

Chatham 173843 Petty Officer Adam Frisken



Adam was born in Victoria Street, Kirkwall on 16th December 1877, elder son of the second marriages of Butcher and Veterinary Surgeon James Frisken and Margaret Frisken (née Wilson). Adam went to school in Kirkwall, until joined the Royal Navy as a Boy 2nd Class on 1st June 1893, aged fifteen. He spent more than a year on the 2,400 ton wooden hulled training ship HMS *Caledonia*, anchored just west of the Forth Bridge.

As a Boy 1st Class, Adam joined his first active warship, the 9,420 ton battleship HMS *Edinburgh*, on 6th November 1894, but left a month later to join the crew of the cruiser HMS *Galatea*. When his elderly father died from influenza and pneumonia on 5th April 1895, Adam probably had a week's leave to spend time home in Orkney with his grieving family.

After a month at the Chatham shore base, HMS *Pembroke*, Adam joined the crew of the light cruiser HMS *Retribution*. During nearly two years on board, Adam became an Ordinary Seaman on his eighteenth birthday, also gained promotion to Able Seaman on 12th November 1896.

Adam spent a year training at Chatham, with only a month on the cruiser HMS *Severn*, before he joined the battleship HMS *Jupiter* on 10th March 1899. Adam was promoted to Leading Seaman a year later, left Jupiter on 10th December 1901. By then his mother and family had moved to Leith.

Adam served two years on the cruiser HMS *Pomone*, nine months on the cruiser HMS *Porpoise* and a couple on the torpedo gunboat HMS *Hussar*. On 28th March 1906 Adam started four years service on the small (410 ton) paddle survey ship HMS *Triton*, on which he was promoted to Petty Officer on 1st October 1906. After short spells on two more cruisers, HMS *Vindictive* and HMS *Berwick*, on 26th March 1913 Adam joined the 11,800 ton battleship HMS *Swiftsure*, which was about to leave the UK to become the East Indies Squadron flagship. Adam left behind in Chatham his wife, Annie Agnes (née Parkes), having married her there in early 1912.

When war broke out, HMS *Swiftsure* escorted three convoys of Indian Army troops to Aden and Egypt, where the battleship remained to defend the Suez Canal. Her gunfire from just west of Kantara helped to repulse a Turkish attack on the canal on 3rd–4th February 1915.

A month later HMS *Swiftsure* had joined the fleet at the Dardanelles, coming into action there on 2nd March against Turkish forts, also with sister ship HMS *Triumph* against those at the German submarine base at Smyrna. Both battleships took part in the failed attempt by British and French ships to force the Dardanelles narrows on 18th March, when they escaped serious damage.

HMS *Swiftsure* fired in support of troops landing on W Beach, Gallipoli, in the early morning of 25th April, then bombarded Hill 138 in the afternoon. By the Second Battle of Krithia, the fleet's ammunition stocks were limited, so *Swiftsure* was able to fire only 16 10-inch shells and 207 of 7.5-inch on 5th–9th May. Capital ships deployment, hence supporting naval bombardments, were severely curtailed after submarine U21 sunk HMS *Triumph* off Anzac on 25th May (three Orcadian sailors aboard *Triumph* survived), then the battleship HMS *Majestic* off W Beach early on the 27th.

HMS *Swiftsure* cruised at 12 knots off W Beach while fired in support of the Third Battle of Krithia in June, then from within Suvla Bay supported the landings there in August. She survived an attack by a German submarine (probably U21) on 18th September, while sailing from Mudros to Suvla.

Petty Officer Adam Frisken was hospitalised from HMS *Swiftsure* on 31st December. He died in Fifth Canadian Stationery Hospital, Abbassia, Cairo from septic pericarditis (heart disease) on 10th February 1916, aged 39. By then the Gallipoli campaign had ended in failure. Adam Frisken is buried in Grave D.309, Cairo War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt.