

AB Harry Lock – Royal Navy

Although he is shown on our memorial as an Able Seaman, there is no doubt that this was Petty Officer Alfred Harry Lock who died on 26 March 1942 while serving on HMS *Jaguar*. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission records state that he was the son of Edith Louisa Lock (nee Merry) of Westcott and that he was 21 at the time of his death. The Westcott School records the admission of Alfred Harry Lock who was born on 23rd October 1920, and shows that he was the son of Harry Lock of Bailey Road, Westcott. Harry Richard Lock died in 1928 and his widow later married William Fillery. A list of those named on the memorial, drawn up in 1954, records Harry's next of kin as Mrs Fillery of 35 Bailey Road.

The service records of ratings who served in the Second World War are not yet available to the general public. As a result we do not know when Harry joined the Royal Navy or when he was posted to HMS *Jaguar*, but he clearly had exceptional leadership qualities to be a Petty Officer at the age of 21. *Jaguar* was a J-Class Destroyer which had a very eventful war. She entered service in September 1939 and in May 1940 took part in Operation Dynamo, the evacuation of troops from France and Belgium. After bringing 700 troops to Dover, she was attacked by JU87 dive-bombers and badly damaged. After repairs she supported HMS *Revenge* in the shelling of Cherbourg and in November 1940 acted as an escort for the battlecruiser HMS *Renown* to join Force H at Gibraltar.

In January 1941 *Jaguar* took part in covering a convoy from Gibraltar to Malta acting as escort to the aircraft carrier HMS *Illustrious* which was taking much-needed Hurricane fighters to assist in the defence of the island. The following month saw *Jaguar* covering the landing of troops on the island of Kastelorizo in the Dodecanese, an action in which the ship engaged the Italian destroyer *Crispi*. More action followed in May when she took part in the battle for Crete and was one of the few British ships to escape damage. She served with Force H during the Syrian campaign and was later engaged in the bombardment of Bardia in Libya. In December 1941 she picked up 8 officers and 12 ratings from HMS *Kandahar* which had struck a mine.

Jaguar returned to escort duties in early 1942 when she assisted with the escort of a convoy from Alexandria to Malta. In March 1942 she was part of a convoy escort group positioned in the Kithura Channel for the Battle of Matapan. On 26th March 1942 her luck ran out when she was escorting the oil tanker *Slavol* off the Libyan coast. At 2.27 hrs she was struck by a spread of 4 torpedoes fired by the German submarine U-652; two of the torpedoes struck the bow of the ship which caught fire and quickly sank. Three officers and 190 of her crew were lost. Eight officers and 45 crewmen were rescued by the naval whaler HMS *Klo*. The tanker *Slavol* was torpedoed and sunk some hours later by U-205.

Those who were lost from HMS *Jaguar* included her Commander, Lt Cdr L.R.K.Tyrwhitt DSO DSC RN, and Petty Officer Harry Lock. Those who died are remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial. Harry's name is on panel 62, column 2 of the memorial which records the names of 24,598 sailors who were lost in both World Wars and who have no known grave.