



The Battle of Jutland

31st May – 1st June 1916

The Battle of Jutland was the pivotal naval battle of the First World War. The battle raged over 31st May/1st June 1916 off the coast of Denmark.

The British and German fleets had clashed before Jutland but not to the scale seen over those two days and not again afterwards.

Given the naval “arms race” between Britain and Germany in the years preceding the War, it is perhaps surprising that there were not more naval engagements of the scale of Jutland. Both nations had strengthened their respective fleets. Britain had the largest and most powerful navy in the world at that time, although many of her ships were aged and not incorporating the newest technologies. The German fleet was smaller but more modern. Both nations had engaged in a race to build the newest, most advanced of naval vessels known as “dreadnoughts”.

For the majority of the War, most of the German fleet was “bottled up” in harbour. German activity at sea was largely conducted by submarines known as U-Boats which preyed on both military and merchant vessels.

On 31st May 1916 the British Grand Fleet and the German High Seas Fleet finally met in conflict. Two hundred and fifty ships engaged in the battle which raged over 36 hours off the Danish coast concluding on 1st June 1916.

By the end more than 6,000 British and over 2,500 German servicemen were killed, with many more wounded. Death was sudden and on a huge scale, for example 1,000 men lost their lives when a magazine exploded on the British battle cruiser *Indefatigable*.

There were no further large-scale battles between the two navies after Jutland. The Germans relied on the activities of their U-Boat fleet, the British on maintaining their blockade off the German coast.

In relation to the nine villages of Corby Borough some local men did see action at Jutland; thankfully there is no record of any of them being killed in the battle.

There were a number of local men who served in the Royal Navy at sea, in the Royal Naval Air Service or the Royal Naval Division. At least three locally-connected men did lose their lives at sea during the war.