

Sailor Commits Suicide Onboard HMS Mars At Portland

185901 Able Seaman Charles Sutton ~ Royal Navy

Charles Sutton was born at Elloughton Brough, Yorkshire on the 4th July, 1879. He seems to be somewhat elusive regarding searches to match his details on the Ancestry web-site. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission name his parents as George and Elizabeth Sutton and adding these details did not coincide with the above Charles Sutton. The closest was a George and Elizabeth Sutton who had a son named Charles who was born in Daventry, Northamptonshire. It does not appear to be that Charles Sutton was 'economical' about his personal details on joining the Royal Navy. Other, available information about him corroborates details given by him. There is a similar problem concerning his wife who was living in the family home in Ipswich. Her Christian name, Jennie may have been misspelt by census recorders as either 'Jenny' or 'Janet'. Further complications arise by the fact that there was another Jennie(y) Sutton living in Ipswich!

Elloughton is a village in the East Riding of Yorkshire, approximately 12 miles west of Kingston-upon-Hull. Conjoined with Brough to the south-east it forms the civil parish of Elloughton-cum-Brough. At the age of 16, Charles Sutton joined the Royal Navy at Chatham as a Boy 2nd Class in September 1895 and two years later signed an engagement for 12 years. He was described as being 5ft 4-inches tall, with brown hair, brown eyes, with a fresh complexion, gave his occupation as that of a hotel boy and had a 6-inch scar below his right knee. His record of service was as follows:-

<u>Ship</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Period of Service</u>		<u>Remarks</u>
		<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	
Caledonia	Boy 2 nd Class	26 Sep 1895		
Caledonia	Boy 1 st Class	4 Jun 1896	13 Jan 1897	
Galatea	Boy 1 st Class	14 Jan 1897		
Galatea	Ordinary Seaman	4 Jul 1897	10 Sep 1897	
Pembroke I	Ordinary Seaman	11 Sep 1897	18 Jan 1898	
Charybdis	Ordinary Seaman	19 Jan 1898	30 Jun 1898	
Furious	Ordinary Seaman	1 Jul 1898		

Furious	Able Seaman	13 Dec 1898	10 Jan 1899	
Wildfire I	Able Seaman	11 Jan 1899	4 Oct 1899	
Pembroke I	Able Seaman	5 Oct 1899	17 Oct 1899	
Terror	Able Seaman	18 Oct 1899	30 Apr 1901	
Malabar	Able Seaman	1 May 1901	30 Jun 1901	
Terror	Able Seaman	1 Jul 1901	23 Jan 1903	
Pembroke I	Able Seaman	24 Jan 1903	18 May 1903	
Dido	Able Seaman	19 May 1903	30 Jun 1903	
Andromache	Able Seaman	1 Jul 1903	2 Mar 1904	
Pembroke I	Able Seaman	3 Mar 1904	28 Apr 1904	
Acheron	Able Seaman	29 Apr 1904	26 Oct 1905	
Pembroke I	Able Seaman	27 Oct 1905	15 Feb 1906	
Cape Yard	Able Seaman	16 Feb 1906	9 May 1906	
Terpischose	Able Seaman	10 May 1906	9 Nov 1906	
Pembroke I	Able Seaman	10 Nov 1906	3 Dec 1906	
Adventure	Able Seaman	4 Dec 1906	20 Aug 1907	
Blenheim	Able Seaman	21 Aug 1907	18 Jan 1909	
Pembroke I	Able Seaman	19 Jan 1909	3 Jul 1909	Time Expired
Joined Royal Fleet Reserve Chatham Service Number B5956 4 th July 1909				
Mars	Able Seaman	2 Aug 1914	14 Dec 1914	Discharged Dead ~ (Self-Inflicted)

Having completed his full time engagement on the 3rd July, 1909 he joined the Royal Fleet Reserve at Chatham the following day. His character and ability during his service in the Royal Navy was marked 'Very Good'/'Good' and with the Royal Fleet Reserve 'Satisfactory'. He was granted his first Good Conduct Badge on the 14th July, 1900, deprived of it on the 1st July 1903

and restored to him on the 1st January, 1904. On the 1st January, 1906 he received his second Good Conduct Badge, which was deprived on the 21st May, 1905 and restored on the 19th November, 1908.

