

DOVER

H.M.T.S Alert
St Mary The Virgin
Cannon Street
Dover
Kent



Built by Swan, Hunter and Wigham Richardson of Wallsend on the Tyne in 1918, the 941 ton vessel H.M.T.S. Alert was working off the Dodman, North Goodwin Sands in the Straits of Dover, undertaking repairs to the Dumpton Gap, Kent to La Panne, Belgium undersea telegraph cable, when she was torpedoed by a German submarine and sunk with the loss of all of her 59 hands. It was not one of the large ocean going type of submarines which sank the Alert, but a Seehund (Seal) type. These submarines had a displacement of 17 tons when submerged, a crew of only two and carried two underslung G7e type torpedoes. The Seehund had the range of 300 kilometres at 7 knots, and could attack on the surface in weather up to 4 on the Beaufort Scale, but had to be almost literally stationary for undertaking submerged torpedo attacks. About fifty Seehund submarines were built which had an additional fuel storage that gave them a range of 300 miles at 7 knots surfaced and 63 miles at 3 knots submerged. These types of midget German submarines were involved in a number of limited actions off Dungeness Point on the south Kent coast. On the morning of 24 February 1945 the two man crew of the U-5330,

Oberleutnant zur See, Klaus Sparbrodt, and Masch Mt. Günter Jahnke claimed to have sunk a corvette northeast of the South Falls. Initially it was assumed by the Kriegsmarine that they had sunk the 1,050 ton French destroyer La Combattante, but this ship had been mined off the Humber estuary on the night of 23/24 February, by a mine laid on 16 February 1945 by German Motor Torpedo Boats (Schnellboots or E-boats), and the real victim of U-5330 was in fact the British G.P.O. cable layer 'Alert.' Arguably one of the Post Office cable laying ship Alert's most important contributions to the Allied war effort took place surrounded in secrecy in Kent during May 1942. It had been realised that with her shallow draft and the crews' expertise gained over many years cable laying for the General Post Office, that the vessel would be an ideal choice to take part in the embryonic Pipeline Under the Ocean (PLUTO) experiments. Resulting from the decision to use the Alert, she laid a fuel pipe across the river Medway, Kent, and fuel was pumped successfully at a pressure of 600lbs. per square inch. From observations and data collected the programme of experimentation and modification continued, and by the next month the system was ready for deep water trials which were conducted by another larger vessel in the Clyde estuary, and of course in June 1944 PLUTO proved to be invaluable.

The Second World War 1939 – 1945

* Set out in alphabetical order for ease of access by researchers

BALDWIN, FREDERICK SIDNEY BERTIE. B.E.M. Seaman.

Merchant Navy.

Died 24 February 1945. Aged 47.

Born 12 June 1897. Merchant Navy Discharge number: 1120123.

Son of William and Elizabeth Baldwin.

Husband of Julia Edith Baldwin of Dover, Kent.

Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial. Panel 4.

BATES, HARRY. Chief Steward.

Merchant Navy.

Died 24 February 1945. Aged 47.

Son of James and Elisabeth Bates.

Husband of Alice Bates of Dover, Kent.

Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 4.

BLAMEY, RONALD FREDERICK ROBERT. Assistant Steward.

Merchant Navy.

Died 24 February 1945. Aged 18.

Born 12 February 1927. Merchant Navy Discharge number: S 34676.

Son of William H. and Ruby G. Blamey of Dartmouth, Devon.

Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 4.

BOOKER, ROBERT ERNEST. Stoker.

Merchant Navy.

Died 24 February 1945. Aged 29.

Born 18 April 1915. Merchant Navy Discharge number: S14932.

Son of Alfred Edwin and Millicent Florence Booker of Dover, Kent.

Husband of Joyce Booker of Dover, Kent.

Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 4.

BROOKSHAW, JAMES CHARLES. Seaman.

Merchant Navy.

Died 24 February 1945. Aged 23.

Born 11 September 1921. Merchant Navy Discharge number: R210338.

Son of Charles Edmund and Florence Gladys Brookshaw.

Husband of Joyce Joan Brookshaw of Woolwich, London.

Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 4.

BUNTING, HARRY WILLIAM. Able Seaman, C/JX267253.

