

Thomas George Wren

Thomas George Wren was born on 21st January 1892 in Nursling. We find him on the 1901 census living in Nursling with his mother Mary (from Braishfield) and her husband Albert Thorne (a railway labourer from Hythe), Thomas's stepfather. There are four other Wren children (including two housemaids and a farm labourer). In 1911 the family are at Test Vale House, Nursling, but Thomas was already in the navy.

He first served in March 1910 on HMS Victory, then had time on Illustrious, Victory, Britannia, Racer, Fisgard, Venus, Woolwich and Bulwark, which he joined in June 1914. According to his records he had brown hair, grey eyes, a fresh complexion, measured 5ft 6 ins and had a 35 inches chest. He is listed as being a groom and gardener before signing up.

From the beginning of WW I in August 1914, Bulwark was assigned to the Channel Fleet, based at Portland, and carried out numerous patrols in the English Channel. From 5 November 1914 to 9 November 1914, while anchored at Portland, Bulwark hosted the court martial of Rear Admiral Sir Ernest Charles Thomas Troubridge for his actions during the pursuit of the German battlecruiser Goeben and light cruiser Breslau in the Mediterranean Sea in August 1914. On 14 November 1914, the 5th Battle Squadron transferred to Sheerness to guard against a possible German invasion.

Thomas was "killed by internal explosion of vessel" off Sheerness on 26 Nov. 1914, when Bulwark was ripped apart by a magazine explosion. He is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval memorial; his body was never recovered. His next of kin is given as his mother, Mary, of the Enterprise Inn, Totton.

Ann Laird - Rownhams June 2015