Charles Sutton's Royal Naval service record reveals he served on various warships of the Royal Navy and in shore establishments. The following gives brief details about those warships and shore establishments:

HMS Caledonia

Charles underwent his training as a Boy seaman on HMS Caledonia. Formerly, a 98-gun second rate ship of the line she was launched in 1810 as HMS Impregnable. In 1862 she became a training ship and renamed HMS Kent in 1888. Renamed again in 1891 as HMS Caledonia she was broken up in 1906. Five warships and three shore establishments of the Royal Navy have been named HMS Caledonia, the Latin name for Scotland.



Grave Of Able Seaman Charles Sutton R.N.

HMS Galatea

One of seven Orlando-class armoured cruisers laid down at Robert Napier and Sons of Govan in April 1865, launched in March 1887 and completed in March 1889. She was 300-ft in length with a beam of 56-ft, draught of 24-ft, coal fired and powered by two triple steam expansion engines. Although ships of this class were overweight, displacing 5,624-tons they were capable of achieving 18-knots. Armed with 2 x Single BL 9.2-inch Mk V guns, 10 x Single BL 6-inch guns, 6 x Single QF 6-pounder Hotchkiss guns and 10 x Single QF 3-pounder guns. They had a nautical range of 8,000 miles at 10-knots and a complement of 484 officers and ratings. HMS Galatea was sold and scrapped in April 1905.

HMS Pembroke

Nine ships and a number of shore establishments of the Royal Navy have been named HMS Pembroke. The latter was the name given to shore barracks established at Chatham in 1903. HMS Pembroke was paid off and closed in 1973. The buildings were designed by Sir Henry

Pilkington and now house the Universities at Medway, a tri-partite collaboration of the Universities of Greenwich, Kent, and Canterbury Christ Church, on a single campus.

HMS Charybdis

One of eight Astraea-class protected armoured cruisers, laid down at Sheerness Dockyard in 1891, launched on the 15th June, 1893 and completed on the 14th January, 1896. Displacing 4,360-tons, she was 320-ft in length, with a beam of 49½-ft and a draught of 19-ft. Steam powered, coal fired, with two triple steam expansion engines, twin propellers, a maximum speed of 18-knots, a nautical range of 7,000 miles at 10-knots and a complement of 318. Her armament consisted of 2 x QF 6-inch guns, 8 x QF 4·7-inch guns, 10 x QF 6-pounder guns, 1 x QF 3-pounder gun and 4 x 18-inch torpedoes. She served predominantly on the Pacific, Indian Ocean and Cape of Good Hope stations. Obsolete by the time of the First World War they were useful additions to the fleet as training or depot ships. HMS Charybdis was sold and scrapped in 1922.

HMS Furious

One of four Arrogant-class protected armoured cruisers, laid down at Devonport Dockyard on the 10th June, 1895, launched on the 3rd December, 1896 and completed and commissioned on the 1st July, 1898. Displacing 5,840-tons, she had an overall length of 342-ft, beam 57½-ft and a draught of 20-ft. Powered by 2 x Vertical Triple-Expansion Steam Engines, 18 x Belville water-tube boilers, a designed SHP of 10,000 producing 18-knots. Armed with 4 x QF 6-inch guns, 6 x 4·7-inch guns, 8 x 12-pounders, 3 x 3-pounders and 3 x 18-inch Torpedoes (Submerged). The ships of this class were the first to be fitted with water-tube boilers. Designed to operate with the main battle fleet, and sink seriously damaged enemy ships by ramming. They were described as 'Fleet Rams'. HMS Furious was paid off in 1912, renamed HMS Forte as a hulk in 1915 and attached to the shore establishment HMS Vernon. Sold and scrapped in 1923.

HMS Wildfire I

Originally purchased in 1888 by the Royal Navy as the Hiawatha, a paddle screw yacht, displacing 453-tons she was renamed HMS Wildfire. Based at Sheerness the following year she was renamed HMS Udine in 1907 and scrapped in 1912. Five ships and a number of shore establishments of the Royal Navy have been named HMS Wildfire.

HMS Terror

Previously named HMS Malabar, an iron screw troopship launched in 1866 she became the base ship at Bermuda in 1897 and renamed HMS Terror in 1905. Sold and scrapped in 1918.

