

William's Jolly

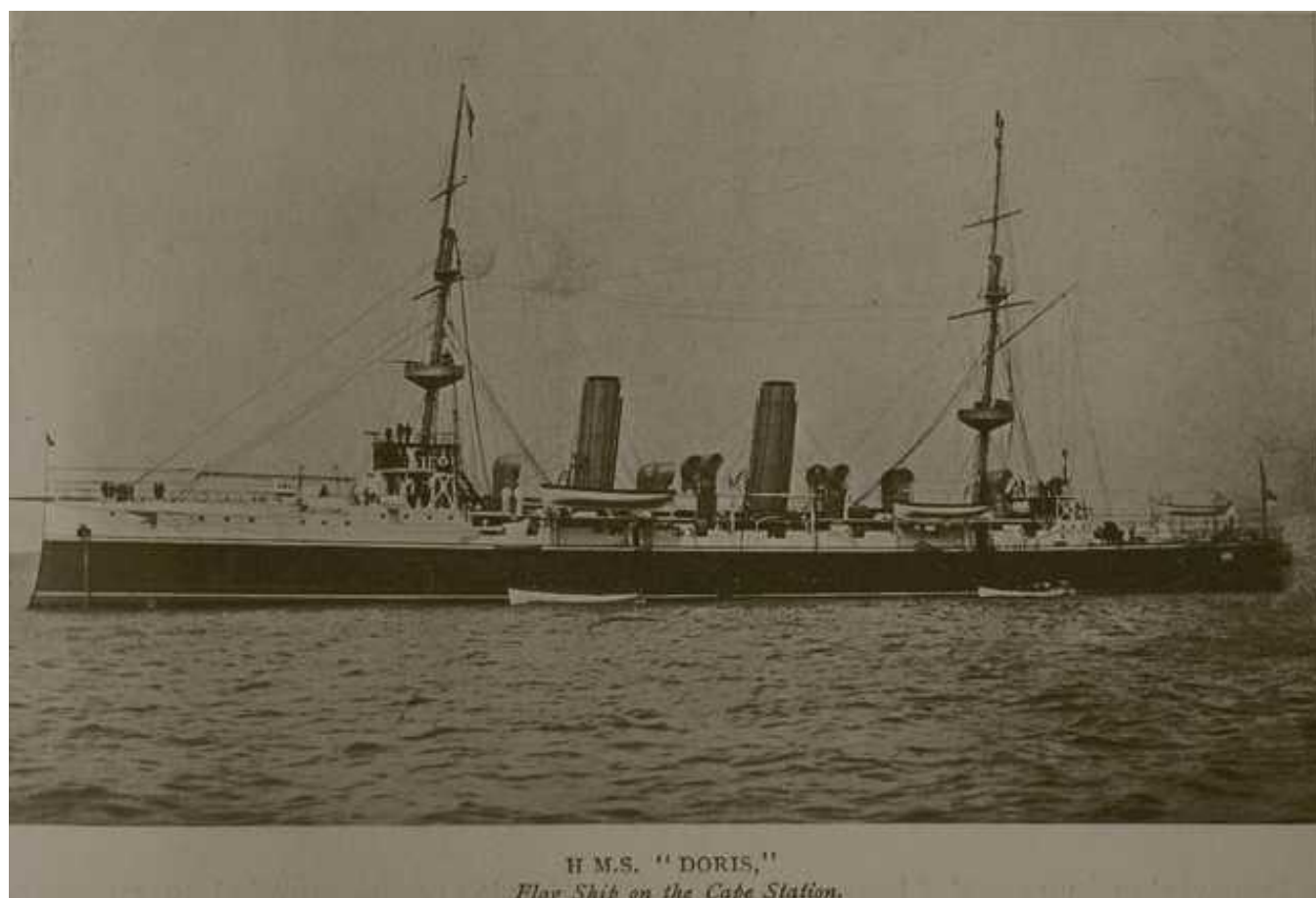
First, an Explanation: At the outset, there is no one better to explain the term 'Jolly' as used in Naval circles than former Surgeon Commander Rick Jolly, Royal Navy who, in 1988 with the help of the noted Royal Marine cartoonist, 'Tugg', produced 'Jackspeak'. 'Jackspeak', fascinatingly subtitled, 'The Pusser's Rum Guide to Royal Naval Slanguage', is what it says on the bottle. It is an alphabetically arranged collection of words, phrases, expressions and the like, which are redolent of the days when Jack would regularly enjoy sippers of Nelson's blood!

