

# The Battle of Jutland

## 7 British seamen were rescued while 21 were buried in Denmark

11.11.16



On a calm warm afternoon, the 31 May 1916, Danes living in fishing villages on the west coast of Jutland could hear the rumble of thunder. As the hours passed the noise got stronger and wilder, at times so violent that their houses shook; it was no ordinary storm in the distance. They guessed at what probably was happening; that the British and German fleets had finally met. The sea battle continued into the morning of 1 June. Ships were sunk or blown to pieces and there were thousands of casualties on both sides. News of the battle filled the Danish newspapers in the following days. Reports from neutral ships moving through the area contained descriptions of sailing for four hours through belts of thick oil, dead fish, floating wreckage and the dreadful sight of great numbers of bodies in the sea. "Vanda" filled with a cargo of coal from England described how dead sailors lay in piles as if packed together, floating in their lifejackets, heads and shoulders above water. *"It was impossible to imagine a more terrible vision, an abominable nightmare"*, and none of the crew slept that night, and one could imagine the memory of what they had seen stayed with them forever.

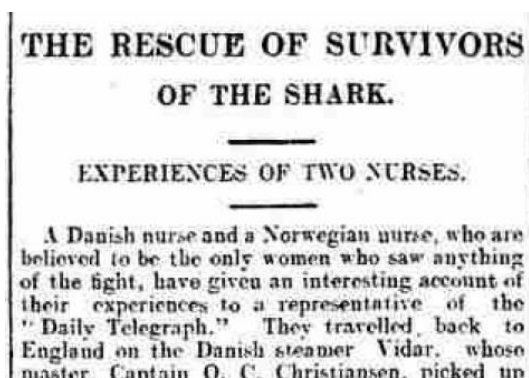
### The survivors

There were a few lucky survivors taken up by passing neutral ships during the battle and after the fleets had sailed home. 7 British seamen from H.M.S. "Shark", sunk at approximately 19.30 on 31 May, were taken up by Danish S.S. "Vidar". H.M.S. "Shark" had had a crew of 92, the 7 rescued were; Petty Officer (P.O.) 1<sup>st</sup> Class **William Charles Richard Griffin**, Able Seaman (A.B.) **Joseph Owen Glendower Howell**, Petty Officer Stoker (Sto. P.O.) **Charles Filleul**, Able Seaman (A.B.) **Charles Cleeborg Hope**, Able Seaman (A.B.) **Charles Herbert Smith**, Stoker 1<sup>st</sup> Class **Thomas Wilton Swan** and Chief Petty Officer Stoker (Ch. Sto.) **Francis Newcombe**. P.O. Griffin described in his report written about a month later of them abandoning the sinking "Shark": *"Captain gave orders to save yourselves, the two rafts<sup>1</sup> were filled up (14 and 15 in*

---

<sup>1</sup> Carley floats

each) and as time went on the men began to gradually die away with exposure, the water being very cold. ...Nearly everyone on board wore lifebelts or life-saving collars, which proved a great success." The men had helped Commander Loftus William Jones, whose leg had been shot off over the knee, with a lifejacket and into a raft. Here he had, according to both Smith and Swan as the ship was sinking, requested the men to sing the hymn "Nearer my God to Thee". Of the survivors one had been shot right through the knee, one was deaf as a result of the tremendous gunfire in action, and the third was delirious through exposure. 44 year old Francis Newcombe, despite not being badly wounded, died of exhaustion onboard the "Vidar".



In an interview given to a British newspaper Captain Christensen of S.S. "Vidar" told what happened; the freighter had left Copenhagen on Tuesday evening bound for Hull and knew nothing of what was going on until they literally found themselves in the middle of the battle in the North Sea. As it so happened they had two nurses onboard, a Dane and a Norwegian, travelling via Hull to take up nursing positions. They were very probably the only women who actually witnessed, if only part of, the Battle of Jutland! The Danish nurse told a journalist <sup>2</sup>*"About 7.30 on Wednesday as we were walking on the deck we observed a zeppelin flying westward, on towards the coast of England. Through our glasses we could plainly see the number L 21. Just about nine o'clock we sighted a big black object in the sea. It looked at first rather like a sail lying on the water. We discovered that it was a wreck, a German battleship. On the upturned side "metres" were marked instead of "feet" as in the case of British ships. Very soon afterwards our attention was directed to a great ship on fire. At first it seemed rather like a three or four masted sailing ship, but as the captain of the "Vidar" steered towards it, with a view to rendering help, it became plain that it must be a battleship.*