HMS Malabar

A Euphrates-class troopship built by the Thames Shipbuilding Company and launched on the 8th December, 1866. One of five iron-hulled vessels originally fitted with a single steam engine which was later replaced with a Napier 2-cylinder compound engine in 1873 and with a barque-rigged sail plan. The vessels of this class were 360-ft in length, with a beam of 49-ft, – HMS Malabar was slightly smaller – they had a Ram bow which projected forward below the water-line, one funnel, a single propeller and fully rigged could achieve a speed of 14-knots. They were built for transporting of troops between the United Kingdom and India, and could carry 1,200 troops and their families. Sold and scrapped in 1918. In 1891 HMS Malabar became the base ship at Bermuda and was renamed HMS Terror on the 1st May, 1905. Later part of the Royal Naval Dockyard became a shore establishment for the Royal Navy and was named HMS Malabar.

HMS Dido

An Eclipse-class protected armoured cruiser built by the London and Glasgow Shipbuilding Company of Govan. HMS Dido was laid down on the 30th August, 1894, launched on the 20th March, 1896 and completed on the 10th May, 1898. She had a displacement of 5,600-tons, was 350-ft in length, with a beam of 53½-ft and a draught of 20½-ft. Coal fired, with 2 x Inverted Triple Expansion Steam engines. Fitted with eight boilers using natural draught produced an IHP of 8,000 (18½-knots) and an IHP of 9,600 forced draught (19½-knots). Originally her armament comprised 5 x QF 6-inch guns, 6 x QF 4·7-inch guns, 6 x 3-pounder QF guns, 3 x 18-inch torpedoes. After 1905 she was equipped with 11 x 6-inch QF guns; 9 x 3-inch QF guns, 7 x 3-pounder guns, 3 x 18-inch Torpedoes. The building cost was approximately £252,000. HMS Dido served on the China Station, returned to the United Kingdom, paid off at Chatham in 1902 and placed in reserve. Re-commissioned in November 1902 she was later assigned to the 3rd Fleet in the Spring of 1912. Converted as a depot ship in 1913, re-commissioned at Portsmouth, she remained on the cruiser list, having retained most of her guns but with reduced ammunition. At the beginning of the First World War she was employed as a depot ship for a number of Destroyer Flotillas and continued in that role throughout the war. After end of the war she was placed in reserve and scrapped in 1926.

HMS Andromache

One of eleven Apollo-class protected armoured cruisers of 3,600-tons she was built at Chatham Dockyard. Laid down in May 1889, launched on the 14th August, 1890 and completed and commissioned two years later. Ordered under the Naval Defence Act of 1889 the building costs

were £186,000/ship. These warships were 314-ft in length, with a beam of 43½-ft and draught 17½-ft. Steam powered their 2 x Triple Steam Engines were capable of achieving 19¾-knots. Their armament comprised 2 x QF 6-inch guns, 6 x QF 4.7-inch guns, 8 x 6-pounder guns and 2 x 14-inch Torpedoes. Initially HMS Andromache was placed in 'A' Division of the Fleet Reserve. She was present at the 1897 Spithead Review to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Transferred from Chatham to Devonport she remained unemployed apart from annual fleet manoeuvres. In 1902 she became a Naval Reserve Drill Ship based at North Shields and participated in the Coronation Fleet Review at Spithead in August for King Edward VII. She was converted to a minelayer at Chatham in 1909. The following year during the annual summer naval exercises she collided with the SS Neapolitan Prince being used as a transport ship off Harwich. Previously in 1908 HMS Andromache had collided with a Torpedo Gun Boat in Harwich harbour. On the outbreak of the First World War she joined a minelayer squadron and was later confined to harbour duties. Sold and scrapped in 1920.

HMS Ancheron

Originally HMS Northumberland, she was the last of the three Minotaur-class armoured frigates built by the Milwall Iron Works, London at a cost of £440,256. She was laid down on the 10th October, 1861, launched on the 17th April, 1866 and completed and commissioned in October 1868. Displacing 10,584-tons, she had a length of 400½-ft, a beam of 59½-ft and a draught of 27¾-ft. Fitted with 10 x rectangular fire tube boilers producing steam for a Trunk Steam Engine which drove a single propeller and combined with five masts for sails produced a speed of 14-knots. She was armed with 4 x 9-inch Rifled Muzzle-Loading guns, 28 x 8-inch Rifled Muzzle-Loading Guns and 2 x 7-inch Rifled Muzzle-Loading guns. With a crew of 800 she had a nautical range of 2,825 miles at 10-knots. After commissioning she served with the Channel Squadron. In 1890 she was assigned to the 1st Reserve Squadron at Portland and then to Devonport from 1891-98. Hulked in 1898 as a stokers training ship at the Nore she was renamed HMS Ancheron on the 1st January, 1904. From 1909 to 1927 she was used as coal hulk at Invergordon, having been renamed C.8 in 1909 and then C.68 in 1926. Sold firstly in 1927, resold and renamed Stedmund for service at Dakar, Senegal, West Africa and scrapped in 1935.