One is tempted to slip in the odd phrase or two drawn from that compendium but it might run the risk of using a somewhat risqué and insensitive phrase that would very likely upset one's maiden aunt or local vicar! So, we shall just stick with a version of 'Jolly', which to quote Rick, is:

'A nice, pleasant trip that has no real underlying purpose'

Containing a sense of irony, like so many other service expressions, it is probable that 'Jolly', in such a context, has found its way into widespread civilian usage, and one is sure that the reader may have in mind the odd politician to which it might apply. However, that is enough digression.

About William: The William in the article's title is 177133 Chief Petty Officer William Philip Le Sauteur who was born in St Helier, Jersey on the 12th February, 1878. He enlisted into the RN as a Boy, 2nd Class on the 3rd November, 1893. He steadily rose through the ranks, becoming a Seaman Gunner and getting his buttons as a CPO on the 1st February, 1911 before retiring from the RN with a pension on the 24th February, 1920, to carry on working as a civilian Seamanship Instructor at Whale Island. Sadly he died on the 18th January, 1923, leaving behind a widow, Sarah (née Osborne) whom he had married in Jersey on the 4th September, 1904, and two sons, William and Philip.



H.M.S. "DORIS,"
Flog Ship on the Cape Station.

His naval service before the Great War had taken him to the Cape Station in Africa, where he received the Ashanti campaign medal with the Benin 1897 clasp while serving on board HMS Philomel and later, the Queen's South Africa Medal with the Cape Colony clasp for service during the Anglo-Boer War where he was a member of the crew onboard the Eclipse Class protected cruiser, HMS Doris, the flagship at the Cape Station, pictured on the previous page.



During the time that it spent during the Anglo-Boer War, HMS Doris, along with HMS Monarch, HMS Powerful and HMS Terrible, sent a number of sailors and marines to form a 350+ strong Naval Brigade equipped with two 12-pounders providing support to the Army. It is not known whether William was among this number, but it is quite possible. While in Africa, William would contract malaria, and would return to England to receive treatment for this at the RN Hospital at Haslar, Gosport from September to November, 1901.

William is pictured left, and is wearing 'square rig'. Two medals are visible, clearly those gained in Africa, while his Seaman Gunner's badge is visible on his right sleeve. At the time that the photograph was taken, he was a Petty Officer as indicated by the badge showing crossed anchors surmounted by the crown on his left sleeve. Below that, he is wearing two good conduct stripes suggesting a period of eight years where any misdemeanours that he had got up to, had gone undetected!

Moving on to the Great War, William joined the crew of the Arethusa-class light cruiser HMS Galatea on the 19th November, 1914, and remained a member throughout the remainder of that War, leaving the ship on the 26th February, 1919. According to family accounts, it was his favourite ship.

HMS Galatea had an excellent career during the Great War, mainly operating out of the port of Harwich into the North Sea, among other tasks to watch for the German High Seas Fleet coming out of their ports and to deal with any other German surface ships and submarines trying to operate against British shipping and England's East coast towns. However, as can be seen in the newspaper article, the ship also 'notched up' a Zeppelin, when on the 4th May, 1916, in conjunction with its sister ship HMS Phaeton, the L7 (LZ32) was brought down as it was either heading westwards to bomb an English town, or had just set to conduct a reconnaissance. Just four weeks later, the Battle of Jutland took place on the 31st May and the 1st June, 1916, and unsurprisingly, HMS Galatea took an important part in this action, but, as will be seen, was very fortunate to survive.

tion. On this warship, which the King had seen for the first time, the full complement had gathered on the decks in marching order. His Majesty made an inspection of the vessel in company with its officers, and its hidden mysteries were fully explained to him. Next His Majesty visited one of "the very latest" products of naval architecture. He was "pinned" aboard by the boatswain, and received with befitting formality by the captain of the ship and his subordinate officers. This battleship also is of a class of its own, though what that class is must not be whispered. But one is permitted to say that it is of a type which may be found extremely useful should it have the luck to encounter any of the *Teninic Sea Lord's* squadrons that may venture forth to do battle. The programme gone through here was similar to that of the preceding ship. After lunch the King went aboard the light cruisers. The *Birmingham*, which had the distinction of sinking the first German submarine in the war, was first inspected by His Majesty. Afterwards he visited the gallant *Galatea*, the light little vessel which has given a good account of herself in the last three years. One of her achievements was to bring down a Zeppelin near Sylt, on the German coast. No class of warship has gained more distinction than the destroyers, and before bidding farewell to the fleet, the King went ashore where seamen of the destroyers were drawn up on parade. He stopped and spoke to the commander of each destroyer, and then addressed a few words of congratulation to the men on the admirable work which they had performed. The seamen responded with three lusty cheers. His Majesty then motored away.



