

FRANCIS Frederick Robert



Deck Hand: Royal Naval Reserve : H.M. Trawler "Burnley."

Age: 21 Date of Death: 25/11/1916

Service No: 4009SD

Additional information: Son of Mr. and Mrs. William Francis, of Salcott, Witham, Essex.

The vessel on which he was serving was virtually brand new, and had never been used for which she was originally intended. Built by the Smiths Dock Company of Middlesborough, at the companies North Shields yard, for the Wyre Steam Trawler Company of Fleetwood, Lancashire in 1916, and given the Fishing Number FD242. The 275 ton trawler was requisitioned for use as a minesweeper trawler by the Admiralty whilst it was still in the shipyard, given the Admiralty number 3277 she was armed with a 12 pounder gun, H.M. Trawler "Burnley" was lost after hitting an enemy laid mine in the North Sea off the coast of Orford Ness, Suffolk.

Two minefields of a dozen mines each were sown off Orford Ness. Two British minesweepers were victims of these mines :- H M Trawler Burnley on the 25th November 1916 & HM Trawler Trevani on the 3rd December 1916.

The loss of the trawler Burnley in November 1916 affords another example of the total disappearance of vessel and crew after the striking of a mine. The Burnley was in charge of a subdivision of trawlers carrying out a patrol in the vicinity of the Shipwash light-vessel. At the close of the day the senior officer in the Burnley, relying on the superior speed of his vessel to overtake the others, ordered the two trawlers under him to proceed to their anchorage in Hollesley Bay. What exactly happened after this will never be known, but it is surmised that the Burnley stopped to investigate something suspicious. The Holdene, the senior of the other two trawlers, reached the anchorage as night was setting in, and had just dropped her anchor when a flash was seen on the eastern horizon. This was followed by a dull, heavy explosion, which shook the Holdene from stem to stern. The anchor was immediately weighed and the Holdene steamed at full speed to the scene of the explosion; but, though she cruised about for two hours in the darkness, nothing was to be seen of the Burnley or her crew. On the following day a fresh group of mines was discovered in the vicinity, so it is probable that the Burnley had struck one of this group very soon after the mines had been laid by German submarines. Reference:- ["The Harwich naval forces: their part in the great war"](#)



1914-1915 Star; 1914-1920 War Medal; 1914-1919 Victory Medal

His name is recorded on the Roll of Honour at Saint Mary's Salcott

Casualty Type: Commonwealth War Dead Grave/Memorial Reference: 19. Memorial: CHATHAM NAVAL MEMORIAL

After the First World War, an appropriate way had to be found of commemorating those members of the Royal Navy who had no known grave, the majority of deaths having occurred at sea where no permanent memorial

could be provided. An Admiralty committee recommended that the three manning ports in Great Britain - Chatham, Plymouth and Portsmouth - should each have an identical memorial of unmistakable naval form, an obelisk, which would serve as a leading mark for shipping. The memorials were designed by Sir Robert Lorimer, who had already carried out a considerable amount of work for the Commission, with sculpture by Henry Poole. After the Second World War it was decided that the naval memorials should be extended to provide space for commemorating the naval dead without graves of that war, but since the three sites were dissimilar, a different architectural treatment was required for each. The architect for the Second World War extension at Chatham was Sir Edward Maufe (who also designed the Air Forces memorial at Runnymede) and the additional sculpture was by Charles Wheeler and William McMillan. Chatham Naval Memorial commemorates 8,514 sailors of the First World War and 10,098 of the Second World War. No. of Identified Casualties: 18613



Saint Mary's Salcott cum Virley