

# Voices of War Life Story

**Walter Stokes**  
1874 - 1914



WWI, Navy, Walter Stokes, 1874, Main

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**Name:** Walter Stokes

**Code names/aliases:**

**Date of Birth:** 1874

**Place of birth:**

**Nationality:** British

**Date of Death:** 22.09.1914

**Place of death:** Off the coast of Holland

**Memorials:** Haarlem General Cemetery

**Rank:** Engineer Commander

**Service No:**

**Unit(s):** HMS Hogue

**Medals and Awards:**

**Schools & Education:** Royal Naval College



## Life Story

Walter was the son of Henry and Anne Stokes, of Southsea, and was born 1874. He had a distinguished career, graduating first class from the Royal Naval College in June 1895. He passed quickly through the ranks, finally promoted with seniority to Engineer Commander 26th November 1913. Walter married Edith May Bullmore 6th June 1907 at St John the Evangelist, Westminster and they lived together in Plymouth.

He travelled extensively during his career, serving in Australia and New Zealand as well as on the Atlantic route.

He was court-marshalled in 1911 for Fraudulent Conversion and Acts Prejudice to Good Order but he was acquitted of all charges, although this did unfortunately see his promotion delayed for two years. His final posting was to HMS Hogue in May 1914, having been promoted six months earlier. His naval records show a dedicated serviceman, and excellent engineer who was repeatedly recommended for further advancement by his peers. His last captain praised him for his tactful way with other officers and efficient attitude to work.

HMS Hogue was sunk on the 22nd September 1914 off the coast of Holland, by the German submarine U9 in one of the great naval disasters of the First World War. She was coming to the rescue of her sister ship the Aboukir, which was attacked first, thinking that it had been mined. They rose and fired on the German submarine but missed. They released lifeboats to rescue the crew of the stricken Aboukir thinking they were safe on the other side, but the U9 and come around, fired at the Hogue. The engine room was hit and rapidly filled, and the ship sunk shortly afterwards.

Walter Stokes was the Engineer Commander aboard the cruiser. He was amongst those rescued from the Hogue and was taken to



Haarlem. He sustained serious injuries to both legs and he passed away there as a result of those injuries a month later. He is buried in Haarlem General Cemetery.

Survivors were picked up by several nearby merchant ships including the Dutch Flora and Titan and the British trawlers JGC and Corainder before the Harwich force of light cruisers and destroyers arrived. Flora returned to Holland with 286 rescued crew who were quickly returned to Britain even though the neutral Dutch should have interned them. In all 837 men were rescued but 1459 died, many of which were reservists or cadets.



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