

Commander Christopher De Saumarez Brock, Royal Navy
of Rowley, All Stretton

died 29 November 1942, over the Bay of Biscay, aged 43.

Christopher de Saumarez Brock was born on 26 December 1898 in Langley Burrell in Wiltshire. Christopher was the eldest surviving child of Lancelot de Saumarez Brock, of independent means, and his second wife Katherine neé Turner who were married in April 1893.

The Brock and De Saumarez families, the latter of whom were originally from Guernsey, had a long-standing connection with the armed forces, especially the Royal Navy. Christopher's uncle was Admiral Sir Frederick Brock (1854-1929) and the De Saumarez family included Admiral of the Red, James De Saumarez, 1st Baron Saumarez (1757-1836).

Christopher was educated at Connaught House School in Weymouth before joining the Royal Navy in September 1911 at the age of 12. He then attended the Royal Naval Colleges at Osborne and Dartmouth and became a Midshipman in 1914. He served during the First World War on the battleships HMS Venerable, HMS Repulse, and HMS Abdiel. He was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant in February 1919 and spent 15 months studying at Cambridge University. At the time of the 1921 census Christopher was living with his parents in Wiltshire.



Submarine L18 c 1920

By April 1921 Christopher was working in submarines which had first been developed during the First World War. In April 1922 he married Florence Jay in Chelsea, and they lived in Plymouth. Christopher was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Commander in February 1927. In October 1929 he received an appointment to work with the British Naval Mission to Greece. In 1930 while on this appointment, he showed "courage, energy, & zeal

in carrying out trials with Davis Escape apparatus". The apparatus was a diving mask with oxygen which was designed to help escape from submarines. As a result of his work in Greece Christopher was appointed to the Order of the Redeemer, the Greek Medal of Military Merit.

Christopher returned to regular service and was given command of submarine L18 in December 1931 and promoted to Commander in December 1932. That year his marriage broke down, though he and his wife only divorced in 1938, and in the same year he married Dora Ruth Larmour. He had been put onto half pay in June 1933 at his own request.

With the outbreak of the Second World War Christopher was recalled to service and served at the shore establishment HMS Chocrane at Rosyth in Scotland as a Duty Commander with the Area Combined Headquarters Operation Staff. By 1941 he had transferred to HMS Excellent II, Accounting Base, in Bournemouth.

He went missing, presumed killed, in the crash of a Sunderland aircraft operating over the Bay of Biscay. He was 43 years of age and is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval War Memorial on Panel No 61 Column No. 2, and on the Church Stretton War Memorial.

His will was proved on 13 December 1943 to his widow Dora. The will entry contains the only connection to All or Church Stretton we have been able to find as Christopher is described as of Rowley, Church Stretton. He left assets worth £8,102 10s 4d. It has not been possible to trace Dora after her husband's death.



Portsmouth Naval Memorial