

# **Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent**



*Lest We Forget*

## **World War 1**



**172555 LEADING SEAMAN**

**W. BROOMHAM**

**H.M.S. "CRESSY"**

**ROYAL NAVY**

**22ND SEPTEMBER, 1914 Age 38**

## William BROOMHAM

William Broomham was born 2nd January, 1878 at Buckhurst Hill, Essex, England to parents Charles & Emma Broomham (nee Hailstone).

A death was registered in the March quarter, 1879 at Dartford, Kent for Emma Broomham, aged 38.

The 1881 England Census recorded William Broomham as a 5 year old Scholar, living with his family at 21 Newbury Road, Bromley, Kent, England. His father was listed as Charles Broomham (Widower, Gardener, aged 56, born Wiltshire). William was the youngest of three sons listed on this Census – Oliver Broomham (Telegraph Messenger, aged 16, born Wiltshire), John Broomham (Scholar, aged 7, born Bromley, Middlesex) & William. Also listed was Mary Broomham, sister of Charles Broomham (Housekeeper, aged 50, born Wiltshire)

The 1891 England Census recorded William Broomham as a 15 year old Errand Boy living with his family at 3 Prospect Place, Masons Hill, Bromley, Kent, England. His father was listed as Charles Broomham (Gardener, aged 66) & married to Henrietta (aged 53). Also listed was William's older brother – John T. Broomham (Telegraph Messenger, aged 17) & step siblings – Emily A. Clark (aged 16) & Alfred R. Clark (Scholar, aged 10).

William Broomham signed up with the Royal Navy on 15th March, 1893 at the age of 15 years. His Service number was 172555 (Chatham).

William Broomham was posted to H.M.S. *Impregnable* as Boy 2nd Class from 15th March, 1893. On 5th April, 1894 William Broomham was rated as Boy 1st Class still on H.M.S. *Impregnable*. Boy 1st Class Broomham was transferred to H.M.S. *Boscawen* on 17th April, 1894 then to H.M.S. *Pembroke* on 12th September, 1894. Boy 1st Class Broomham was transferred to H.M.S. *Grafton* on 28th October, 1894 then transferred on 1st December, 1894 to H.M.S. *Penelope* (Cape).

Boy 1st Class Broomham was transferred to H.M.S. *Phoebe* on 1st January, 1895 & rated as Ordinary Seaman on 2nd January, 1896. On 2nd January, 1896, at the age of 18 years, William Broomham signed on for 12 years with Royal Navy. He was 5ft 1 ½ in with brown hair, brown eyes & a sallow complexion. Ordinary Seaman Broomham was rated as Able Seaman on H.M.S. *Phoebe* on 25th April, 1897. Able Seaman Broomham was transferred to H.M.S. *St. George* on 29th September, 1897. He was transferred to H.M.S. *Pembroke I* on 19th February, 1898 then transferred to H.M.S. *Wildfire I* (?) on 20th April, 1898. Able Seaman Broomham was transferred back to H.M.S. *Pembroke I* on 3rd November, 1898 then transferred to H.M.S. *Galatea* on 11th February, 1899. Able seaman Broomham was transferred to H.M.S. *Sappho* on 19th August, 1900.

The 1901 England Census recorded William Broomham as a 23 year old, Able Seaman, a crew member of H.M.S. *Sappho*, with the Royal Navy. H.M.S. *Sappho* was positioned in Delagoa Bay, off Lourenco Marques (East Africa) on the night of the Census.

Able Seaman William Broomham was transferred back to H.M.S. *Pembroke I* on 19th September, 1901 then transferred to H.M.S. *Wildfire* on 20th November, 1901.

William Broomham, Royal Navy, married Alice Lambert on 26th December, 1901 in the Parish Church Bengoe, Hertfordshire, England.

Able Seaman William Broomham was transferred to H.M.S. *Pembroke I* on 20th February, 1902 then transferred to H.M.S. *Wildfire* on 10th March, 1902.

William Oliver Broomham, son of William & Alice Broomham was born on 2nd January, 1903 at Barnet, Hertfordshire, England.

Able Seaman William Broomham was rated as Leading Seaman on 1st March, 1904 while on H.M.S. *Wildfire*. He was transferred to H.M.S. *Pembroke* on 1st March, 1905 then transferred back to H.M.S. *Wildfire* on 22nd March, 1905. Leading Seaman William Broomham was transferred to H.M.S. *Pembroke* on 20th April, 1905 until 28th April, 1905.