*Just at this time we noticed a light on the face of the darkening sea. It was like a torch being waved about. Then peering over the sides of the "Vidar" into the foam lit blackness one's eyes suddenly began to realize the terrible fact that the sea was full of floating bodies. There were dozens of them. It may be there were hundreds. They could not be counted. Hardly had we grasped the meaning of it than one noticed a number of floating mines. Again one could not say how many. Here was danger for ourselves, as well as tragedy. Among the flotsam and jetsam, human and material, were 5 men clinging to a gigantic buoy. It not only seemed, but was a gigantic buoy, probably 30ft. or 50ft. in circumference, and large enough for men to sit on its rim.*

*One man was faintly lapping the water with his hand and throwing the spray upon a patent fire-signal device affixed the buoy, which, I believe only burns so long as it is "fed" or "struck" by water. It was just the*

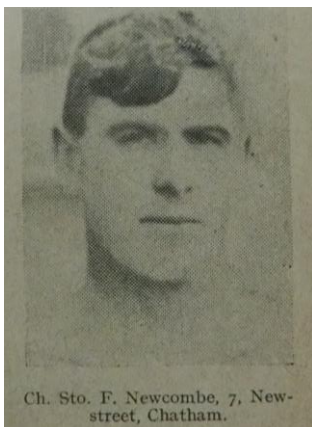
<sup>2</sup> The Yorkshire Post, Tuesday, June 6 1916

*action of an automaton, and nothing more, so lifeless he was. The other poor fellows appeared to be cataleptic almost, but from either the man mechanically lapping the water, or from one of the others, we could hear a faint and plaintive cry. Gradually we distinguished its words. It was, "We are alive!" "We are alive!" "We are alive!" They were alive in that sea of dead! It would be difficult to tell you what thrill, right to the marrow, as you say, those words gave. And the pang!*

*Captain Christiansen instantly set about a rescue. With only a small crew, he was only able to lower one boat, and this, manned by the first officer,<sup>3</sup> slipped down the sides of the "Vidar" and made for the great black circlet, with its living freight. "We are alive!" "We are alive!" they continued to say. Whether because of the flow of the water, the darkness, or what, the wrecked sailors rapidly drifted towards us in the steamer and away from the boat we had launched. As they got beneath us, a ladder was let down. They made no effort to reach it, and it was plain that they were too ill to do so. One man only was able to make signs. The others remained practically motionless.*

*One by one, with great difficulty, they had to be carried up the gangway and laid upon the saloon floor. Their limbs were frozen, and their eyes staring and the teeth chattering. Nothing could warm them in the least for a time. Brandy we gave them, in suitable dozes, at intervals, and, having no water-bottles, we kept continuously massaging the frozen limbs and rendering other aid. In this our fellow-passengers did everything they were asked, and the feeling of sympathy was so intense among us that even men had tears in their eyes as they worked. When we took off their clothes, we found that three of the men were wounded and bleeding. The first officer's boat brought two more survivors, making seven. Unhappily, one died, despite all we could do for him and we rather feared that we should lose one if not two of the others. But they pulled round.*

*The first man to speak did so an hour afterwards, but he was only able to mutter words like "from Shark" "went down" "battle". Another man helped him, with similar words, to convey to us what had happened. The first man made an effort and said; "Whole of German fleet – whole of British fleet – battle!" After making the poor fellows as comfortable as possible for the night, at midnight we continued our voyage. The captain had remained about in the hope of picking up other survivors, but decided that there were no more, although there were hundreds dead. When morning came our charges were, happily, very much better, and, in fact, one of them was quite chirpy, as you say."*



The Danish nurse continued about Newcombe "His body was wrapped in the sic Danish flag and carried to a separate cabin, where the captain saluted it by taking off his cap, while the women cried. Ordinarily, the body would have been buried at sea, but as the Vidar was near port the dead hero was put ashore in his own country". The "Vidar" was flying a flag at half- mast, to honour the deceased, when she reached Hull on Friday 2 June. The "Vidar" was well known here as she had brought from Copenhagen the bodies of the crew of the British submarine E 13 killed in action when their vessel was stranded on Saltholm almost a year earlier. Captain Christensen was congratulated on his humane conduct and the gallant behavior of his lifeboat crew and Rear-Admiral Nicholson submitted to the Admiralty that their actions should be suitably

---

<sup>3</sup> And 4 sailors

recognised. The skipper's reply was "I only did my duty.. " P.O. Griffin, wounded in the eye and cheek, was practically recovered in late July. A.B. Howell, wounded in the left leg wasn't thought to be fit to leave hospital in Hull until late September.