Forewarned by Naval Intelligence that a major German fleet operation was imminent, the British set sail from Scapa Flow and Rosyth, the latter where Admiral Beatty and his battle-cruisers were based. Beatty's battle-cruisers sailed eastwards, but their progress was made behind a screening force of light cruisers that included HMS Phaeton, and on the left flank of this force, HMS Galatea. As the fleet steamed forward, a ship was spotted on the port bow, and Phaeton and Galatea were detached to investigate. The mystery ship turned out to be none other than a Danish ship, the NJ Fiord (or Fjord).

However, the two British ships now suddenly discovered that heading towards them and the NJ Fiord were two German destroyers, B109 and B110, who had been similarly ordered by their fleet's commanders to investigate the Danish ship! Unbeknown to either of the two adversaries, the British and the German fleets were now less than fifty miles apart. It was reputed that HMS Galatea was the first British ship to fire the first shells of the Battle of Jutland, but it was certainly the first to be hit by a German shell, fired by the SMS Elbing. Yet, fortune smiled on the Galatea in that this shell (pictured left), which plunged down through three decks, failed to explode, and thus the ship continued on in action.



HMS Galatea at full steam

This is not the place to recount the facts of the Battle of Jutland, as there are many websites and books that cover the topic more than adequately. However, there is one family anecdote that may be of interest, and which relates to the visit of His Majesty, King George V following the fleet's return to port after the battle, and which is referred to in the press cutting earlier in this article.

During his visit to the Galatea, the King paused for refreshments with his party in the wardroom, and decided to have a few games of cards, whereupon one of his aides produced a pack. Then, suitably refreshed, he resumed his visit to his ships, and the party all trooped out. At this point, William apparently squirreled away the pack and promptly headed ashore to post them home as a souvenir. Later, when he was back on board, the cards were found to be missing, and he was ordered to organise a search party to locate them so that they might be returned to their rightful owner. The search was unsuccessful!

One can never be too careful!

About the 'Jolly': Leaving behind our overview of William's naval career, let us turn our attention to a particular event that occurred just a few weeks before the L7 was brought down. This was his 'Jolly', although in reality, as will be seen from some of the events that were reported, the trip was anything but jolly.

Among the family's memorabilia of William's life there exists a typed four page document which, for convenience purposes, is referred to as the 'Brownrigg Report'. It has been scanned and is contained in subsequent pages. Who was the writer? Commander Brownrigg was Henry John Studholme Brownrigg, and there are some thoughts that it was he who produced it. However, the author of this article takes the view that William may have been the Report's author, as its contents are not fully consistent with the official service writing style of the day. There are a few other clues.

At the time, Commander Brownrigg was the Executive Officer onboard HMS Barham, whose home port was Scapa Flow in the Orkneys, while HMS Galatea was operating out of Harwich. It does seem odd that the Commander would have gone out of his way to collect an experienced CPO whom he would have certainly regarded as 'old and ugly enough' to have found his way to London and report at a certain time to the Commander there. It appears that William also stayed overnight at the Union Jack Club that was opposite Waterloo Station in London. Intended to provide affordable accommodation for sailors and soldiers in transit via London or for spending a few days leave there, it was unlikely that Commander Brownrigg would have stayed, and that he would very likely have used either the Army and Navy or the Naval and Military Club. However, whoever actually wrote the 'Brownrigg Report' is less relevant than its content which is of considerable historic interest. The role of the Royal Naval Division on land operations out in Gallipoli and in France and Flanders is well known. Less so were the excursions by Midshipmen into the trenches in Gallipoli. But, as far as can be determined, nothing has been published about visits to the trenches on the western front by parties of naval personnel.

