

**In Memory of  
Able Seaman GEORGE FRANCIS KEBBLE  
P/JX 261908 HMS Hydra  
Who died, age 30, on 10 November 1944  
Son of Arthur and Fanny Kebble; husband of Emily  
Gladys Kebble, of Coventry.  
Remembered with honour  
Faringdon War Memorial and  
OOSTENDE NEW COMMUNAL CEMETERY**



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

Hydra was a reciprocating engine-powered *Algerine*-class minesweeper built for the Royal Navy during the Second World War. *Hydra* was laid down at the yard of Lobnitz, Renfrew and launched on 29 September 1942. As a result of savings raised during "Warship Week", she was adopted by Wellingborough Urban District Council in Northamptonshire on 14 March 1942. *Hydra* joined the 18th Minesweeping Flotilla in the Rosyth Command on 20 February 1943 and was transferred in May 1943 to the Nore Command. She was variously employed on minesweeping in the North Sea in 1943 and on escort duty with Arctic convoys from 1943-1944, including the convoys JW 55B and JW 57 to Kola in 1943-44. *Hydra* was part of Operation Neptune, the naval part of the D-Day landings at

Normandy on 6 June 1944. She was mined in the approaches to Ostend on 10 November 1944. She was towed to Sheerness but declared a constructive total loss and not repaired. She was sold for scrap and arrived at the yard of Thos W Ward in Grays, Essex on 28 October 1944 to be broken up in 1947.

Oostende New Communal Cemetery is located in the town of Oostende on the Stuiverstraat, a road leading from the R31 Elisabethlaan. From the 13th to the 22nd August, 1914 Oostende (also known as Ostende) was a British seaplane base, and for four days at the end of the month it was protected by the British Marine Brigade. From the 7th to the 12th October it was the seat of the Belgian Government.

On the 8th October the 3rd Cavalry Division landed at Oostende; but the port was closed on the 14th and entered by the Germans next day. Thereafter, Oostende was periodically bombarded by ships of the Royal Navy and bombed by Allied airmen. On 23 April and 10 May 1918, it was raided by the Dover patrol in an attempt to block the port as an outlet for German torpedo boats and submarines based at Bruges. The attack of 23 April failed to block the harbour but that of 10 May, when "Vindictive" was sunk in the channel, partially succeeded. The town was finally entered by Allied forces on 17 October 1918, without opposition.

During the Second World War, the British Expeditionary Force was involved in the later stages of the defence of Belgium following the German invasion in May 1940, and suffered many casualties in covering the withdrawal to Dunkirk. Commonwealth forces did not return until September 1944 (Oostende was liberated by the Canadians on 8 September), but in the intervening years, many airmen were shot down or crashed in raids on strategic objectives in Belgium, or while returning from missions over Germany.

The Commonwealth plots at Oostende New Communal Cemetery contain 50 burials of the First World War and 366 from the Second World War, 75 of the latter unidentified. The plots also contain eight non-war burials and eight war graves of other nationalities.