Full naval and military honour was accorded Chief Stoker Newcombe at his funeral held in Hull the following Thursday, with large crowds assembled on route to the cemetery. *"A firing party of Lancashire Fusiliers, with reversed arms and accompanied by naval and military buglers, led the funeral procession, followed by the band of the East Yorkshire Regiment. Behind the coffin, which was carried upon a wagon drawn by a couple of dark heavy draft horses, draped with the flag and covered with a wealth of wreaths was an escort of bluejackets from His Majesty's ships. One of the survivors from the Shark, Charles Herbert Smith walked bareheaded immediately behind the coffin. A large party of 2<sup>nd</sup> Garrison Batt. East Yorkshire Regiment walked behind. The band played the Dead March from Saul, and later Chopin's funeral march and Beethoven's March with impressive effect. After the service at the graveside the firing party fired reverberating volleys, between which the band played a few mournful notes. Naval and military buglers next broke the silence with the penetrating notes of the "Last Post" and all was over". A funeral for one man where people's thoughts must also have been with the many whose grave was the North Sea.*





Newcombe's wife wasn't registered as his next of kin, his sister was. Mrs Whalley was informed of her brother's death and that the funeral was to be held the next day 7 June and participated together with her husband and son. Mrs Newcombe didn't hear of her husband's death until two weeks later. In a letter to the Admiralty written 23 rd. June she simply informs "*according to information noticed in our local newspaper, my husband Frances Newcombe no. 15519, chief stoker of the Fleet Reserve no. 1773 lost his life in the naval battle on 31.*" There is no accusation or apparent remorse at not being informed personally and earlier. What she required was an official death certificate to be sent to her. In the response to her letter it was explained that his sister had been noted as being the person to inform should anything happen to him. Whatever the reason behind it, it must have been upsetting for Mrs Newcombe and the children, 13 and 14, to read of his death and funeral so many weeks later. Alice Newcombe placed "In Memorium" announcements in the local paper in the immediate years that followed.

### **Buried in Denmark**

Three German seamen survivors were taken up on 1st June by a Danish ship "Para" after 8-9 hours floating on wreckage in the sea. An even luckier German from the "Wiesbaden" was picked up after 2 days by the Norwegian vessel "Willy"; there had been 5 comrades on the raft but 4 didn't make it. Taking up survivors is understandable; one wonders more about the corpses that weren't left in peace floating in their watery grave. Some of the ships had committed their dead to the sea before turning homeward, with a prayer, a couple of hymns and the Dead March and following normal navy procedure, sewn into their hammocks with shot by their feet to weigh them down<sup>4</sup>. On other ships, because of the dramatic circumstances this honor wasn't accorded the deceased. According to the telegraphist on H.M.S. "Broke" J.J.R. Croad "We were about five hours finding all of our dead chums, dragging them out of the wrecked mess deck and throwing their bodies over the side to be buried in the deep ocean".<sup>5</sup> While the corpses floating en-masse

<sup>4</sup> "The Battle of Jutland" by Geoffrey Bennett p. 153

<sup>5</sup> "Jutland, 1916: Death in the grey wastes" Nigel Steel, Peter Hart

were left, it appears that the sight of single seamen buoyed up by their life-jacket or laying dead on a raft for days has moved passing crews to take them out of the sea to be buried on land. In the following days bodies of both British and Germans were picked up and taken to Danish ports and fishing hamlets.



On the 5 June the front page of a local Danish newspaper contained another Battle of Jutland article. This time about fishing vessels that had witnessed the battle from a safe distance. They too describe a large number of bodies floating in the sea between mines and wreckage. Fishing boat “Astoria” back in Esbjerg showed off souvenirs, 1 meter long German shell casings. The article mentions many corpses already having been “fished” up along this west coast of Denmark. In reality this hadn’t begun to happen yet and when it did the numbers of British were few, higher numbers ended up in Norway and Sweden. All three countries buried identified seamen from H.M.S. “Shark”.

A local of Hvidbjerg who was a boy at the time of the Battle of Jutland, wrote an article in 1991 about the finding of the bodies of three British seamen. It was said at the time that the three, when found, were floating in their lifejackets dead but not yet stiff corpses. No discernible injury was found on any of the men, but one was described as having “cried himself to death”. When brought onto land they were taken to the beach bailiff’s cottage. Here the three bodies were placed in a sitting position against the wall of a garage and their photographs taken. When knowledge of this spread people were upset by the disrespectful treatment of the deceased. None of the photos however were seen in public. According to a newspaper article they were taken up by Carl Josefsen on to his fishing vessel about 35 miles north west of Lyngby on 7 June. All three were floating in their lifejackets, one was actually wearing two. In fact the fisherman had seen another 7 bodies which because of lack space on their vessel they had left in the sea.



