

Albert Edward COLE

Born: 11th April 1873, Almondsbury, Gloucs
Occupation: Coastguard (Padstow)
Enlisted: Plymouth: 1st August 1914 (Royal Fleet Reserve)
Unit: HMS Monmouth
Rank/number: Able Seaman: No.145887
Death: Killed in action, 1st November 1914
Detail: Albert died when *Monmouth* and *Good Hope*



were sunk by *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* off Coronel in Chile. The old out-gunned British cruisers, manned largely by raw reservists, were no match for the modern German ships and well-trained crews. Heavy seas stopped them using casement guns and silhouetted against a dying sun they were easy prey. All 1,600 British sailors perished.

Age at death: 42

Naval info: Albert, a farm labourer, joined the Royal Navy as a Boy Seaman at Devonport on 1st June 1888. He was 15. Three years later, on 11th April 1891, he signed on as an Ordinary Seaman and spent 12 years serving on a variety of ships and shore establishments. In 1902 Albert, then an Able Seaman, left the navy and became a Boatman in the Coastguard. He also joined the Royal Fleet Reserve, which required him to report for naval duty in time of war. Albert served at Amlwch and Cemaes Coastguard stations on Anglesey, and there met his future wife, Liverpool-born Ann Hughes. They married in 1903. He was 31, she 22. After a spell in the Western Approaches, Albert was posted to Padstow in February 1909, where he set up home with his wife and 3 children in a Coastguard cottage at Hawker's Cove. On the outbreak of war all reservists were called for duty and on 3rd August 1914, Albert and two other local Coastguard reserves, were waved off by a patriotic crowd at Padstow station. The men travelled to Plymouth and joined *Monmouth*, an obsolete cruiser. Also aboard were two serving seaman from Padstow. The ship sailed south to join the 4th Cruiser Squadron in the hunt for the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, two modern German raiders then on the loose. On 1st November these enemy ships sunk both *Monmouth* and *Good Hope* with all hands off Coronel, Chile - Britain's first naval defeat in a century. But a month later both enemy marauders were destroyed by the British at the Falkland Islands. All 2,200 Germans, including Admiral Von Spee and his two sons, died.

Grave/memorial: Albert's body was never found. He is commemorated on Plymouth Naval Memorial, at St Petroc's Church, Padstow and on Padstow War Memorial.

Family info: Father: William Cole, born Compton, Gloucs in 1836. Agricultural labourer.
Mother: Susannah Hayden, born Over, Gloucs in 1843. They married in 1859.



This information was researched by Peter Smith, who is currently writing a book about Padstow's part in the Great War. Anyone wishing to correct errors or supply additional information can write to him at 24 Mallard Drive, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5PW. Also phone 01825 762226 or email smithpeter24@gmail.com

+Lest we forget+