

**In Memory of  
Able Seaman ALFRED HOBBS  
P/J 90516, H.M.S. President III, Royal Navy  
who died, age 39, on 23 February 1941  
Son of Alfred and Isabella Hobbs; husband of Marjorie  
Lavinia Hobbs, of Faringdon, Berkshire.  
Remembered with honour  
Faringdon War Memorial and  
PORTSMOUTH NAVAL MEMORIAL**



**Commemorated in perpetuity by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission**

The Memorial is situated on Southsea Common overlooking the promenade, and is accessible at all times.

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 Portsmouth was Sir Edward Maufe (who also designed the Air Forces memorial at Runnymede) and the additional sculpture was by Charles Wheeler, William McMillan, and Esmond Burton. Portsmouth Naval Memorial commemorates around 10,000 sailors of the First World War and almost 15,000 of the Second World War.

**Alfred Hobbs** was born in Faringdon in 1901 and lived with his parents in Ferndale St. He was the youngest of four: Henry (Harry) b 1892, James (Jimmy) b 1898 and Florence b 1896; she emigrated to Canada with her husband George Prior and daughter, Pamela. Alfred joined the Royal Navy and was trained as a Gunner at HMS President III in London.

On 23 February 1941 he was serving on the British registered merchant vessel SS Anglo Peruvian, carrying 3015 tons of coal, sailing from Tyne – Loch Ewe – Boston with Convoy OB 288. The convoy was attacked and dispersed by U-Boats. At 23.27 hours on 23 Feb 1941 the Anglo-Peruvian (Master Cyril Mervyn Quick) was hit by two torpedoes from U-96 (Captain Heinrich Lehmann-Willenbrock), broke in two and sank within three minutes southwest of Iceland.

The master, 26 crew members and two gunners were lost. 17 crew members were picked up by the British merchant SS Harberton and landed at Halifax on 4 March.

#### **Report by 1st Mate - SS Anglo Peruvian**

On February 23rd, 1941, (Sunday) at 07:00 Destroyer left convoy in approx. 59 20N 18 30W. Convoy steamed on to dispersal point. Signal to disperse was made at 9 a.m. from the Commodore.

At dispersal point on Sunday night, Captain Quick of the above steamer carried out instructions as per Naval Control. At 9:00 p.m. GMT in about 59 36N 21 00W submarine attack began with the above ship first, which received two torpedoes; one in engine room, putting out all lights; the second one striking about 30 ft. abaft the first, within a few seconds. Vessel broke in two and sank in about three minutes.

Twenty seven members, including captain feared lost. Total crew 44.

#### **Report by Captain - SS Harberton**

In company with Convoy OB 288, at 21:00 BST 23rd February, I received orders from Commodore to disperse and proceed independently to destination. At 23:00 BST 23rd February, we sighted a raft carrying men, so decided to ease down and attempt a rescue. Rescue was effected successfully, and seventeen

men taken aboard. They were survivors from *SS Anglo Peruvian*. We then proceeded towards destination at maximum speed.

At 00:00 BST 24th February, sighted two lifeboats carrying men, so again decided to attempt rescue. At 01:00 rescue was successfully carried out and thirty-three men, survivors from *SS Cape Nelson* were taken aboard.

I wish to report the following:

a) During the rescue of the survivors of *SS Anglo Peruvian*, which was effected with our own lifeboats, one lifeboat capsized, and one man from *Anglo Peruvian* lost his life.

b) During the rescue of the survivors of *SS Cape Nelson* one man was killed, falling between the *Harberton* and the lifeboat of *SS Cape Nelson*.

c) The lifeboats of both *SS Cape Nelson* and *Harberton* were abandoned.

Having due regard to the extra men now numbering 50, in addition to my own crew of 41, I decided to make for the nearest British Port (Halifax) with consideration to the safest navigation, and in view of the fact that *SS Harberton* did not have sufficient lifeboat accommodation for the 25% of the lives now aboard. Further, I held provisions for 10 days only.

I arrived at Halifax, noon March 4th, 1941, to land survivors of above named ships and report to the British Ministry of Shipping.

I suggest, for consideration, that as this attack occurred only twelve hours after the local escort left the convoy, in Longitude 18° West, it would be in the interest of British Shipping, that the Local Escort should not disperse from the convoy before Longitude 28°W.

Signed Captain A. Patterson.