The local church ledger notes that the three were identified by their names written in their clothes. **William Herbert Burgess**, Stoker 1st Class R.N., H.M.S. "Tipperary" was described as having tattoos on chest and arms. The 30 year old left a wife and daughter in Warminster. Able Seaman **Edwin Frank Herage** and 25 year old Leading Stoker **Frank James Jenner**, with many tattoos on his chest and arms, had both served on H.M.S. "Fortune". The three seamen were buried on the 9 June. A great number from the local community and many of the regions dignitaries attended the funeral. Head mourner was Lt. Garriock R.N. He was a survivor of the previously mentioned submarine the E 13 which had run aground in 1915 on Saltholm and was interned in Aarhus. Garriock had been allowed, on signing parole, to travel to the west coast to take part in the funerals of the men lost in the Battle of Jutland. 22 year old Herage's headstone is the only one of the three with a personal inscription "Ever in our thoughts".



Edwin Frank Herage



Knud M.Nielsen finishes his article about the Battle of Jutland by musing over the reasons why Danish fishermen didn't immediately take to the sea to look for survivors. Of course the battle had to be over before it was safe to venture out and then the sea was full of corpses. Nielsen believed that local fishermen were forbidden to retrieve the bodies as it would have been a major task to identify and bury so many. Contemporary Danish newspapers wrote that the fishermen in fear of getting their nets full of corpses stayed at home. A week after the battle the Ministry for Justice sent an order to the local police stations to keep close watch on the beaches. Everything material from the battle had to be taken up and details noted and if bodies were washed up information about nationality, condition, name etc. had to be sent immediately to them by telegraph if possible.



On 8 June the body of a seaman from H.M.S. "Tipperary" was brought to Frederikshavn, a small town on the north east coast of Jutland, by the steamer "Jylland" coming from Kristiansand in Norway. He had been found on a raft 35 miles south west of Skagen. When "Jylland" entered the harbour all the ships and public buildings along the quay flew flags at half-mast. The body was taken on an open sided wagon to the chapel at the old people's home. This turned into somewhat of a scandal, that the deceased had been treated so disrespectfully, and according to the local newspaper what made it even worse was that the wagon hadn't been horse drawn. Officer's cook **Alfred Henry Ernest Gray**, a fortnight short of his 24<sup>th</sup> birthday and from Portsmouth, was identified by a postcard in his wallet in his pocket addressed to A. Gray. To make up for the undignified mode of transport to the old people's home the local community made sure he was shown the respect he deserved at his funeral. A British newspaper described how *"amidst singularly moving demonstrations of sympathy. The coffin was followed over a route which lay right through the town by up to several thousand people, nearly half the population of the place in fact. It was borne by fishermen of Frederikshavn in their typical old-fashioned costume and the procession was bigger than anything previously witnessed in the locality"*. The funeral was held at 5 o'clock in the afternoon of 12 June at Frederikshavn Church. The service was conducted by Rev. Dresler who spoke touchingly of the young man who had died doing the most sacred duty, that of giving his life for his country. People were moved by the simple but eloquent tribute. Psalms "Befal du dine veje" and "Til himlene rækker din miskundhed gud" were sung in Danish. Frederikshavn's shipping and fishing organizations with their banners took part in the ceremony and a choir sang a last farewell. Mr. Korup, the British consul expressed his *"warmest thanks for this great manifestation of sympathy and for the honour paid a plain seaman"*.

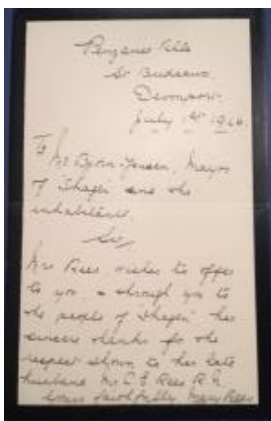
A dead seaman was brought to Hvidbjerg's neighbouring village Stenbjerg on the 9 June. Fisherman Christian Jensen had been tending his nets about 35 miles from the coast when he saw a body *"standing upright in the sea"* and took it on-board. It appears from the church ledger that **Patrick John Archdeacon**, Petty Officer R.N., H.M.S "Black Prince" was identified by a handkerchief in his pocket marked P. Archdeacon. Also in his pocket was £7, a rosary, a lucky charm and a medal. These items were to be sent home to his family. Archdeacon was buried 12 June. The 33 year old bachelor had joined the navy when he was 18. His large Catholic family had moved from Glasgow and lived together in Queenstown, County Cork, famous for being the last port of call for the Titanic. Patrick's mother Mary was his next of kin; the personal inscription chosen for his headstone is *"Sweet Jesus have mercy on his soul"*.



The body of an unknown British seaman was brought to Skagen on the 8 June. Another body, from H.M.S. "Tipperary", was brought in the next day, taken up 60 km from Hirtshals. He had been found sitting in a lifebelt wearing a lifejacket. His head was about 50 cm above water level and they assumed that he hadn't drowned but had died of hunger and cold. This man was identified according to the coroner's report as 34 year old **Charles Edgar Rees**, Artificer Engineer. He had a letter in his pocket sent to him by his wife, dated 24 May with her name and address. Rees was wearing a leather strap on his wrist which held a small watch.