Cape Yard – Simon's Town

The Royal Naval Base at Simon's Town in Table Bay, South Africa from 1814 until 1957 when it was transferred to the South African Navy.

HMS Terpsichore

An Aeolus Second-class Cruiser also known as the Apollo-class of 3,600-tons she was built by J. & G. Thompson at Clydebank. HMS Terpsichore was laid down on the 27th August, 1889, launched on the 30th October, 1890 and completed in April 1892. 314-ft in length, with a beam of 43½-ft, a draught of 17½-ft, coal fired with two propeller shafts she was capable of 19½-knots. Her armament was comprised of 2 x 6-inch QF guns, 6 x QF 4·7-inch guns, 8 x 6-pounder guns and 2 x 14-inch Torpedoes. Ten ships were sheathed in copper for service in the tropics. After completion HMS Terpsichore was placed in reserve at Chatham from 1892 until 1901. Commissioned during the latter year she was sent to the Cape Station, South Africa remaining there for five years. On return to the United Kingdom she was based at Portsmouth from 1906-1907 and laid up. Placed on the disposal list in 1913 she was sold and scrapped the following year. Twenty-one of these vessels were completed for the Royal Navy and by 1905 were obsolete. Prior to disposal some were used for training purposes.

HMS Adventure

One of two Adventure-class scout cruisers built for the Royal Navy by Armstrong Whitworth at their Elswick, Tyneside shipyard. She was laid down on the 7th January, 1904, launched on the 8th September and completed and commissioned in October 1905. Displacing 2,670-tons she was 374-ft in length, with a beam of 38¼-ft and a draught of 12½-ft. Coal fired with twelve Yarrow boilers, two triple expansion steam engines, producing a speed of 25-knots and a nautical range of 2,370 miles at 10-knots. Her armament consisted of 10 x QF 12-pounder guns, 8 x QF 3-pounder guns and 2 x 18-inch Torpedoes. From completion she was placed in reserve until 1907 and assigned to the 1st Torpedo Boat Destroyer Flotilla. After a refit at Chatham in 1910 she became the Flotilla leader of the 2nd Destroyer Squadron based at Devonport. On completion of a refit in 1912 she joined the 3rd Light Cruiser Squadron and after fleet manoeuvres was assigned to the 6th Destroyer Flotilla at Dover. In 1915 she was transferred to the 6th Light Cruiser Squadron based on the Humber. Later in that year she became the flagship at Queenstown until 1917. During the summer of 1918 she was employed on escort duties to Gibraltar, followed by service in the Mediterranean and Aegean. Returning to the United Kingdom in 1919 she was paid off and scrapped the following year.

HMS Blenheim

A Blake-class first class protected armoured cruiser of 9,150-tons built by the Thames Ironworks & Shipbuilding Company, Leamouth, London. She was laid down in October 1888, launched on the 5th July, 1890 and completed and commissioned the following year. 375-ft in

length, with a beam of 65-ft she was coal fired and powered by 4 Humphreys, Tennant & Company Triple Expansion Steam Engines developing 20,000 H.P., turning two propellers giving a top speed of 22-knots. Her armament was comprised of 2 x BL 9·2-inch Mk VI guns, 10 x QF 6-inch Mk I – Mk III guns, 16 x 3-pounder guns, 4 x 14-inch Torpedoes (2 submerged & 2 above the waterline) and a ships complement of 593 officers and ratings. Based at Chatham in 1891 she later served on the China Station until 1902 and on returning to the United Kingdom was assigned to the Channel Squadron. Converted to a depot ship in 1906 she was assigned to the Mediterranean Fleet as a destroyer depot ship two years later. In March 1915 she was sent to the Eastern Mediterranean to support the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force and landing of troops at Gallipoli and later served with the 5th Destroyer Flotilla in the Mediterranean. HMS Blenheim was sold and scrapped in 1926.