Before reading the Report, note that there are several place names incorrectly spelt:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| • Neouf-Les-Mines | should be | Noeux-Les-Mines |
| • Bully Grenade | should be | Bully Grenay |
| • Moroc | should be | Maroc |
| • Loose | should be | Loos |
| • Mazingarde | should be | Mazingarbe |
| • Les-Brebis | should be | N/K |

VISIT OF PARTY "F" TO THE TRENCHES IN FLANDERS

(Commander Brownrigg, H.M.S. Barham)

Left "Galatea" at 11 a.m. on 17th April 1916.
Left Union Jack Club p.m. 18th April.
Left Folkestone at 10 a.m. on 19th April and arrived at Boulogne 11.30. We passed several wrecks on passage and on arrival had to pass S.S. "SUSSEX" whose Fore Part was blown away as far as the Fore Bridge.

Having had dinner at the Army Depot and having been supplied with the necessary trench requirements, viz: Gas Helmets, Blankets and Accoutrements, we left Boulogne for Bethune, passing through St Omer on the way and arrived at Bethune at 4 p.m. Here the party was split up into two sections (A & X). At 7 p.m. the party arrived at Neuf-Les-Mines where we were greeted by heavy bombardment which had been going on for about half an hour and lasted until 8.20: a large number of houses had been dismantled but the casualties numbered only six, one of whom was a soldier. About 15,000 troops were billeted in this district. The natives still carry out their customary pursuits, their one idea during a bombardment being to secure parts of shells etc. Nearly every house has its own duck-pond in the form of an excavation made by the dropping of a Jack Johnson or big proj.

We were billeted for the night in the Hotel de Ville where we were made very comfortable under the existing circumstances having been supplied with extra blankets and straw etc. At 7 a.m. on the 20th we were again in the Motor Lorries proceeding to the various supply depots. The first of these at which we arrived was the Rail Head, where all the food supplies arrive: from Rail Head they are taken by motor transport as far as the Dumps some of which are situated on the roadside. The food after being transported to Dumps is taken the remainder of the journey by mule transport as far as the Reserve Trenches. When the supply wagons reach the Reserve Trenches the men from the first line get their food etc during the night, one man from each platoon being detailed for this duty. The same procedure is carried out for ammunition and stores etc. Secondly at 10 a.m. we visited the veterinary corps. Arrangements for the horses were excellent. We passed many barracks where the new army were receiving their final training before going into the first line trenches. The country in the neighbourhood is well cultivated and the roads are in splendid condition. During our stay in these parts Colonel Tullech (Staff) explained everything to us and made everything very interesting indeed. 12 o'clock arrived and we had dinner.

Leaving for the trenches at 1 p.m. again we proceeded to Les Brebis and again split into small parties. We were then detailed for the regiment to which we were attached: each party had a guide. After leaving Les Brebis we passed through Bully Grenade and Moroc: all dwelling places were in ruins but the inhabitants still remain, for they believe in "Business as usual". As soon as we arrived at Moroc we entered the Communication Trench at the "Hole in the Wall. These trenches are in fine condition and run under the road in several places.

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On our way to the last line of trenches we passed the Brigade Head Quarters consisting of a large cellar which belonged at one time to a hotel in the town of Loose. It is here that the C.O. of the Division organizes his Division. He is in telephone communication with all places under military control in France. On entering the 2nd line trenches we had to put up with plenty of gravel and dirt as Fritz was giving us a good reception in the form of Trench Mortar and Aerial Torpedoes.

The party having dwindled down to two we entered a Dugout and after dropping our surplus gear were supplied with rifles and ammunition and taken into the 1st line trenches about 5 yards distant. Whilst we were being shown the different mortars and Lewis Guns by a Sergeant of the Cameroons, an aerial torpedo dropped into the bombers sap and killed eight bombers. We then placed the eight men on two stretchers. It was now about 5 p.m., we had tea and waited for the Black Watch to come up to relieve the Cameroons, but owing to heavy bombardment on the remnants of Loose where the Black Watch were billeted in cellars, they were about 1½ hours late relieving. The Cameroons left the trenches at about 8.0 p.m. and took their casualties with them.

We reported ourselves to Capt. Millar D.S.O. who detailed us for bombing party dug-out. Here we made friends with the Black Watch and they were very eager to hear any news we could give them of our doings. At dusk we all stood to arms and made all preparations for the on-coming night: sentries manned their firing steps, periscopes were taken down and maxim guns placed in position. These are stowed in the dug-outs during the day so as not to draw artillery fire. The bombers also manned their sap: on entering their sap 3 men were wounded by a hand grenade, two having to be taken down on stretchers after receiving first aid from their own people.