Several English newspapers wrote about the funeral which took place on 14 June. *"Yesterday the bodies of two English and seven German sailors were buried at the Skaw, amidst every sign of sympathy. All the flags in the town and harbour were at half-mast and at the cemetery there assembled all the local civil officials, and officers and the men from Danish torpedo boats in the harbour paraded. The coffins were buried in two separate graves, and were hidden under wreaths sent from the Danish torpedo boats. The service was conducted by a local minister, and the British and German Consuls expressed the thanks of their respective countries for the honour shown to the dead"*. Another wrote *"over a thousand people were present and wreaths were sent from people in various parts of Denmark"*. Danish newspapers judged up to 2000 mourners, it was men from the "Sølven" on parade and there was an enormous number of wreaths in fact several Skagen families had bound wreaths for each of the 9 coffins, English and German.



Apparently touched by the funeral, the mayor of Skagen William August Bjørn-Jensen contacted an acquaintance and suggested she write to Mrs Rees, whose letter had been found in her husband's pocket. The Rees family lived in St. Budeaux, Plymouth. Mrs Rees sent a note back to Louise Hall addressed to the mayor and inhabitants of Skagen wishing *"to offer sincere thanks for the respect shown to her late husband Mr. C.E. Rees R.N."* Rees's wife Mary was heavily pregnant and gave birth to the couple's only child, Edgar Terence, on 18 July. There were a few personal items to be sent over to her; perhaps this included an order of service from the funeral and a photo of the grave. Mary Rees chose "Remembered by all" for the personal inscription on his headstone.

A fortnight after the battle ships which sailed through the North Sea could still tell of seeing *“over a hundred bodies and enormous masses of wreckage”*. A newspaper reported from Skagen on 10 June *“Yesterday the fishing cutter Nordvest found a drifting torpedo which was longer than the cutter itself. Unfortunately the towing rope snapped and the torpedo went to the bottom near Hirtshals”* and on 15 June another ship had *“also found a huge unexploded torpedo, and took it in tow, as it was a serious menace to navigation. The torpedo exploded just before the steamer entered the harbor, at Frederikshavn, but, fortunately did no damage”*.

Cautious of what they would find the Danish west coast fishermen were wary of going to sea. The Danish inspection ship “Løvenørn” was sent out to “clear” their fishing ground as well as it could. “Løvenørn” brought in the next group of 3 British seamen and 7 Germans to Frederikshavn on 18 June. According to a local newspaper all the bodies were wearing cork belts and all were decomposing. One chap helping bring the bodies on to land was so distressed by their condition that he fainted. It was however possible to identify two of the English seamen as **William John Ellis**, Officers steward R.N., H.M.S. “Ardent” and **William Edward Johnson** Petty Officer R.N., H.M.S. “Turbulent”, although unfortunately the church ledger doesn’t say how this was achieved. The funeral of the three British together with the 7 German seamen took place at midday on 22 June. Once again the local townspeople, authorities and dignitaries attended. Both British and German consuls thanked on behalf of the nations they represented for the honour shown the deceased. The highly esteemed Rev. Dresler who had led the service for Gray 10 days earlier had himself died suddenly of a heart attack two days later. He was buried later in the afternoon after the seamen. Money was collected locally for a special memorial stone for the four British seamen killed in the Battle of Jutland and buried at Frederikshavn churchyard.