HMS Mars

HMS Mars was the seventh of nine pre-dreadnought battleships of the Majestic-class built under the 1894 Naval building programme. Built by Laird Brothers of Birkenhead, she was laid down on the 2nd June, 1894, launched on the 30th March, 1896 and completed and commissioned in June 1897. Technical details:-

Dimensions ~ Length Overall 413-ft; Beam 75-ft; Draught 30-ft;

Displacement ~ 14,900-tons;

Machinery ~ 2 x 3-cylinder Vertical Inverted Triple Expansion Steam Engines; 2 x Propellers, 8 x Cylindrical Boilers, with Four furnaces each; Designed Horse Power 10,000 = 16½-knots (Natural Draught); Horse Power 12,000 = 17½-knots (Forced Draught);

Fuel – Coal ~ Normal 1,200-tons; Maximum 2,000-tons (always carried);

Coal Consumption ~ 1·25-tons/hour at 8-knots; 8·5-tons/hour at 15-knots; 10·25-tons/hour at 16·5-knots;

1907-1908 ~ Old Boilers Removed & New Oil-Fired Boilers Installed;

Armament ~ 4 x 12-inch Mk VII, 35 Calibre guns; 12 x 6-inch, wire, 40 Calibre guns; 16 x 12-pounder guns; 12 x 3-pounder guns; 2 x Maximum Guns; 2 x 12-pounder Boat Guns; 4 x 18-inch Torpedoes (Submerged) 1 Above Waterline (Stern);

Armour ~ Belt 16-ft wide x 220-ft long; 9-inch Belt amidships; 14-inch Bulkheads; 4-inch Deck (on slopes); Protection to Vitals: 14-inch Barbettes; 10-inch Turrets; 6-inch Casemates; 14-inch Conning Tower; Total Weight 4,260-tons;

Complement ~ 757 Officers and Ratings;

Building Costs ~ Approximately £1,000,000/ship to complete;

After commissioning, HMS Mars served with the Channel Fleet. In 1902 an accident with her forward turret killed eleven men. After the damaged had been repaired the warship was present later that year at the Coronation Fleet Review for King Edward VII. During a refit at Portsmouth in 1904 the Channel Fleet became the Atlantic Fleet after a Fleet reorganisation on the 1st January, 1905 and HMS Mars remained in the renamed unit. Her refit was completed in March 1905 and a year later on leaving the Atlantic Fleet she was placed in reserve at Portsmouth.

Re-commissioned in October 1906 HMS Mars joined the new Channel Fleet and was paid off at Portsmouth on the 4th March, 1907. Re-commissioned the following day she was assigned for service in the Devonport Division of the new Home Fleet which had been created in January 1907 and was based at Devonport. Whilst at Devonport she underwent refits in 1908-1909 and 1911-1912. Assigned to the 4th Division of the Home Fleet in July 1914 HMS Mars was mobilised for war on the 27th July. With her sister ships HMS Hannibal, HMS Magnificent and HMS Victorious they formed the 9th Battle Squadron and were based at the Humber. HMS Mars was the guard ship at the Humber when war was declared and continued in that duty after the 9th Battle Squadron had been dissolved in August. She was transferred on the 9th December to the Dover Patrol and two days later on the 11th was ordered to Portland, remaining there until early February 1915. Later in the month she sailed to Belfast and was paid off. Disarmed, with the exception of four 6-inch and lighter guns during March and April she was laid up in Loch Goil.

HMS Mars was re-commissioned in September 1915 as a troopship as was HMS Hannibal and HMS Magnificent, similarly disarmed for duties as troopships in the Dardanelles campaign arriving there in early October 1915. HMS Mars evacuated troops from Anzac in December 1915 and at Helles in January 1916. She returned to the United Kingdom in February and was paid off at Chatham where she was converted to a harbour depot ship. On re-commissioning in that capacity on the 1st September, 1916 she served at Invergordon until July 1920. Placed on the sale list there she was sold and scrapped in 1921.

The Census taken on HMS Terror, Bermuda Able Seaman Charles Sutton was listed on the 'List of the Officers, Crew, Royal Marines and of All Persons NOT Onboard on the Night of Sunday,

March 31st, 1901'. Charles had married on the 3rd October, 1908, Jennie (née Langley) born on the 25th August, 1882. After completing his full-time service in the Royal Navy he was employed at Chatham Dockyard as a 'Rigger'. The 1911 Census recorded that he was living with Mrs Annie Chick and her daughter Emily at 11 River Street, Old Brompton as a boarder with four other male workers. His marital status was 'married' and perhaps his duties with the Royal Fleet Reserve and dockyard employment it may have been mutually convenient for his wife to remain at their home in Ipswich.