Royal Navy.

Died 24 February 1945. Aged 34.

Son of Thomas and Lillian Bunting.

Husband of Hilda Marion Bunting of Coventry, Warwickshire.

Buried Oye Plage Communal Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France.

Grave Ref: Row 5. Grave 19.

BUTTON, ROBERT STANLEY. Seaman.

Merchant Navy.

Died 24 February 1945. Aged 39.

Born 12 November 1905. Merchant Navy Discharge number: S14940.

Son of Jack and Susannah Button of Lowestoft, Suffolk.

Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 4.

CLARKE, FRANK JOHN ALLWARD. Able Seaman, D/JX 291229.

Royal Navy.

Died 24 February 1945. Aged 23.

Son of Esmond and Mabel Clarke of Pontypridd, Glamorgan, Wales.

Husband of Elsie Doreen Clarke of Pontypridd, Glamorgan, Wales.

Commemorated on the Plymouth Naval Memorial. Panel 93, Column 3.

CWGC commemoration shows Frank as belonging to H.M.S. President III. As one of the six D.E.M.S. Royal Navy Gunners who were serving on H.M. Telegraphic Ship 'Alert' at the time of her loss. The H.M.S. President III reference for Frank and the others is indicative of the D.E.M.S. Royal Navy Gunners shore establishment headquarters, for the personnel on Defensively Armed Merchant Ships, but it does not mean that the six served there, but basically that their pay etcetera was worked out there.

CAMPBELL, MALCOLM. Able Seaman, D/JX 240087.
Royal Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 23.
Son of Malcolm Whitford Campbell and Anne Emily Campbell.
Husband of Doris May Campbell of Clapham, London.
Commemorated on the Plymouth Naval Memorial. Panel 93, Column 3.

CANT, PERCY AUGUSTUS. Assistant Steward.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 62.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 4.

CASSINGHAM, JACK. Third Engineer Officer.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 39.
Son of John Odion Cassingham and Kate Cassingham.
Husband of Violet Cassingham, of Folkestone, Kent.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 4.

CORNWELL, WILLIAM FREDERICK. Seaman.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 30.
Born 29 September 1914. Discharge number: R125243.
Son of William John and Ellen Susan Cornwell, of Dover, Kent.
Husband of Olive Cornwell, of Dover, Kent.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 4, and in the Dover, Kent Grammar School for Boys, Second World War Book of Remembrance, where William was a pupil from 1925 to 1930.

CRONIN, HENRY TREVERTON. Purser.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 35.
Born 29 September 1909. Merchant Navy Discharge number: S14915.
Son of David Treverton Cronin and Priscilla Cronin.
Husband of Doris Jean Cronin of Abbey Wood, Kent.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

DELLOW, ERNEST GEORGE NORMAN. Second Officer.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 31.
Born 28 September 1913. Merchant Navy Discharge number: R121743.
Son of Ernest Dellow and of Ellen Dellow of Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

DEMELWEEK, EDWARD JOHN. Stoker.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 46.
Son of George Thomas Demelweek and Elizabeth Anne Demelweek.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

DIXON, JAMES. Second Officer.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 33.
Son of George Dodds Dixon and Mary L. Dixon of Stanmore, Middlesex.
Husband of Mildred Burrell Dixon (née Waugh) of Durban, Natal, South Africa.
Buried Oye Plage Communal Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France.
Grave Ref: Row 5. Grave 17.

DOWLE, CHARLES JOHN. Storekeeper.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 65.
Born 17 April 1879. Merchant Navy Discharge number: S14939.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

DRURY, FRANK ARTHUR. Quartermaster.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 40.
Born 13 July 1904. Merchant Navy Discharge number: R91262.
Son of Walter and Emily Helen Drury.
Husband of Florence Lily Olivia Drury of Dover, Kent.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

ELLIS, PERCY WILLIAM. Seaman.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 38.
Born 6 December 1907. Merchant Navy Discharge number: S14930.
Husband of Ruby Dorothy Ellis of Buckland, Dover, Kent.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

EVERALL, FREEMAN JAMES. Seaman.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 52.
Born 24 February 1893. Merchant Navy Discharge number: S14926.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

FISHER, HERBERT CHARLES. Chief Engineer Officer.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 46.
Born 13 August 1898. Merchant Navy Discharge number: 1022700.
Buried Oye Plage Communal Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France.