William Broomham joined the Royal Fleet Reserve (CH. B. 2605) on 29th April, 1905.

Samuel Charles Broomham, son of William & Alice Broomham was born on 30th October, 1905 at Barnet, Hertfordshire, England.

From British Postal Service Appointment Books - in May, 1906 William Broomham, Postman was transferred from Barnet to Shenley. In August, 1907 William Broomham, Postman was posted to Barnet.

Lambert Jess Broomham, son of William & Alice Broomham was born on 11th December, 1908 at Barnet, Hertfordshire, England.

William Broomham re-enrolled in the Royal Navy on 23rd April, 1910 to serve until 20th April, 1915.

Charles Broomham, father of William Broomham, died on 2nd September, 1910 at Bromley, Kent.

The 1911 England Census recorded William Broomham as a 35 year old Postman living with his wife – Alice Broomham (aged 36) & children at 76 Salisbury Road, Barnet, Hertfordshire, England. William & Alice had been married for nine years & had three children – William O. Broomham (aged 8, born Bengoe, Herts), Samuel C. Broomham (aged 5, born Barnet, Herts) & Lambert J. Broomham (aged 2, born Barnet, Herts). Also listed was Charlotte Lambert (Mother, widow, aged 69) & a boarder – James Smith (Butcher, aged 22).

Leading Seaman William Broomham was posted to H.M.S. *Cressy* on 2nd August, 1914.

### **H.M.S. *Cressy***

HMS *Cressy* was a *Cressy*-class armoured cruiser built for the Royal Navy around 1900. Recommissioned at the start of World War I, she played a minor role in the Battle of Heligoland Bight a few weeks after the beginning of the war. *Cressy*, together with two of her sister ships, was torpedoed and sunk by the German submarine U-9 on 22 September 1914 with the loss of 560 of her crew.

On the morning of 22 September, *Cressy* and her sisters, *Aboukir* and *Hogue*, were on patrol without any escorting destroyers as these had been forced to seek shelter from bad weather. The three sisters were steaming in line abreast about 2,000 yards (1,800 m) apart at a speed of 10 knots (19 km/h; 12 mph). They were not expecting submarine attack, but had lookouts posted and one gun manned on each side to attack any submarines sighted. The weather had moderated earlier that morning and Tyrwhitt was en route to reinforce the cruisers with eight destroyers.

U-9, commanded by Kapitänleutnant Otto Weddigen, had been ordered to attack British transports at Ostend, but had been forced to dive and take shelter from the storm. On surfacing, she spotted the British ships and moved to attack. She fired one torpedo at 06:20 at *Aboukir* which struck her on the starboard side; the ship's captain thought he had struck a mine and ordered the other two ships to close to transfer his wounded men. *Aboukir* quickly began listing and capsized around 06:55 despite counter flooding compartments on the opposite side to right her.

As *Hogue* approached her sinking sister, her captain, Wilmot Nicholson, realized that it had been a submarine attack and signalled *Cressy* to look for a periscope although his ship continued to close on *Aboukir* as her crew threw overboard anything that would float to aid the survivors in the water. Having stopped and lowered all her boats, *Hogue* was struck by two torpedoes around 06:55. The sudden weight loss of the two torpedoes caused U-9 to broach the surface and *Hogue's* gunners opened fire without effect before the submarine could submerge again. The cruiser capsized about ten minutes after being torpedoed and sank at 07:15.

*Cressy* attempted to ram the submarine, but did not succeed and resumed her rescue efforts until she too was torpedoed at 07:20. Weddigen had fired two torpedoes from his stern tubes, but only one hit. U-9 had to manoeuvre to bring her bow around with her last torpedo and fired it at a range of about 550 yards (500 m) at 07:30. The torpedo struck on the port side and ruptured several boilers, scalding the men in the compartment. As her sisters had

done, *Cressy* took on a heavy list and then capsized before sinking at 07:55. Several Dutch ships began rescuing survivors at 08:30 and were joined by British fishing trawlers before Tyrwhitt and his ships arrived at 10:45. From all three ships 837 men were rescued and 62 officers and 1,397 enlisted men lost: 560 of those lost were from *Cressy*.

*(Extract of information on H.M.S. Cressy from Wikipedia)*



**H.M.S. Cressy**

Leading Seaman William Broomham was killed in action in the North Sea on 22nd September, 1914, due to enemy action. His body was not recovered for burial. His wife was notified at 10 The Drive, High Barnet, Herts.

