

GUSTAVUS WILLIAM MUSGROVE CUSTANCE

Surgeon

**H.M.S. Hawke, Royal Navy
died on
Friday 15th October 1914
aged 31**

**GUSTAVUS WILLIAM MUSGROVE CUSTANCE
Is commemorated on the
CHATHAM NAVAL MEMORIAL**

After the First World War, an appropriate way had to be found of commemorating those members of the Royal Navy who had no known grave, the majority of deaths having occurred at sea where no permanent memorial could be provided. An Admiralty committee recommended that the three manning ports in Great Britain - Chatham, Plymouth and Portsmouth - should each have an identical memorial of unmistakable naval form, an obelisk, which would serve as a leading mark for shipping. Chatham Naval Memorial commemorates 8,517 sailors of the First World War and 10,098 of the Second World War. Gustavus Custance's name is on Panel 1.



**Ledbury Guardian
& Herefordshire Advertiser**
Saturday 24th October 1914

COLWALL GENTLEMAN A POSSIBLE VICTIM

Many residents of Colwall will note with much regret the name of Mr Gustavus W M Custance, surgeon in the list of officers who are supposed to have been lost with the cruiser Hawke. Mr Custance was the younger son of Rev. G M Custance formerly Rector of Colwall, who with Mrs Custance now reside on the south coast



HMS Hawke

Gustavus William Musgrove Custance was born in 1882 and was baptised in Colwall on July 11th 1882. He was one of the fourteen children of George Musgrave Custance, Rector of Colwall, and his wife Elizabeth. Gustavus studied medicine at St Thomas' Hospital from 1901 – 1907. He did his naval medical training at The Royal Hospital Haslar in 1907 and 1908. At the time of the 1911 census he was a surgeon on board the *HMS Clio* on the China and the East Indies census returns. He died on October 15th 1914 when *HMS Hawke* was torpedoed by a German submarine, which ignited a magazine and caused a tremendous explosion which ripped the ship apart. *HMS Hawke* sank in a few minutes with the loss of her captain, 26 officers and 497 men; only 70 of her 594 crew survived.

Gustavus Custance is commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial, St Thomas' Hospital Memorial and the Bognor Regis Hospital Memorial.