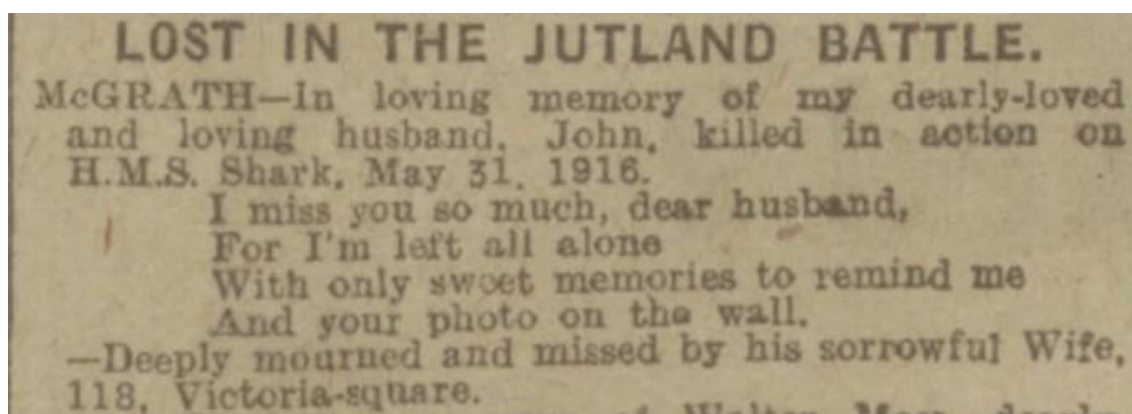


Billedet fra Illustreret Tidende marts 1995. Originalen fra Verden og Vi 1916

The bodies of two British seamen were brought to Skagen on 20 June, taken from the sea the same day as the town buried 12 German seamen. According to an article in the local Skagen newspaper the inquest identified one of them as “gunner Livermore from H.M.S. “Ardent”” while the other was unknown but wearing a gold ring with initials H.C.S. A third was brought out of the sea to Skagen two days later, with only a small pocket knife and 2 penny coins in his pocket he remained unidentified. The question of identification begs explanation. It appears some seamen wore identity tags, but made of pressed fibre they were not durable in water! As already mentioned a number of the seamen were identified from the names written in their clothes or items in their pockets. The identification of Livermore must have been retracted as gunner Livermore from H.M.S. “Ardent” is in fact buried in Sweden! The original identification of Livermore, made by the Skagen coroner, came from a brown leather wallet in his pocket in which were found one English copper coin and a requisition form for Junior Army and Navy Store, 15 Regent Street, London. Livermore’s rank, name, ship and the date 18/5 16 were written on it in pencil. One other personal item in his pocket was a small penknife in the shape of a ladies shoe. The body in Skagen, formerly identified as Livermore, is buried with a headstone inscription of “Known unto God”. In Sweden, first buried at Hamburgön and later moved to Kviberg Cemetery, Mrs Livermore chose for her husband’s headstone “I give unto him eternal life”.

The 3 unknown British seamen were buried in Skagen on 28 June. Flags in the town hung at half mast, but rain meant that only a couple of hundred townspeople attended the funeral, although as earlier all the local officials in their gala uniforms and with banners participated. There were many flowers and wreaths including an impressive palm leaf decoration given by the Danish Navy. Also noted was a beautiful wreath decorated with ribbons in red, white and blue, which was laid by a holidaymaker. After the hymns “Min Jesus, lad mit hjerte faa” and “O, Gud ske Lov, det hjemad gaar” Rev. Burch spoke with respect of how the seamen had given the best they had for their country. The mayor thanked people for their attendance.

A body washed up on Rødhus beach on 22 June was identified by a letter in his pocket as 1<sup>st</sup> Class Stoker **John William McGrath** of H.M.S. “Shark”. The 23 year old from Liverpool was buried 3 days later at Hune Churchyard. His widow Catherine put an in memoriam in the “Liverpool Echo” a year later.



She remarried a year later, a sailor who survived the war and with whom she had a family. Mrs Gilchrist chose the personal inscription for her late husband John McGrath’s headstone “Gone but not forgotten RIP”. A British seaman was washed up on Tolbøl beach on 28 June. His identity wasn’t established, it was noted in the church ledger that the soft parts of his head and hands were missing and his teeth were defect. The unknown seaman was buried on 31 June at Lodbjerg Church.



Secretary R. H. CARTER,  
H.M.S. Defence.

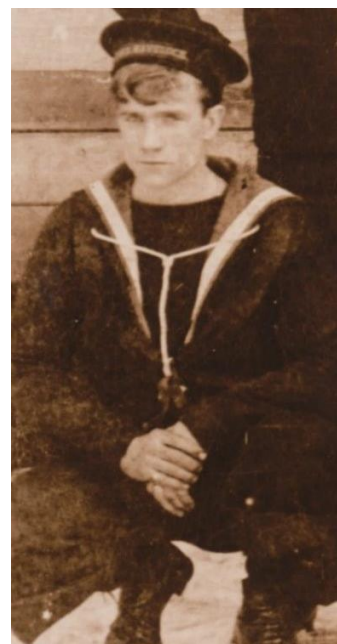
Many items were taken up by fishing vessels or found on the beaches and registered and reported to the authorities in Copenhagen. A register from Skagen lists diverse items such as lifebelts, blankets and jumpers brought in by fishermen. On 17 June a desk washed up on the beach at Løkken. There were diaries and photographs in the desk drawers belonging to Richard Hector Carter paymaster on H.M.S. "Defence". These items were taken by the authorities, and one wonders if they eventually were sent to his widow; Margaret now alone with their children, a 4-year-old, a 2-year-old and the 6 month old baby. At Saltum, a few km south of

Løkken, a packet of documents from H.M.S. "Indefatigable" was picked up by members of the Mondrup family walking on the beach and taken back to their summerhouse. These documents were dried and put in a tobacco cabinet where they lay undisturbed until recently. Christian Iversen Mondrup was director of the Post and Telegraph Company, and perhaps he thought these "Clothing Issue Notes" were so insignificant that they were not handed in but kept in their holiday home as a souvenir.<sup>6</sup> The newspapers reported that there were fewer sightings of drifting bodies, mines and torpedoes. It was said artefacts, such as seamen's hats displaying the names of their ships were washed up on Danish beaches, a very tangible and poignant reminder of the lives lost. However one wonders whether this was a romanticizing of this war tragedy by the journalists. Then a new month and a new battle began The Somme; The Battle of Jutland was old news.

