

**In Memory of
Stoker Petty Officer ARTHUR JAMES DAVIS
P/KX 79741, H.M.S. Iron Duke, Royal Navy
who died, age 29 on 17 October 1939
Son of Arthur John and Eliza Davis,
of Faringdon, Berkshire
Husband of Elizabeth Mary Davis of Hayes, Kent
Remembered with honour
Faringdon War Memorial and
PORTSMOUTH NAVAL MEMORIAL**



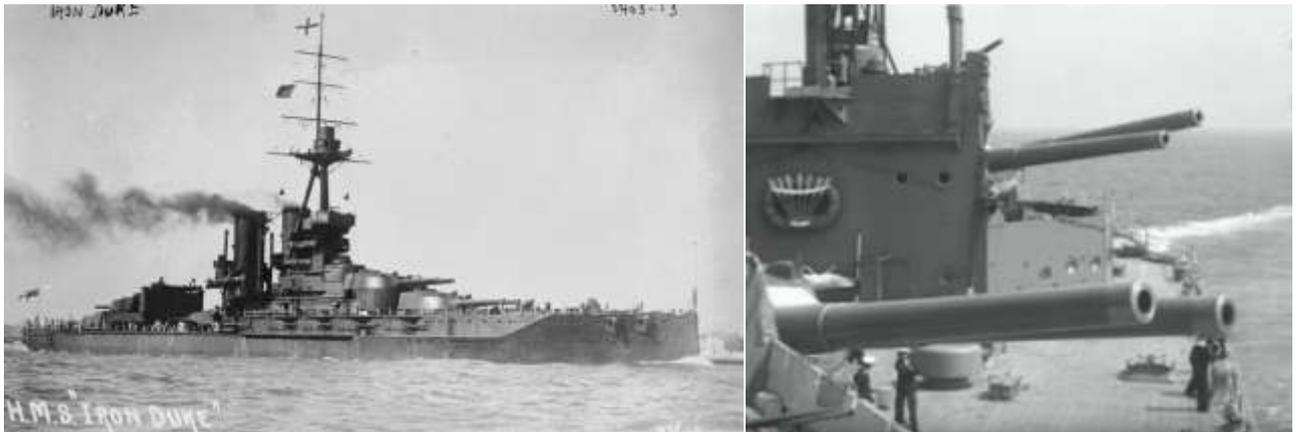
Commemorated in perpetuity by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Standing on Southsea Common overlooking the promenade in Portsmouth, Hampshire, is the Portsmouth Naval Memorial. It commemorates nearly 10,000 naval personnel of the First World War and almost 15,000 of the Second World War who were lost or buried at sea.

HMS *Iron Duke* was a dreadnought battleship of the Royal Navy, the lead ship of her class, named in honour of Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington. She was built by Portsmouth Dockyard, and her keel laid in January 1912. Launched ten months later, she was commissioned into the Home Fleet in March 1914 as the fleet flagship. She was armed with a main battery of ten 13.5-inch (340 mm) guns and was capable of a top speed of 21.25 knots (39.36 km/h; 24.45 mph).

Iron Duke served as the flagship of the Grand Fleet during the First World War, including at the Battle of Jutland. There, she inflicted significant damage on the German battleship SMS *König* early in the main fleet action. In January 1917, she was relieved as fleet flagship. After the war, *Iron Duke* operated in the Mediterranean as the flagship of the Mediterranean Fleet. She participated in both the Allied intervention in the Russian Civil War in the Black

Sea and the Greco-Turkish War. She also assisted in the evacuation of refugees from Smyrna.



In 1926, she was assigned to the Atlantic Fleet, where she served as a training ship.

Iron Duke remained on active duty for only a few more years; in 1930, the London Naval Treaty specified that the four *Iron Duke*-class battleships be scrapped or otherwise demilitarised. *Iron Duke* was therefore converted into a gunnery training ship; her armour and much of her armament was removed to render her unfit for combat. She served in this capacity until the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939, when she was moored in Scapa Flow as a harbour defence ship and a floating anti-aircraft platform at Scapa Flow. Her secondary guns were removed and used for coastal defence around the base.

On 17 October, four Junkers Ju 88 medium bombers attacked Scapa Flow, and damaged *Iron Duke* with several near misses; presumably Arthur was killed in this attack. To prevent her from sinking, her crew had to run the ship aground. She continued to serve as an anti-aircraft platform for the duration of the war, and was eventually refloated and broken up for scrap in the late 1940s.

Arthur's father, Arthur John Davis, a carpenter, married Eliza Rossiter in Axbridge, Somerset, in 1902 and Arthur was born there in 1910. By the 1930s the family had moved to Faringdon. On February 16 1934 Eliza was called back to Axbridge to give evidence at the inquest on her brother, James Rossiter, 67, who had died in a house fire the previous Friday at the Barrows, Cheddar. It seems James may have been smoking in bed and died in his sleep of asphyxia. A verdict of accidental death was recorded.