

Thomas HALLETT

Born Broadclyst, Devon 13 September 1852 Died 16 February 1918, aged 65
 Lieutenant Commander, R.N. (Ret'd) H.M.S.ZARIA

Thomas Hallett was the grandson of John and Elizabeth Hallett of Woodbury and the son of Thomas Hallett (1829-) and Sophia Stevens (1832-1864). His young parents had farmed at Broadclyst where **Thomas** was born in 1852, but his family moved to Ashbrittle, Somerset ca 1855.

Thomas, father, was a farmer and was at Greenham Barton, Ashbrittle for the 1861 census with a household as:

Thomas Hallet, Head,	33,	farmer	born	Woodbury
Sophia Hallett, wife,	30,			Woodbury
Eliza Stevens, dau,	10,			"
Elizabeth, dau,	9,			Broadclyst
Thomas , son,	7,			"
Lucy, dau,	5,			Ashbrittle, Somerset
William, son,	3,			"
John A, son,	6 months			"

There were also a farm assistant and three servants.

After the death of his wife, Sophia, in 1864, Thomas Hallett married again to Jane (?) as shown in the 1871 census at Landboat, Cheriton Fitzpaine:

Thomas Hallett,Head,	43,	farmer of 245 acres, employing 4 men and 1 boy		
Jane Hallett, wife,	49,		born	Dartmouth
Lucy "	dau, 15,	farmer's assist		Ashbrittle, Somerset
John "	son, 13,	scholar		"
William "	son, 12,	"		"
Edwin "	son, 9,	"		"

(John has increased in age, but records may have been lost or the census-taker confused)

The children moved away when Thomas retired, and in 1891 is living at 1 Mount Pleasant, Wolborough, Newton Abbot with his wife Eliza Jane. No marriage record has been found for Thomas and (Eliza) Jane. Eliza Jane Hallett was a widow by 1911 when, aged 89, she was living at Dendy Road, Paignton and declares her birth at Follaton, which is approximately one mile west of Totnes. There is a death record for Thomas Hallett, aged 74, in the Totnes District in the December quarter of 1901, vol 5b, p 91. There is a death record for Eliza J Hallett, aged 97, in the Totnes District in the June quarter of 1920, vol 5b, p 180.

The young **Thomas Hallett** signed on at the age of 18 on 13 September 1870 for 10 years' service in the Royal Navy, and again in 1880 for another 10 years. After a period of training he served in H.M.S.Royal Alfred, the last wooden-hulled battleship to be built at Portsmouth. He was rated Able Seaman and when the ship was paid off into reserve he moved in 1874 to H.M.S.Cambridge, a triple-decker, 102-gun first-rate wooden-wall ship of the line, moored as a gunnery ship off Plymouth. He gained gunnery qualifications over following years and rated as Leading Seaman in March 1876 and Petty Officer, 1st Class in June 1879. Over the six years to 1881 his character reference is recorded as 'exemplary.'

Thomas Hallett was promoted to Acting Boatswain on 21 July 1881.

While serving aboard H.M.S.Monarch as Bosun, he was present at the bombardment of Alexandria on 11 July 1882. On 15 June 1883 his leg was fractured by a hawser. The record

showed 'cured 1 Aug 1883'. It is not uncommon for a hawser (mooring rope) to fly back if tension is released and injuries can be acquired in such a manner.

His S.206s are recorded in a ledger of his service and include such as: "All round an excellent Bosun. One of the best I have met with for a long time. Strongly recomm for Chief – Commander Atkinson", and, "One of the best Bosuns I have been shipmates with during late years. Zealous, gets on well with the men, and is recomd for promotion." Some of these references relate to a period of five years, from January 1900 – 1905 when he was appointed to the Deptford Victualling Yard.

He was promoted again to Chief Boatswain on 1 April 1903 and to Lieutenant on 17 May 1906. He had thus risen through the ranks of lower deck to become a Warrant Officer and full Officer, Royal Navy.

Thomas Hallett retired for the first time on 5th September 1907, at his own request at age 55 and the record is marked, "Their Lordships' appreciation expressed of zealous and conscientious manner in which he carried out his duties at the Victualling Yard, Deptford.