July brought two more British seamen to Skagen, both washed up on the beach near Højen. On the 12<sup>th</sup>, an unknown officer. He was buried on the 15 July. On the 30 July **Norman Parkhurst Kemp**, Able Seaman R.N., H.M.S. "Black Prince" was found on the beach west of Højen. The 20 year old from Wimbledon was buried 2 August. His family's feeling of grief and loss is shown in the inscription on his headstone "We three are always thinking of you father, mother and sister".

August brought three British seamen's bodies to Danish beaches. On 1 August **Thomas William Payne**, Ordinary Seaman R.N., H.M.S. "Turbulent" washed up on Skallerup beach. He appears to have been identified at the inquest with his name T.W. Payne and his ship "Penelope", probably on an item of clothing. H.M.S. "Penelope" was the ship he had served on up until a fortnight prior to the battle of Jutland. 18 year old Payne had during the battle served on H.M.S. "Turbulent". His body lay in the church chapel until he was buried on 3 August. Rev. Nielsen spoke of remembrance and asked those attending the ceremony to send loving thoughts to the deceased's family far away in a foreign country. Men from the coast guard carried the coffin to the grave. Little girls threw flowers on the grave and there were a number of wreaths from the local community. The beach bailiff thanked for their attendance.

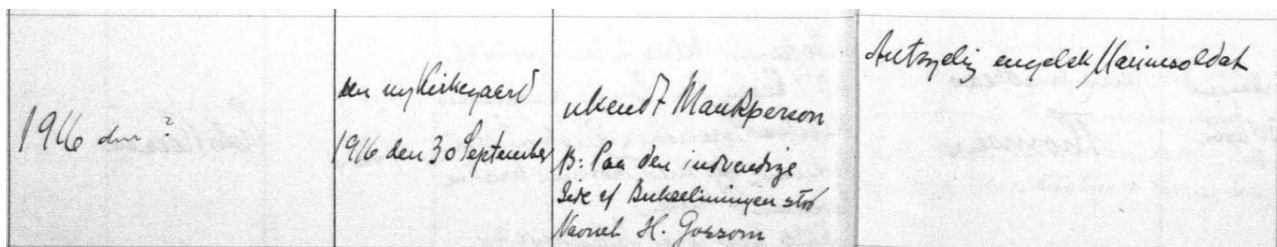
Thomas William Payne



<sup>6</sup> <http://dagbladet-holstebro-struer.dk/lemvig/tobaksskabets-indhold-endte-paa-museum>



**Harold Leslie Fromm**, Leading Seaman R.N., H.M.S “Fortune” was found on the Grærup beach near Børsmose on 5 August. Harold had joined the Royal Navy at 15 as a boy seaman. According to a newspaper he was identified by *“A metal name plate is inscribed H. Fromm and the uniform has a red band with a white anchor on the left arm”*. The 21 year old Londoner was buried on 14 August; on his headstone was inscribed *“Peace perfect peace”*. An unknown British seaman was washed up on the beach near Sønderho on 27 August. He was buried the next day.



The last of the seamen buried in Denmark after the Battle of Jutland was also an unidentified, he was found on a beach near Esbjerg on 25 September and buried at the new Zion Church there on 30 September. It was noted in the church ledger that H. Gasson was written in the waistband of the deceased’s trouser. The seaman was however buried as unknown and stayed so for almost 100 years. It wasn’t until recently that this handwritten name was understood to be H. Gasson. 32 year old Able Seaman **Harry Gasson** had served on H.M.S. “Castor”. H.M.S. “Castor” hit 4 times on the evening of 31 May was seriously damaged but didn’t sink. *“Staff surgeon Holmes of the Castor records that twelve men were killed instantly and that there were in all forty-one casualties.”*<sup>7</sup> One assumes these bodies were committed to the sea in haste necessitated by the condition of the ship, as H.M.S. “Castor” left the battle arena and was on her way to safe harbour. Back in Hastings Harry had a pregnant wife and a one year old daughter.



Harry Gasson

### “Vidar” crew and Commander Jones honoured

The body of the captain of H.M.S. “Shark”, Commander **Loftus William Jones** was found off the coast of Sweden and buried on 24 June at a *“largely attended funeral marked by every sign of sympathy and reverence”*. One wonders why it took so long for news of this to reach his wife who didn’t hear of this until 4 months later on 23 October. When she received the letter from the Admiralty they could also inform that *“The fishermen of Fiskebakskil are making themselves responsible for the erection of a monument over the grave, and have already received a sufficient sum of money for this purpose”*. For the personal inscription on her husband’s headstone Margaret Jones chose *“Fear God Honour the King”*.