William Broomham's Royal Navy Register of Seaman's Services records "*Drowned in North Sea when H.M.S. Cressy was sunk by German Submarine.*"

Newspaper Article – Portsmouth Evening News – 22 September, 1914:

### **NAVAL DISASTER**

#### ***Three British Warships Torpedoed***

#### **SUNK IN NORTH SEA**

#### **ABOUKIR FIRST ATTACKED**

#### **HOGUE & CRESSY BECOME VICTIMS WHILE AT RESCUE WORK**

*London, Tuesday Afternoon*

*The Press Bureau issued the following at 4.25 this afternoon:-*

*The Secretary of the Admiralty communicates the following statement for publication:-*

*H.M. ships Aboukir (Captain John E. Drummond), Hogue (Captain Wilmot S. Nicholson), and Cressy (Captain Robert W. Johnson), have been sunk by submarines in the North Sea.*

*The Aboukir was torpedoed, and whilst the Hogue and the Cressy had closed, and were standing by to save the crew, they were also torpedoed.*

*A considerable number were saved by H.M.S. Lowestoft (Captain Theobald W. B. Kennedy), and by a division of destroyers, trawlers and boats.*

*Lists of casualties will be published as soon as they are known.*

*The Cressy, Aboukir and Hogue were sister ships, armoured cruisers of a comparatively old type, built 14 years ago, They were of 12,000 tons and 18 knots speed, and carried two 9.2in and twelve 6-in guns.*

De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour:

*Broomham, William, Leading Seaman (R.F.R., B. 2605), 172555, H.M.S. Cressy; lost in action in the North Sea, 22 Sept. 1914.*

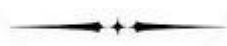
Leading Seaman William Broomham was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission records Leading Seaman William Broomham – service number 172555, aged 38, H.M.S. “Cressy”, Royal Navy. He was the son of Charles Broomham, of Bromley, Kent England; husband of Alice Broomham, of Kitchener Cottage, Southpine Rd., Everton Park, Enoggera, Brisbane, Australia.

Leading Seaman William Broomham is remembered on the Commemorative Roll Book, located in the Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. The Commemorative Roll records the names of those Australians who died during or as a result of wars in which Australians served, but who were not serving in the Australian Armed Forces and therefore not eligible for inclusion on the Roll of Honour.



**Commemorative Area of the Australian War Memorial** (*Capital Photographer*)





**William Broomham**



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **NAVAL CASUALTIES**

#### **H.M.S. "CRESSY"**

The following losses on H.M.S. Cressy under similar circumstances are also reported:-

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Broomham, William, leading seaman (R.F.R. B. 2695), 17255;

.....

(*Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, England – 5 October, 1914)

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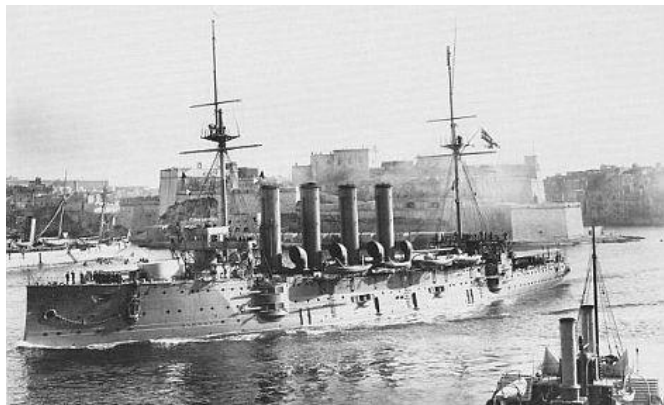
### **An insult to our war dead:**

#### **Dutch vessels ransack sunken British warships containing the bodies of 1,500 sailors for scrap metal**

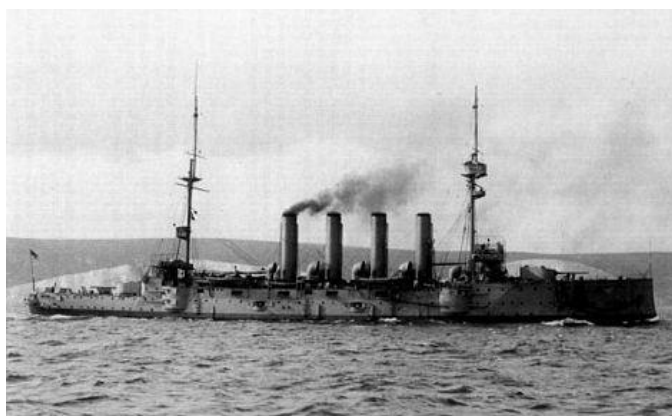
Dutch salvage vessels are illegally ransacking three sunken British cruisers in an attempt to find valuable scrap metal, it has emerged.