On the outbreak of the First World War Able Seaman Charles Sutton was mobilised for war service with the Royal Fleet Reserve and drafted to HMS Mars on the 2nd August, 1914. He would have been with the warship at the Humber during the early months of the war, then briefly at Dover before arriving at Portland on the 11th December, 1914. Three days later he was dead, having committed suicide on the 14th. He was 35 years of age.

Southern Times ~ Saturday, 19th December, 1914.

Suicide Aboard A Man O'War ~ Sailor Cuts His Throat

An inquest was held at the Royal Naval Hospital, on Wednesday morning by the Coroner (Mr G.P. Symes), Mr A.H. Gill being foreman of the jury on Charles Sutton, R.N.R., an able seaman aboard a ship of which we suppress at the request of the Admiralty. Mr A.H. Huxtable appeared for the Admiralty and made the request heretofore mentioned, with which we in common, with all other journals deem it our duty to comply.

Alexander George Attrill, chief petty officer of H.M.S. — identified the body as that of Charles Sutton an A.B. of the same ship. Witness had known deceased since the middle of September, they being in the same party. Deceased's station was with witness at the stern torpedo tube by day and on the telephone by night. Witness last saw him alive on Sunday at 8 p.m. On Monday afternoon he was told that deceased had committed suicide. Deceased was a man of a very depressed mind, always low-spirited. He had never spoken about his health, but was always a quiet, reserved man, not wishing to mix with other men. A week before the suicide deceased went on four days leave from — and returned on Friday last. Witness saw him on Saturday and he seemed more depressed than ever, but did his work all right. There was nothing about him to make witness call the doctor's attention. He had never made a complaint, nor had any complaint ever been made against him. Deceased was a native of Ipswich, living at 11, Regent Street, St. Helen's, Ipswich.

George William Savage, R.M.L.I., stated that he had known deceased ever since last July or August. He seemed very quiet since he returned from leave last week, but before that he had never seen anything wrong with him. He last saw deceased alive at 9 a.m. on Monday, when Sutton was walking up and down the passage outside the store room. They passed the time of day and had a casual chat. Witness was waiting for the armourers to come, but while walking along the deck he saw a water-tight door open. It led to the 12in magazine and ought to have been closed. Knowing that, witness went to the door to see who was there and to close the door, and found deceased lying on the floor in a pool of blood. He was lying on his stomach. The witness, thinking he was dead, ran to the sick bay and told two stewards, one of whom fetched the fleet surgeon, and the other came back with him, finding P.O. Read with deceased then. Witness did not see anything in the nature of a knife or razor. The man must have done the deed himself, as witness was only 20 yards away. He heard no sound of any kind.



By the Coroner: When deceased returned from leave had said he had had a very good time, and Grave Of Able Seaman Charles Sutton R.N. hoped witness had had the same.

By Mr Monger: Anyone going to the turret magazine would have to pass witness. Deceased was the only man who did so.

Frederick John Read, P.O., of the same ship, said he had been at work in the fore-turret on Monday morning at about 10 a.m. He heard that someone had cut his throat, and witness went to the “mag” at once, finding deceased lying on his left side with his throat cut. Witness rendered first aid by compressing the artery and putting the head down on the wound. When the doctor came witness saw a razor lying in the pool of blood.

James Ness McBean, temporary surgeon to the ship, said he was sent for at 10.55 to see deceased who was reported dying. Sutton was on his back and Read was rendering first aid in a very efficient manner. Deceased was suffering from haemorrhage caused by a large wound on

the right side of the neck. Witness applied dressings and had the man taken to the sick bay, where he was operated upon, but only lived three hours and 40 minutes. At first he was conscious, but could not speak owing to the larynx being severed. Such a wound might easily be caused by the razor.

The Fleet Surgeon of the ship Dr — (name suppressed by request for Navy list reasons) stated he saw deceased on Saturday, when he complained of a cough and that his nose was blocked up. He had a catarrhal cold, but was otherwise in perfect health. At about 11 a.m. on Monday witness saw deceased brought into the sick bay. He had an incised wound in the neck extending from the right side obliquely across the larynx. It was a deliberate clean cut and must have been caused by great force. The razor produced would have done it. He died at 2.30 p.m. from loss of blood.

