



In Memory of
Ordinary Seaman
RICHARD ROSS JAMES HARPER

P/SSX27296, Royal Navy
who died age 20
on 14 October 1939

Son of Donald Harper and Edith Harper,
of Nettleham, Lincolnshire, England

Remembered with honour
PORTSMOUTH NAVAL MEMORIAL, ENGLAND



ORDINARY SEAMAN
RICHARD ROSS JAMES HARPER
ROYAL NAVY
SERVICE NUMBER: P/SSX27296

Ordinary Seaman Richard Ross James Harper, the son of Donald Harper and Edith Harper, was born at Inverness in Scotland on 19th April 1919. He enrolled at the Toowoomba Grammar School as a day student on 31st January 1933. His parent was shown as a Mr Harper, Chief Inspector of Queensland Insurance, Corner of Arthur & Godfrey Streets, Toowoomba. After leaving school he moved to Sandgate. Nothing is known of his life between Sandgate and when he voluntarily enlisted in the Royal Navy as an Ordinary Seaman on 19th October 1938. His physical description at the time of enlistment was that he was 5 feet 7 inches in height and that he had blue eyes, brown hair and a fresh complexion. At the time of his enlistment he stated that he had been employed as a Machinist. He gave his next of kin as his mother, Mrs Edith Annie Kerrison residing at Alma Cottage, Nettleham, Lincoln, Lincolnshire.

Ordinary Seaman Richard Harper was enlisted for a period of engagement of 7 & 5 years and he was allocated to the training establishment of H.M.A. S. Victory¹ and allotted the service number of P/SSX27296. After completing his naval training he was transferred to the crew of H.M.S. "Royal Oak" on 7th June 1939. Ordinary Seaman was killed in action on 14th October 1939. At the time of his death he was 20 years of age. He has no known grave therefore his name is recorded on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial for the missing. For his service during World War 2 he had entitlement for the 1939/1945 Star, the Atlantic Star and the War Medal.

H.M.S. "Royal Oak" was a Revenge class battleship that saw combat in World War 1. On 14th October 1939 it was anchored at Scapa Flow in Orkney, Scotland, when German Submarine U-47 torpedoed her. Of the crew of 1,234 men and boy sailors, 833 were to die that night or succumb to their wounds at a later date. The Royal Oak remains under water at Scapa Flow and is a designated war grave protected under the Military Remains Act of 1986.

Toowoomba Grammar School archive records show that he enrolled as a day student on 31st January 1933 and he left the School on 8th December 1933. His parent is shown as Mr Harper, Chief Inspector Queensland Insurance, Cnr Arthur & Godfrey Streets, Toowoomba. He was a keen sailor and achieved his Masters Certificate. After leaving school he moved to Sandgate.



Portsmouth Naval Memorial.