Looters have enraged the British naval community by scouring through the remains of the three warships sunk in the First World War and which are the final resting place of 1,500 sailors.

Netherlands police are now attempting to end the looters' activity, which has seen them use heavy-duty claws on cranes to tear through the shipwrecks 22 miles off the Dutch coast.



HMS Aboukir, above, HMS Hogue, below, and HMS Cressy, bottom, which were sunk off the Dutch coast by a German torpedo in 1914. They are the last resting places of 1,500 British seamen.



According to The Times, the Ministry of Defence and the Dutch Cultural Agency have condemned the disturbance of the war grave.

Vice-Admiral John McAnally, president of the Royal Naval Association, urged the metal hunt to stop in telling the paper: 'Leave our sailors alone. Let them rest in peace.'

The three ships were sunk off the Dutch coast on September 22, 1914, after being hit by torpedos from a German submarine.

HMS Aboukir was struck at 6.20am, while its fellow British warships Hogue and Cressy were also unable to avoid the German torpedos.

An estimated 1459 British soldiers aboard the armoured Royal Navy cruisers perished during the attack by the German U-9 sub.



The Times reported that local dive operators raised the alarm about the illegal salvage after seeing the damage to one of the North Sea's most popular diving sites.



Netherlands coastguard officials confirmed that salvage vessels were on the site and that they had been found with pieces of wreckage, but the destruction has not been stopped.

Marine conservationists and maritime historians have now warned Britain of the scavenging in a letter to the Ambassador to the Netherlands.

It has been alleged that two ships in the port of Scheveningen, the MS Bernica and MS Bela, are the ones responsible for the raids.

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Defence said: 'We do not condone the unauthorised disturbance of any wreck containing human remains.'

*(Daily Mail - 28 September, 2011)*

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### **Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent, England**

Chatham Naval Memorial overlooks the town of Chatham, Kent, England. It commemorates more than 8,500 Royal Navy personnel from World War 1 & over 10,000 Navy personnel from World War 2 who were lost or buried at sea.

After the Armistice, the Naval Authorities and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission were determined to find an appropriate way to commemorate naval personnel who had no grave.

An Admiralty committee recommended that the three manning ports in Great Britain - Chatham, Plymouth and Portsmouth - should each have an identical memorial of unmistakable naval form, an obelisk, which would serve as a leading mark for shipping.

The Chatham Naval Memorial was unveiled by The Prince of Wales, the future Edward VIII, on 26 April 1924.