Grave Ref: Row 5. Grave 18.

GILCHRIST, FRANCIS ALEXANDER. Seaman.

Merchant Navy.

Died 24 February 1945. Aged 47.

Born 17 November 1897. Merchant Navy Discharge number: S14941.

Son of Francis Alexander Gilchrist and Harriet Gilchrist.

Husband of Emma Elizabeth Gilchrist of Deal, Kent.

Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

GODDEN, ALBERT VICTOR. Seaman.

Merchant Navy.

Died 24 February 1945. Aged 29.

Born 15 July 1915. Merchant Navy Discharge number: S14944.

Son of Fred and Jane Godden of Dover, Kent.

Husband of Lilian G. Godden of Efford, Devon.

Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

GREGORY, ALBERT REGINALD. Quartermaster.

Merchant Navy.

Died 24 February 1945. Aged 40.

Son of William Ernest and Florence C. Gregory of Faversham, Kent.

Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

HEALE, SAMUEL. Petty Officer, D/JX 227670.

Royal Navy.

Died 24 February 1945. Aged 31.

Son of Henry and Sarah Heale.

Husband of Winifred May Heale of Ottery St. Mary, Devon.

Buried (St. Mary) Churchyard, Ottery St. Mary, Devon.

HEMPSALL, FRANK ABDY. Carpenter.

Merchant Navy.

Died 24 February 1945. Aged 47.

Born 1 August 1897. Merchant Navy Discharge number: R63858.

Husband of Gertrude Hempsall of Dover, Kent.

Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

HOPE, FRANK. Engine Driver (Cable).

Merchant Navy.

Died 24 February 1945. Aged 47.

Born 11 May 1897. Merchant Navy Discharge number: S14943.

Husband of Florence H. Hope of Perivale, Greenford, Middlesex.

Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

HUNTER, WILLIAM THOMAS CALEB. Seaman.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 26.
Born 12 June 1918. Merchant Navy Discharge number: S32.
Son of Albert Thomas Hunter and Catherine Hunter of Dover, Kent.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

HURFORD, HAROLD FREDERICK. Seaman.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 18.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

INSOLE, ALEC. Cable Jinter.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 39.
Husband of F. M. Insole of Dover, Kent.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

JONES, GEORGE HENRY. Seaman.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 30.
Son of George and Rose Jones.
Husband of E. R. Jones of Dover, Kent.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

KITT, EDWIN KENNETH JOHN. Assistant Steward.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 17.
Born 3 August 1869. Merchant Navy Discharge number: 313670.
Son of John and M. K. Kitt of Dartmouth, Devon.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

MACKEY, VICTOR WILLIAM. Stoker.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 27.
Born 12 February 1918. Merchant Navy Discharge number: R124247.
Son of Albert and Mary Mackey.
Husband of Dorothy E. B. Mackey of Efford, Devon.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

MacLEOD, NORMAN ANGUS. Radio Officer.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 30.
Son of Malcolm and Mary Ann MacLeod.
Husband of Myra R. MacLeod of Corton, Wiltshire.
Buried Calais Southern Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France. Grave Ref: Plot S. Grave 6.

MAPLE, WILLIAM JOHN. Donkeyman.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 62.
Born 10 March 1882.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

MARTIN, LIONEL SYDNEY. Assistant Steward.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 19.
Born 28 January 1926.
Son of Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Martin of Falmouth, Cornwall.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

MILLAR, JAMES GRANT. Surgeon.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 64.
Son of David Millar, D.D., and Gloriana Margaret Grant Millar.
Husband of Mary Graham Millar of Glasgow.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

MILLARD, GEORGE HENRY. Seaman.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 17.
Born 30 September 1927. Merchant Navy Discharge number: S28766.
Son of James and Margaret Elsie Millard of Woolwich, London.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

OATES, JOHN GERALD BEVERIDGE. D.S.C. Master.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 37.
Born 13 December 1907. Merchant Navy Discharge number: R35838.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 4, and on the Kingswood College Memorial Roll 1939-1945 plaque, (in the chapel), Grahamstown, South Africa.

