

Joseph Leonard

Private, *H.M.S. Indefatigable*, Royal Marine Light Infantry. Enlisted Chippenham, January, 1912. Served at the Dardanelles. Killed in action, Jutland, May 31st, 1916. General Service and Victory Medals.



JOSEPH LEONARD was born in 1895 in Corsham. His parents Joseph and Sarah Anne (née Williams) were originally from Gloucestershire, and they were living in Mynte Cottages in Corsham and working at Mynte Farm. Joseph senior was a farm labourer working as a shepherd. They already had five daughters – Ellen, Jane, Elizabeth, Lucy and Emily – and a son William before Joseph was born. In total they had nine children, eight of whom survived – the youngest brother, Frederick, was born in 1899.

The family were very settled and had not moved through 1901 and 1911, while Joseph senior remained a shepherd. Brother William and then Joseph himself started working as mason's labourers on the local 'gentleman's estate'. Joseph, however, enlisted in the Royal Marines as a career choice before the start of the war.

As a Private in the Royal Marine Light Infantry, Joseph was on board HMS *Indefatigable* when she was sunk on 31st May 1916 during the Battle of Jutland, the largest naval battle of the war. Only two of the crew of 1,019 survived. All are remembered on the Naval Memorial in Plymouth. Joseph was only 20 years old when he died.