Thomas Hallett had married Emma Shapter (born in Dawlish, ca 1862) in Q3 of 1884.

In 1891 Emma was living in 1 Brook Street, Dawlish with her parents Thomas and Emma Shapter and four other children aged between 22 and 33. (Thomas Shapter was born in Trusham, ca 1821, and worked as a Plumber and Decorator in Dawlish)

In 1901 Emma Hallett and her husband **Thomas** were living in the Royal Victoria Yard, Deptford with her widowed mother Emma Shapter, 71 and a niece Gladys, 7.

In 1911 **Thomas** and Emma Hallett were living at 'Meadow Croft', Barton Crescent, Dawlish and the niece, Gladys, 17, was shown as a 'help'. There were no children from their marriage and it seems that Gladys had been adopted as their daughter.

Thomas was placed once more on the Active List when he volunteered and was promoted to Lieutenant Commander on 17 May 1914. In April 1915 the Navy List shows him as retired, but he was brought back into active service for, in 1915, 1916 and 1917 Navy Lists, he is shown as Lieut Cdr (Retd) serving aboard H.M.S.ZARIA (for Charge of Stores).

He was appointed to "ZARIA" for c/o Stores on 25 January 1915.

H.M.S.ZARIA was sometimes described as an Armed Merchant Cruiser, although she was in fact a Depot Ship of 3,500 tons, based at Longhope, Orkney from 25 February 1915.

Thomas' record shows that he was 'sick on shore, muscular rheumatism' on 12 October 1917 and his appointment was suspended on 21 December 1917. The combination of arduous work and climate may have been the cause of his illness. The death certificate records "1 Prostatic hypertrophy, 2 Retention of urine Cystitis and Toxaemia" and was certified by Dr F.J.Cann. This would appear to indicate a bladder infection and blood poisoning brought on by enlargement of the prostate gland (but not necessarily Prostate cancer).

The *Western Times* of 22 February 1918 reported on his death on the evening of Saturday 16 February at his home, 'Meadowcroft'. He had been ill since returning home on sick leave. It states that "Lieut-Commander Hallett, previous to the war, was exceedingly interested in

politics. He was an energetic member of the local Conservative Club, and at election time rendered valued help to the Party."

The funeral took place on 21 February and the newspaper records the presence of Messrs J and T Shapter (brothers-in-law), Messrs W Hallett , Lymptone, and J.Hallett, Cullompton (cousins) among a long list of mourners. (see attached cutting from the *Dawlish Gazette*)
(The death ref GRO is March quarter 1918, Newton Abbot District, vol 5b, p 158.)

Thomas Hallett is inscribed in the Devon Roll of Honour, but no date or location for death are shown. He does not appear in the Commonwealth War Graves site index.

Dawlish War memorial inscription: HALLETT THOS. Lt Cdr H.M.S.ZARIA

Devon Heritage site info:

Lt.Commander Thomas Hallett of the Royal Navy, H.M.S.ZARIA. H.M.S.ZARIA was sometimes described as an Armed Merchant Cruiser, although it was in fact a Depot Ship of 3,500 tons, based at Longhope, Orkney from 25 February 1915. ZARIA remained at Scapa Flow as an Auxiliary Patrol Depot Ship or Repair Ship until the crew were paid off early in 1919. No details are known as to the cause of Thomas Hallett's death.

Last known address: Meadow Croft, Barton Crescent, Dawlish

Next of kin: Emma Hallett, widow who died in 1952

Probate was granted on 30th August 1918 as follows:

Hallett, Thomas of Meadow Croft, Barton Crescent, Dawlish, Devonshire Lt Cdr RN, died 16 February 1918. Probate granted Exeter 30 August to Emma Hallett, widow.
£479.16s.8d

References:

The Navy Lists,

Free BMD refs

wikipedia

www.historicalrfa.org Accounts of additional group of ships requisitioned by the Admiralty during WW1 to augment the ships of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

Refs via subscription websites:

Census records

Alexander's Family tree – Ancestry

UK, RN Seamans Index

Probate record

Tripe family tree – Ancestry (for Emma Shapter)