O'BEIRNE, HENRY WREN. Assistant Cable Foreman.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 58.
Born 28 June 1886. Merchant Navy Discharge number: S14921
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

PAYNE, FRANCIS WILLIAM. 2nd Cook and Baker.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 38.
Born 3 July 1906. Merchant Navy Discharge number: S14935.
Husband of E. E. Payne, of Buckland, Dover, Kent.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

PETERS, GERALD RAYMOND. Seaman.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 18.
Son of Henry and E. M. Peters of Dartmouth, Devon.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

PHILLIPS, DAVID COLENZO. Quartermaster.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 44.
Born 7 March 1900. Merchant Navy Discharge number: S14950.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

PRINCE, ERIC. M.B.E. Third Engineer Officer.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945.
Born 1889. Merchant Navy Discharge number: S14919.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

RIVETT, FREDERICK WILLIAM. Able Seaman, P/JX 397466.
Royal Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 21.
Son of Robert and Annie Catherine Rivett of Crayford, Kent.
Commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial. Panel 89, Column 1.
Please see Frank Clarke commemoration re President III.

ROBINSON, RONALD AMBROSE. Fourth Engineer Officer.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 30.
Son of Frank and Anne Kathleen Robinson.
Husband of Gwendoline Mabel Robinson of Littlehampton, Sussex.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

SHARP, FREDERICK STEVEN GEORGE. Seaman.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 39.
Born 26 July 1905. Merchant Navy Discharge number: S14925.
Son of Chief Petty Officer Steven Richard Sharp, Royal Navy, and Mary Ann Sharp.
Husband of G. Sharp of Dover, Kent.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

SHEPHERD, WILLIAM ERNEST SYDNEY. Boatswain.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 34.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

SKELTON, WALTER GEORGE. Quartermaster.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 36
Born 29 August 1908. Merchant Navy Discharge number: R909.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

SMITH, ERNEST JAMES. Assistant Steward.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 18.
Son of Mr. and Mrs. E. T. Smith of Dover, Kent.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

SMITH, WILLIAM. Cable Foreman.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 47.
Husband of Florence May Smith of Charlton, London.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

STIVEY, JOHN CUTHBERT. Third Officer.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945.
Born 24 March 1909. Merchant Navy Discharge number: R.21320.
Son of Commander J. Stivey, R.N.R., and Mrs. Stivey of Towyn, Merionethshire, Wales.
Husband of Evelyn Stivey of Cathcart, Glasgow.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.
Master Mariner, Merchant Navy.

STOYLE, REGINALD PERCY. Able Seaman, D/JX 29115.
Royal Navy.
Died 24 February 1945.
Son of Percy Frederick and Elsie Maud Stoye of Shaldon, Devon.
Commemorated on the Plymouth Naval Memorial. Panel 94, Column 1, and on Shaldon,
Devon civic war memorial.

TAWS, JOHN CROSBY. Fourth Officer.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 30.
Born 27 November 1914. Merchant Navy Discharge number: R.147760.
Son of John and Rose A. Taws.
Husband of Peggy E. M. Taws of Falmouth, Cornwall.
Buried Oye-Plage Communal Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France.
Grave Ref: Row 2. Grave 5.

TICKNER, WILLIAM JOHN. Chief Cook.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 51.
Born 25 February 1893. Merchant Navy Discharge number: 587007.
Son of Thomas Charles and Elizabeth Tickner.
Husband of Rosetta Tickner of Dover, Kent.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

WADE, ARTHUR GEORGE. Stoker.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 43.
Born 7 November 1902. Merchant Navy Discharge number: R.216688.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

WAKEFIELD, RICHARD CHARLES STEPHEN. Steward.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 43.
Born 12 April 1901. Merchant Navy Discharge number: S.14942.
Husband of Doris Wakefield of Plumstead, London.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

WILLIAMS, FRANCIS HENRY. Assistant Steward.
Merchant Navy.
Died 24 February 1945. Aged 17.
Son of Walter G. and Elisa S. Williams of Dartmouth, Devon.
Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 5.

