 3a Manor Row (1891) on their own aged 70 and 66. James had worked as a general labourer for much of his life.

William's mother died in Q4, 1893 and his father in Q1, 1901.

Census entries for **William** in 1901 and 1911 have proved elusive.



William enlisted once again on 31st August 1914 to join **HMS QUEEN MARY** (26,770 tons), the last battlecruiser built before WW1 and the sole member of her class. She was completed in 1913 and was part of the Grand Fleet based in the North Sea.

As part of the 1st Battlecruiser Squadron she attempted to intercept a German force that bombarded the North Sea coast of England in December 1914, but was unsuccessful. After a refit in early 1915 she participated in the largest fleet action of the war, the Battle of Jutland. (wikipedia and naval-history.net)(photo: www.militarian.com)

HMS Queen Mary - Loss at Jutland:

Steaming in advance of Admiral Sir John Jellicoe's Grand Fleet, Beatty's battlecruisers, supported by the battleships of the 5th Battle Squadron, met Vice Admiral Franz Hipper's battlecruisers in the opening phases of the Battle of Jutland.

Engaging at 3:48 PM on May 31, the German fire proved accurate from the outset. At 3:50 PM, *Queen Mary* opened fire on SMS *Seydlitz* with its forward turrets. As Beatty aboard the *Lion* closed the range, *Queen Mary* scored two hits on its opponent and disabled one of *Seydlitz*'s aft turrets. Around 4:15, HMS *Lion* came under intense fire from Hipper's ships. The smoke from this obscured HMS *Princess Royal* forcing SMS *Derfflinger* to shift its fire to *Queen Mary*. As this new enemy engaged, the British ship continued to trade hits with *Seydlitz*.

At 4:26 PM, a shell from *Derfflinger* struck *Queen Mary* detonating one or both of its forward magazines. The resulting explosion broke the battlecruiser in half near its foremast. A second shell from *Derfflinger* may have hit further aft. As the after part of the ship began to roll, it was rocked by large explosion before sinking.

Of *Queen Mary*'s crew, 1,266 were lost while only twenty were rescued.

Though Jutland resulted in a strategic victory for the British, it saw two battlecruisers, HMS *Indefatigable* and *Queen Mary*, lost with nearly all hands. An investigation into the losses led to changes in ammunition handling aboard British ships as the report showed that cordite handling practices may have contributed to the loss of the two battlecruisers. (militaryhistory.about.com)

photo of the explosion of H.M.S.QUEEN MARY – IWM public domain.



Commonwealth War Graves entry:

Mutters, William Henry, Private PLY/16964, 31/05/1916

Age:47 Royal Marine Light Infantry H.M.S. "Queen Mary." Panel 18. Plymouth Naval Memorial. Son of James and Jane Mutters, of 41, The Strand, Teignmouth, Devon.

Native of Dawlish, Devon. (*mother's name incorrect and repeated in Devon Heritage site, below - ed*)

William Henry Mutters is recorded on the Devon Roll of Honour but no date or location of death is shown.

Dawlish War memorial inscription: MUTTERS W.H. PTE. R.M.L.I.

Devon Heritage site info:

PLY 16964 Private William Henry Mutters of the Royal Marine Light Infantry, H.M.S.QUEEN MARY. Son of James and Jane Mutter of 42 The Strand, Teignmouth. Born in Dawlish in the September Quarter of 1868. Died 31 May 1916 aged 47. (*parentage and date of birth incorrect-ed*)

Last known address: 3a Manor Row (1891 census)

Next of kin: Olive Mutters, neice, daughter of Thomas William & Sarah Mutters, Westmead, The Bartons, Dawlish (UK RN & RM War Graves Roll)

References:

Naval/Royal Marine service record at National Archives, Kew

Free Birth Marriage & Death records

CWGC.org

Refs from subscription sites:

UK RN & RM War Graves Roll

Census records

Forces War Records

14 family trees on Ancestry (*many with errors-ed*)