

Leading Stoker Gilbert Edward HUTTON

Service number D/K 60339

Royal Navy

HMS Galatea

Killed in action on 15 December 1941, aged 46

Born in Bristol, Gilbert served in the Royal Navy in the Great War, and then again from 1922 until his death. He married Mary Jenkins from Haybridge and they lived in Wells with their two children. From February 1940, Gilbert served on the light cruiser HMS Galatea, which took part in the Norwegian Campaign and in the hunt for the Bismarck. Gilbert died when the Galatea was sunk by a German submarine off the coast of Alexandria.



Gilbert, from his Merchant Navy registration card

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Gilbert was born in Bristol on 20 March 1898 to William and Mary Jane Hutton. In 1901 they were living at 10, Lower Station Road, Bristol, and in 1911 at 10, Lower Fishponds, Bristol. His father was a general labourer. In 1911, Gilbert had five brothers and three sisters.

Before the Great War he was working as a collier. In the war he joined the Royal Navy and served as a stoker from 26 October 1916 until 12 July 1919. After leaving the navy he served for a while in the Merchant Navy, but then on 16 December 1922, he rejoined the Royal Navy and again served as a stoker. He served for a while on HMS Hood, which was then the pride of the Navy, and in 1935 became a Leading Stoker.

In 1923 in Wells, Gilbert married Mary Jane Jenkins of Haybridge. They had two children, Ronald whose birth was registered in the first quarter of 1926, and Audrey whose birth was registered in the second quarter of 1929. In September 1939, Mary and the children were living at 7, Burcott Road.

Gilbert's first sea-going posting in the Second World War was to light cruiser HMS Galatea on 24 February 1940. He had an active time on her. First she was used to intercept enemy merchant ships attempting to leave Vigo in Spain. Then she took part in the Norwegian campaign, and in the

evacuation of allied troops from western France. On 8 September 1940 she struck a mine and spent three months in dry dock. She was also involved in the hunt for the Bismarck.

HMS Galatea joined the Mediterranean Fleet in July 1941, and by November was based at Malta. Just before midnight on 15 December 1941, the Galatea was off the coast of Alexandria, Egypt, when she was sunk by U-557 with heavy loss of life. Gilbert was one of those who died.

Gilbert's only grave is the wreck of HMS Galatea, but he is remembered on the Plymouth Naval Museum, on Panel 52, Column 2. He is also remembered on the rolls of honour at Wells Town Hall and Wells Cemetery.