Deceased's official record showed that he was a married man 36 years of age.

Foreman: On Saturday there was no depression apparent in the deceased.

Another man present at the inquiry said deceased had got it into his head that he was going to be shot at sunset.

William Edwin Blenkinsop, A.B., of the ship, who had known deceased since August 2nd when they joined the ship, stated deceased was cheerful, but would only mix with witness and Private Savage. He seemed to be very happy in his home life. On Saturday morning deceased seemed to be depressed but he said he had spent the happiest leave of his life and wished the same to witness. On Monday at about 9.45 a.m. witness went to the flat, and spoke to the deceased, who said, "I'm going to be shot at sunset." He laughed at it as a joke, and then started skylarking and made deceased smile before he left him.

Witness did not see him alive again. He was a very nervous man and was always a bit jumpy about going to sea, now that the war time was on.

The jury returned a verdict of suicide while of unsound mind.

Note: — Due to the war and disclosure of information thought to be helpful to the enemy the name of the ship, some place names and names of personnel were censored.

Charles' wife Jennie would have been informed of the sad and distressing news of her husband's death. She was living at 11 Regent Street, St Helen's, Ipswich. Able Seaman Charles Sutton was buried in Portland Royal Navy Cemetery. Grave Location: Plot 537.

The Imperial War Graves Commission erected a 'Special Memorial' headstone over his grave in 1924. A new headstone was erected in November 1959 and inscribed:

Buried Near This Spot

C. Sutton

Able Seaman 185901

H.M.S. Mars

14th December 1914 Age 35

Portland Royal Naval Cemetery

Portland Harbour is a manmade harbour attached to the north of Portland. Originally it was a natural anchorage known as Portland Roads, protected by Portland to the south, Chesil Beach to the west and mainland Dorset to the north. Portland Roads was transformed into a naval base following the building of two breakwater arms in the mid-19th century. The Cemetery was established by the War Office in 1876 for the burial of the soldiers garrisoned at Verne Citadel (part of the harbour defence fortifications) and Royal Navy sailors based at Portland. In 1907 the site was transferred to the Admiralty, who went on to extend the site to the west in 1914.

Throughout the First World War, Portland Harbour was used regularly for training exercises and patrols for German U-boats. There are 67 burials from the First World War, 50 of which are unidentified. In addition, there is a Special Memorial to a casualty buried in Portland (St George) Churchyard. After the War the maintenance of the Cemetery was passed to the Imperial War Graves Commission and in November 1926, the Cross of Sacrifice was unveiled in the presence of detachments from ships stationed at Portland and the local garrison. With the outbreak of the Second World War, Portland continued hosting training exercises. However, after Germany's successful invasion of France, the naval base quickly became the target of air attacks. On the 4th July, 1940 HMS Foylebank was attacked while at Portland Harbour, which resulted in her sinking on the 5th. Over 70 crew members lost their lives, some of whom are buried at Portland Royal Naval Cemetery, the rest are commemorated on memorials to the missing. By May 1944, both Portland Harbour and Weymouth Harbour were used as part of the D-Day preparations. They were major embarkation points for American troops, particularly the US 1st Division who embarked for 'Omaha Beach' in June 1944. There are 103 burials (including 1 Norwegian Merchant Navy seaman and 12 German airmen) 10 of which are unidentified, from the Second World War, the majority of which are in the Church of England section, near the Cross of Sacrifice. The Cemetery was extended eastwards in the mid-20th

century, where many post-Second World War burials are found. In 1996 the Naval Base at Portland was closed.

Charles Sutton is commemorated on the Roll of Honour in St Mary's Church, Elloughton and on the Brough War Memorial. His wife Jennie received a pension of 10/- per week from June 1915. The entries in the pension ledger show payments were made to her until the 4th April, 1917. There are no further entries after this date. On the 4th April, 1918 Jennie remarried and became the wife of William Henry Sheaf. She would also have received Charles' 1914-15 Star, British War Medal 1914-1920, Allied Victory Medal 1914-1919, the Bronze Memorial Plaque and Scroll.

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ADM 171/116

Pension Records ~ Western Front Association Archive

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