

## **Herts at War**

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**Name:** Charles Adams  
**Rank:** Chief Writer  
**Service Number:** 343679\*  
**Date of Death:** 30/12/1915  
**Age:** 35  
**Regiment/Service:** Royal Navy, H.M.S. "Natal."  
**Award:** 1915 Star, British War Medal & Victory Medal  
**Grave/Memorial Reference:** Panel 12  
**Cemetery/Memorial:** CHATHAM NAVAL MEMORIAL, United Kingdom  
**UK Cemetery/Memorial:** Letchworth War Memorial



### **Pre War:**

Charles Adams was born in Bedford, son of Henry Adams, of Priory St., Bedford; Husband of Ada Helen Adams, of 96, Pixmore Way, Letchworth.

### **Wartime Service:**

Died Cromarty Firth, Scotland, killed in action. Ship HMS Natal "Warrior Class Cruiser".

On 30 December 1915, HMS Natal was lying in the Cromarty Firth with her squadron, under the command of Captain Eric Back. The captain was hosting a film party aboard and had invited the wives and children of his officers, one civilian friend and his family, and nurses from the nearby hospital ship Drina to attend. A total of seven women, one civilian male, and three children were in attendance that afternoon. Shortly after 15:25, and without warning, a series of violent explosions tore through the rear part of the ship. She capsized five minutes later.

Some thought that she'd been torpedoed by a German U-boat or detonated a submarine-laid mine, but examination of the wreckage revealed that the explosions were internal. The divers sent to investigate the ship reported that the explosions began in either the rear 9.2-inch shell-room or the 3-pounder and small arms magazine. The Admiralty court-martial in the causes of her loss concluded that it was caused by an internal ammunition explosion, possibly due to faulty cordite. The Admiralty issued a revised list of the dead and missing that totalled 390 in January 1916, but did not list the women and children on board that day. Losses are listed from 390 to 421 (including crew and civilians).

### **Additional Information:**

Son of Henry Adams, of Priory St., Bedford; husband of Ada Helen Adams, of 96, Pixmore Way, Letchworth, Herts. Home address, 96 Pixmore Way, Letchworth, Herts.

### **Acknowledgments:**

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