During the night we had a working party out repairing barbed wire and searching for 'feelers' as the Huns tap our wire and receive our messages. The trenches at this spot were 35 yards apart and there was always plenty of chaffing between the two lines. When the Black Watch arrived late and shouted "Are you there, Fritz, Boy" the answer came back - "You're very late relieving tonight, Jock". Our working party remained out about 20 minutes, the Huns having a party out we were not disturbed, although they must have seen us as they were continually sending up large Very's lights. All we could do was to lie flat and very still. Our party having finished first, a rush was made by the Huns to get back, as the first back do not forget to let their opponents have it with machine gun fire and bombs.

At 4 a.m. Daylight - everyone is again standing to arms, the machine guns taken down, periscopes put up and the bombers are taken from their saps, as they run straight up to the enemy's line and are 10 to 15 yards long they are rather too close for day work. At 5 a.m. the reliefs take place and rum is served to the men neat, the same amount as is served in H.M. Navy and about the same quality. The men on duty received their tot at their post. The men prepare their own food. Fires are kindled in soft soap drums and plenty of coke is supplied. There is one of these in each dug-out and has to

do for 30 men.

21st April - Breakfast consisted of bacon and tea. During the forenoon heavy firing took place. An Aeroplane came over our lines but was repelled by gun fire before our own planes arrived. The number of round fired could very easily counted 20 minutes afterwards as the smoke remained in round puffs. During dinner which consisted of Macintosh's Tinned food, a bomb fell on the top of our dug-out, which was once upon a time the furnace of a brick kiln - bricked inside: there was about 12 feet of earth and sandbags on the top and sides with the result that we only felt a slight shock. The dug-out opposite ours had been smashed up and three officers killed a few weeks before, but in that case it was an armour piercing shell that wrought the damage. During the afternoon only grenade throwing, bombing and sniping went on. After dark went with fatigue party to get food and water. 3 Kerosene tins for about 60 men has to last 24 hours. As there is very little chance of one's getting a wash, there is plenty of 'company' everywhere, which is not very pleasant. We returned to dugout at about 9.30 p.m. and distributed rations and mails. During the night we exploded a counter mine with good results. At 3 a.m. a German made his was to our parapet to give himself up, but on arriving at the edge of out trench was shot by two of the Munsters and fell halfway into our trench dead. He was about 18, no coat, poor under clothes and was very badly fed.

22nd April - 4 a.m. stood to arms as usual - Usual morning salute with bombs etc, not much damage done. 9 a.m. prepared to leave trenches, but owing to heavy firing had to remain until 11 a.m. 11 a.m. left trenches for Maroc. Arrived there at 1.30 p.m. and had dinner with the 19th Company R.G.A. 2.30 p.m. visited Garden City of South Maroc where 18 pdr Howitzers are mounted. They are well concealed from aerial attack and from spies. Number of guns 18. Closed up at one gun and fired 6 rounds at range of 4,000 yards. We could not see the results but observers reported very good. 5 p.m. left for base arriving at 7 p.m.

At 9 a.m. next day A & X parties proceeded by Motor Lorry to the Chateau Mazingarde where the 8" Howitzers, 4 in number are mounted. These guns being old 6" converted, use a shell of 200 lbs, but a very small charge - a full charge being 9 lbs 5 ozs. Next we visited the 9.2 Seige Guns manned by the R.G.A. at present, but which were formally manned by the Blue Marines. They were relieved to man the 15" of which there are two in the vicinity. The 9.2's were firing at 6,000 yards, and the extreme elevation was about that of an Anti-Aircraft gun (55 degrees). They are transported by means of caterpillars and weigh about 15 tons. There are 32 of these along the line.

We next visited the 6" Mark VII. Here we were more at home and a gun's crew having been selected from the gunnery ratings of the party we made a fairly good show with 6 rounds firing at a range of 5,050 yards. There are 20 of such guns here and are mounted on Scott's Travelling mounting.

P.M. We proceeded to visit the Naval Balloon Section - about 80 men and 4 Officers comprise this corps.