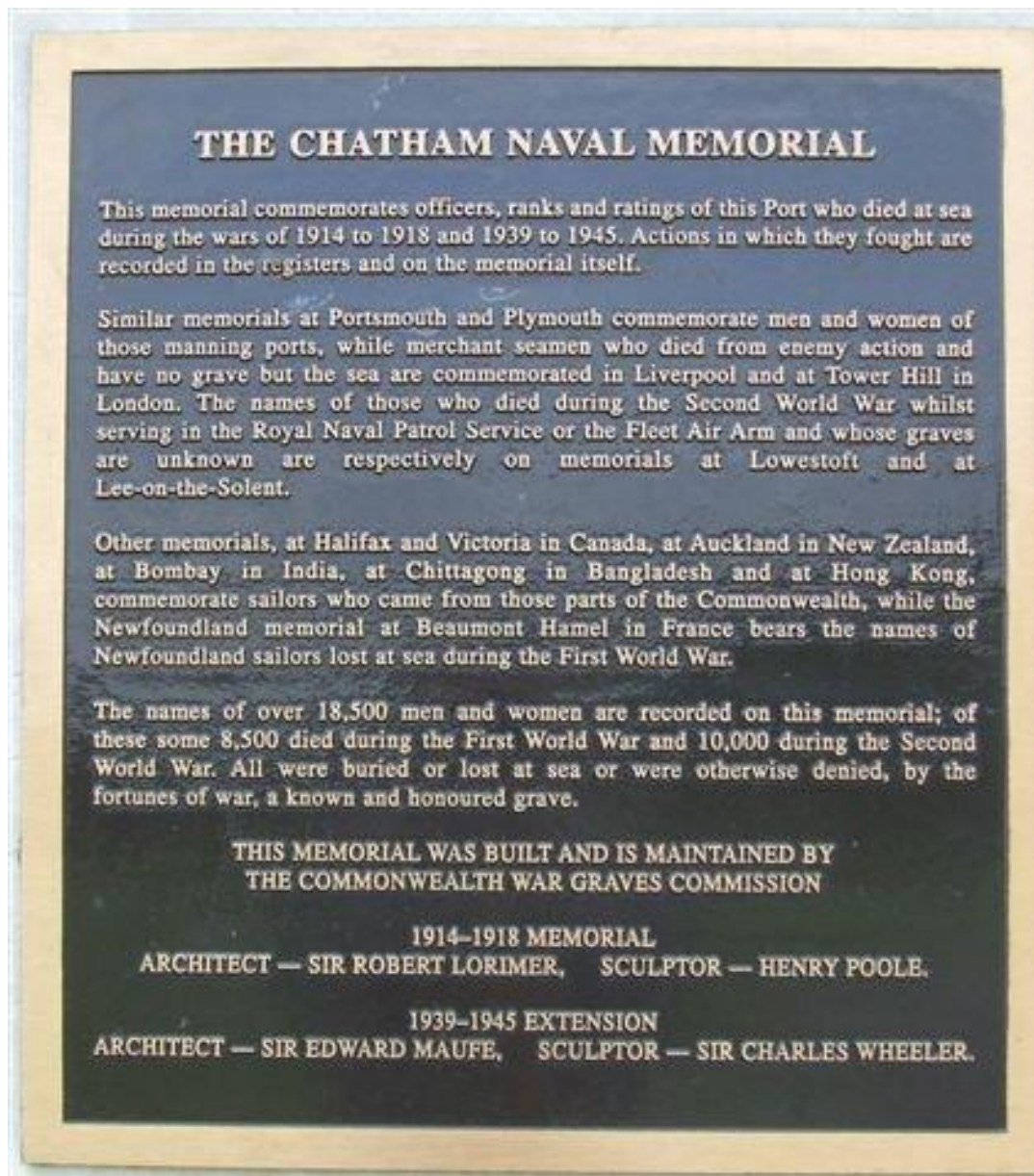
**Chatham Naval Memorial** (Photo above by Clem Rutter; below from CWGC)







Chatham Naval Memorial (Photo above from CWGC)



(Photo by Geoffrey Gillon)







LEADING SEAMAN  
 ANDERSON W. J.  
 ATKINS E. J.  
 BAILEY C. H.  
 BAILLIE D. A.  
 BEARMAN W. C.  
 BEE H.  
 BISHOP F. H.  
 BLACKBURN J. E.  
 BOULDEN R. W. H.  
 BOWELL E. J.  
 BRENCHLEY A.  
 BROOMHAM W.  
 BYRNE H. H.  
 CHILES S. M.  
 CLARKE V. G.



William Broomham is remembered on a headstone with his wife, Alice Broomham, in Lutwyche Cemetery, Queensland.



(Photo courtesy of Bradley Scott, Chermside & Districts Historical Society)

In Loving Memory of  
 OUR DEAR MOTHER  
 ALICE BROOMHAM  
 DIED 16TH AUG. 1939  
 AGED 64 YEARS.

OUR DEAR FATHER  
 WILLIAM BROOMHAM  
 WHO LOST HIS LIFE  
 WHILST IN ACTION  
 BY THE SINKING OF  
 H. M. S. CRESSY,  
 IN THE NORTH SEA  
 ON SEPT 22ND 1914.  
 AGED 38 YEARS.



Research on the Australians (or those connected to Australia) remembered on the Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent, England was completed as part of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's "For Those In Peril" project.

*'For Those in Peril' is an initiative to encourage people to research, remember and share local stories of those who left their homes to join the war at sea, whose names are engraved on the Commission's three naval memorials at Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham.*

*The project has been launched to coincide with the opening of the Poppies: Wave at the CWGC Plymouth Naval Memorial, presented by 14-18 NOW: WW1 Centenary Art Commissions, to mark the centenary of the First World War.*



**Poppies: Wave By Paul Cummins, Artist and Tom Piper, Designer  
at CWGC Plymouth Naval Memorial  
23 August - 19 November, 2017**

*(Photos from 1418 NOW)*

*Poppies: Wave, a sweeping arch of bright red poppy heads suspended on towering stalks, was originally seen at the Tower of London as part of the installation Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red. It can currently be seen at the CWGC Plymouth Naval Memorial.*