Commander Loftus William Jones

<sup>7</sup> Page 193 – “The Battle of Jutland 1916”, George Booney

The Royal Navy showed its appreciation to the "Vidar" for rescuing survivors from H.M.S. "Shark" in a public ceremony held on 6 November at the Guildhall in Hull. On behalf of the Admiralty Rear-Admiral Nicholson presented a gold watch to Captain Gotthardt, standing in for Captain O.H. Christensen who was in hospital in Denmark. A *"handsome silver cup with an inscription recalling the event"* was presented to Chief Officer A.P. Andersen and the four sailors Otto Nielsen, Ole Nielsen, R. Jensen and A. Hamalden were given a sum of money. The Rear-Admiral cordially shook hands with each man and offered his good wishes. The Navy highly appreciated what Captain Christensen had done, well aware of *"the considerable risk they had been in stopping and rescuing these men as it was close to the scene of the battle and as darkness had come on rendering himself liable to be torpedoed by either of the belligerents"*. Chief Officer Andersen returned thanks on behalf of the captain and his shipmates *"Of course, we sailors are bound by the common ties of humanity to help one another when in trouble. It was a great pity we were not a bit earlier, so that we might have saved many more valuable lives"*. One very grateful mother who took part in ceremony at the Guildhall was that of A.B. Charles Herbert Smith. He was 20 years old at the time of the rescue. Mrs Smith wrote a letter to the editor of the Hull Daily Mail which was published under the title "Sailor mother's gratitude" - *"My son was one of the lucky six that was landed at Hull by the Vidar he being the only Hull man saved from the plucky little Shark. Of course I went personally to thank the captain, chief officer and the crew of the Vidar for their kindness shown to my son and the other survivors. I, like my son, think no praise is too great for them."*



When the facts were known about the bravery and courage of the six survivors of HMS "Shark" before and after the ship sank they were awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. Commander Loftus William Jones' wife contacted the survivors to get their first-hand accounts of what had happened. It was with their testimonies to her husband's brave actions that Mrs Jones fought to get her husband's deeds recognized and he was posthumously awarded the VC. He was one of the great heroes of the Battle of Jutland and in

any book about this First World War naval battle he merits a mention often rounded off by the rescue of the seven by a neutral vessel. The lifejacket, wristwatch and binoculars Jones had been wearing were given to his wife. They are now exhibited in Portsmouth Historic Dockyards Battle of Jutland exhibition alongside his medals and a photo of the survivors of H.M.S. "Shark".



Lord Ashcroft Collection IWM

21 British seamen were buried after the Battle of Jutland in Denmark. The first 13 were taken up from the sea while the last 8 were washed up on beaches. The 12 identified bodies, excluding Gasson, were all from ships that sank. The Sea War Museum in Thyborøn, opened in 2015, focuses on maritime warfare in the North Sea during WW1 in particular the Battle of Jutland. A memorial park honouring the sailors lost to this battle, British and German, was opened on the centenary of the battle.

### **“A Hero of Jutland” by Kate Rawlins**

But ere the good ship yielded up her life,  
Once more above the turmoil of the strife  
Was heard the captain’s cry (well nigh his last)  
To hoist another ensign at the mast.  
So sank the Shark into the surging seas,  
With ensign floating proudly in the breeze.  
And when that failing voice rang out anew  
A dying captain’s to his sinking crew –  
His order “Save yourselves” on deaf ears fell

One thought – to save the Chief they lov'd so well  
Was surging wildly through each heart and brain  
Of those dear lads he'd ne'er command again.  
And so they drew him from the sinking craft  
To the frail shelter of a friendly raft.  
But all was vain. His life was ebbing fast  
As on his sinking ship his eyes he cast,  
"Let's have a song, lads!" was his last request.  
And with their tear dimm'd eyes turned to the West,  
Their voices trembling with the chills of death  
Those gallant heroes sang with quiv'ring breath,  
"Nearer, my God, to Thee" – that song of songs  
Which to all crises in our lives belongs.  
Bravely at first, then faint and fainter still,  
As sinks the setting sun behind a hill.  
Each voice grew weaker, and each note a moan.  
Until exhaustion claim'd them for its own.  
So died a man whose like we seldom see.  
And never Britons died more worthily.  
Firm to the bitter end, he gave his life  
For King and country in unequal strife  
Praising his Maker with his dying breath.  
To God and England faithful unto death<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Last part of poem "A Hero of Jutland" by Kate Rawlins, in Bexhill – on- Sea Observer, 24 March 1917