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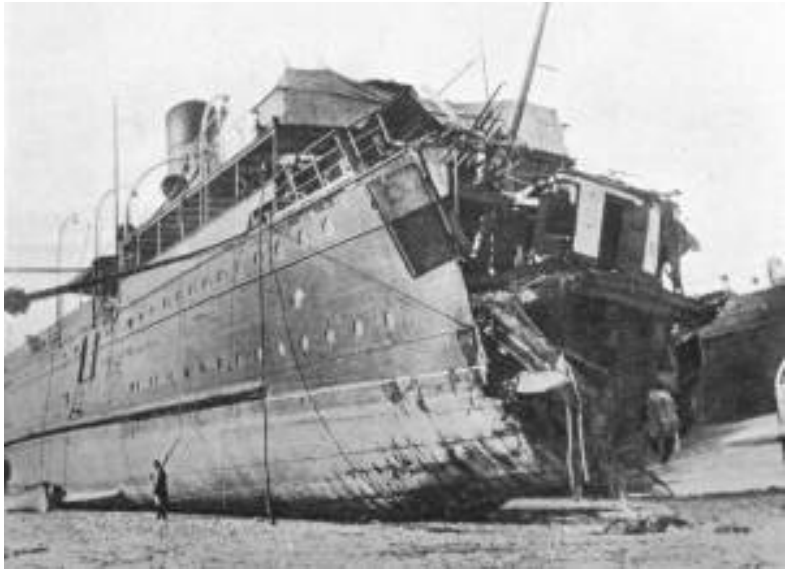
The Balloon was sausage shaped with a small balloon at one end to keep it head to wind. It carries two observation officers who take photos and do most of the spotting for the artillery. A motor with bollards and winches is fitted for hauling it to the ground. Some time ago one of these balloons broke adrift, but it was brought down before it reached the enemy's lines. The depot referred to above is about 9 miles from the trenches. It was at this place that we had the opportunity of witnessing an aerial contest. The contest was fought between 2 German and 4 English planes. One of the German planes managed to get away but was forced to descend by three of the English planes who managed to get above him and force him to earth. He landed in the vicinity of St Eloi. We returned to Les Mines to find a bombardment taking place, the result of which was the death of 2 military police and 2 horses.

We proceeded by motor to Boulogne where we arrived at 1 p.m. Had dinner at the army depot and embarked for England per s.s. "VICTORIA" arriving at Folkestone at 5 p.m. We then proceeded to the Union Jack Club and were granted 48 hours leave, thus concluding a most interesting tour.

The 'Brownrigg Report' offers yet another insight into trench life, this time from the standpoint of a sailor, yet it is also fascinating to see a few uses of naval terminology. Reference is made, for example, to the RGA's Ordnance BL 9.2" Howitzers, to give them their correct name, being formerly used by the 'Blue Marines'. The 'Blue Marines' were men from the Royal Marine Artillery whose uniform jackets were blue in colour. This differed them from the Royal Marine Light Infantry, resplendent in their red jackets, who as well as being known as 'Red Marines', were occasionally unkindly, if not unwisely, referred to as 'Lobsters' by Jack!

Party 'F' was split into two sections, 'A' and 'X'. One may wonder whether this was applying the standard references of the turrets onboard the larger naval ships, where the forward turrets were 'A' and 'B' while the aft turrets were 'X' and 'Y', the latter generally manned by the 'Blue Marines'.

The Party were able to see SS Sussex (pictured right) fairly close up, and the Report very accurately summarises the damage that resulted the previous month when SS Sussex was struck by UB 29's torpedo.



The visit to the western front does appear to have provided the ratings with a wide sample of the life routinely experienced by their khaki-clad, kilted hosts. Shelling, the occasional bursts of Maxim machine gun fire, wiring parties, and Maconochie's stew (not Mackintosh?), all of which would steadily add to the British casualty figures during the Great War, and which they witnessed during their stay. As far as can be made out, and this is partially based upon the report of the eight bombers who were killed, their hosts, the Cameroons, were in fact the 1st Battalion, the Cameron Highlanders who were part of 1st Brigade, 1st Division. Reference is also

made to the Black Watch taking over the trenches from the Highlanders, and the presence of the Munsters also. Both the 1st Battalion, the Black Watch, and the 2nd Battalion, the Royal Munster Fusiliers belonged to 1st Division also. One would expect that the arrival of a party of sailors, their handover when the Battalions changed, and their subsequent departure were mentioned in the War Diaries.

Back in London, they would clearly enjoy their 48 hours of leave before returning to their ships with one or two 'when I was in the trenches' stories to recount to their messmates, little knowing of what would await them at Jutland! One can conclude that the Report was soon produced, and it is marvellous that it has fortunately survived in such an excellent condition.

Thanks: Thanks must go to William Le Sauteur's grand-daughter, Sue Corbel, for providing the most of the material upon which this article relies.



**177133 CPO William Philip Le Sauteur
MSM, Medaille Militaire
(1878-1923)**