John Joseph Miles (Mills)





Rank: - Able Seaman

Number: - SS/1772 (RFR/PO/B/4920)

Regiment: - Royal Navy H.M.S. "Good Hope"

Lost in action from HMS Good Hope at the Battle of Coronel, off the coast of Chile: - 1st November 1914

Memorial: - Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Hampshire, England Panel 2

Blaydon Courier, 28th November 1914, 11th September 1915

Family Details

John Joseph Carr was born in Blaydon on Tyne, Co. Durham on the 2nd November 1888 the son of Gateshead born Francis and Jane Mills (nee Carr) who came from Hexham. He was baptised at St. Cuthbert, Stella, Durham, England on the 24th September 1889.Francis and Jane had married at the Registry Office, Gateshead on the 1st December 1886.

In 1891 his parents and siblings Sarah Jane Marley 1876, Mary Ann 1878, and George 1879 and Eliza 1882, Isabella 1885, Susannah 1887 and John were living at 25, Bridge Street, Blaydon. Cicely (Susie) was born in 1891 and Lilie in 1894.

In 1901 the family was living at 103, James Street, Winlanton, Durham and Francis was working as boot and show maker. The house must have been quite large because they had two shoemakers, two stone masons and a stone quarryman lodging with them.

Francis died on the 25th January 1904 in Blaydon.

John Joseph joined the Royal Navy prior to 1911 because when the census was taken, he was a patient at Alverstoke, Hampshire. He returned to Gateshead area to marry Margaret Dobson on the 19th October 1912. Edith was born 22nd February 1913 and Francis 11th May 1914. After her husband's death Margaret married Varley Carbutt who lived at 36, Healey Street, Batley in late 1917.

Service Details

Joseph enlisted in the Royal Navy on the Royal Navy on the 10th January 1907 at Portsmouth giving his occupation as a Crane Driver. He was described as being 5ft.6" tall with blue eyes, brown hair and a sallow complexion. He was on board many ships including the Victory, Cressy, Essex, Drake, Warrior amongst others. On the 15thJanuary 1912 he transferred to the R.F.R. and had some shore leave.

From the 13th July - 24th July 1914 he sailed on the "Good Hope" and from the 25th - 30th July the "Victory1 ". He was attached to the "Good Hope" before the war broke out from the 31st July. The ship sailed to the South Atlantic and took part in the Battle of Coronel the ship was sunk off the coast of Coronel, Chile.

The Battle of Coronel was a First World War Imperial German Naval victory over the Royal Navy on 1 November 1914, off the coast of central Chile near the city

of Coronel. The East Asia Squadron *stasiengeschwader* or Kreuzergeschwader) of the Kaiserliche Marine (Imperial German Navy) led by Vice-Admiral Graf Maximilian von Spee met and defeated a British squadron commanded by Rear-Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock.



The engagement probably took place as a result of misunderstandings. Neither admiral expected to meet the other in full force. Once the two met, Cradock understood his orders were to fight to the end, despite the odds being heavily against him. Although Spee had an easy victory, destroying two enemy armoured cruisers for just three men injured, the engagement also cost him almost half his supply of ammunition, which was irreplaceable. Shock at the British losses led the Admiralty to send more ships, including two modern battlecruisers, which in turn destroyed Spee and the majority of his squadron on 8 December at the Battle of the Falkland Islands.

John Joseph was awarded the 1914 Star, the British War Medal, Victory Medal.

Wesleyan Methodist Church War Memorial, Blaydon on Tyne; Ryton War Memorial, Station Bank, Ryton on Tyne; Greenside War Memorial, Greenside, Ryton on Tyne; Blaydon War Memorial, Blaydon on Tyne, Co. Durham and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group