

# Finding someone who served in the Navy in the First World War



The following databases of Naval and Royal Marine records are available to search on [www.Ancestry.co.uk](http://www.Ancestry.co.uk):

De Ruvigny's Roll 1914-1918  
UK, Naval Medal and Award Rolls 1793-1972  
UK, Commonwealth War Graves 1914-1921 and 1939-1947  
UK, Memorial Books WWI and WWII 1914-1945  
England, The National Roll of the Great War, 1914-1918  
UK, Royal Navy and Royal Marine War Graves Roll, 1914-1919

The following databases of naval records are available to search on [www.Findmypast.co.uk](http://www.Findmypast.co.uk):

Naval Casualties 1914-1919  
Royal Marines Medal Roll 1914-1920  
Royal Naval Division Service Records, 1914-1920  
Royal Naval Division Casualties, 1914-1919  
Royal Naval Officers Medal Roll 1914-1920  
Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve medal roll, 1914-1920  
WW1 Ships Lost at Sea, 1914-1919  
De Ruvigny's Roll 1914-1918  
Prisoners of War 1914-1918

## Case study: Frank Herbert Mills

Able Seaman Frank Herbert Mills was lost on H.M.S. Queen Mary at the Battle of Jutland on 31 May 1916 and is commemorated in Brightlingsea churchyard (monumental inscriptions, T/Z 151/91) and on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)).

He was the son of Thomas Richard and Amanda Root Mills, clothier, who was born in Brightlingsea on 13 December 1893 and baptised 4 February 1894 ([www.essexancestors.co.uk](http://www.essexancestors.co.uk) Brightlingsea baptism register, D/P 312/1/7 image 17).

In the 1901 census Frank is aged 7 and living at 50 Victoria Place, Brightlingsea with his mother, Amanda, a clothier and his sisters, Annie (13), Floss (12), Kate (9) and Florence (8). His father was visiting his uncles in Erith, Kent on census day. The family later moved to Coventry. (See census returns on [www.Ancestry.co.uk](http://www.Ancestry.co.uk) or at ERO or any Essex library)



The 1911 census shows Frank Herbert Mills as a Boy First Class at a naval establishment at Portland, Dorset. His service records which are held at the National Archives, Kew show that he had joined the Naval Training establishment HMS Impregnable in February 1910 but couldn't join the Navy proper until his 18th birthday, 13 December 1911. He is described as 5'5" tall with light brown hair and grey eyes. He had a tattoo of a snake coiled around a tree on his right forearm. He signed on for 12 years' service. He served on HMS Impregnable (a training establishment at Devonport), Donegal (also a training ship), Albemarle, Cochrane and Excellent (a gunnery training establishment) before being posted to HMS Queen Mary on 4 September 1913. He was promoted to Ordinary Seaman on 13 December 1912 and to Able Seaman on 21 February 1913. His service number was J/7266. J numbers were given to seamen and signallers. (Naval personnel service records are available to download from [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk) for a charge of £3.30)

The UK Naval Medal Roll, which is available to search on Ancestry, shows that he was awarded the 1914 Star, Victory, and British War Medals which were sent to his family.

HMS Queen Mary was the last battlecruiser to be built before the First World War. She was launched in 1913. She had 8 13.5 inch guns and had armour plating to a thickness of 6 inches at the maximum point. She participated in the Battle of Heligoland Bight in 1914 but was in port for a refit in 1915 during the Battle of Dogger Bank. During the Battle of Jutland on 31 May 1916 she was part of the Battlecruiser Fleet which intercepted the German Fleet. She was fully involved in the action and scored three hits on the German ship *Seydlitz*. However, damage to other ships in the British line exposed Queen Mary to German fire from the battleship *Derfflinger*, and she took two hits from shell fire, which caused her magazine to explode. The ship broke in two and she quickly sank with the loss of 1,266 men, including AB Frank Mills. 18 survivors were rescued. The wreck was discovered in 1991 and is now recognised and protected as a war grave. (Information from Wikipedia)