

## Ernest William Webster



Telegraphist H.M.M.T.B. 255, Royal Navy

Service number D/JX 357777,

Died on 14 February 1945 Age 20

Commemorated on the Plymouth Naval Memorial

<https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/2489763/ERNEST%20WILLIAM%20WEBSTER/>

Son of Albert Ernest and Caroline Webster (nee Wardle), of Gedling, Nottinghamshire Albert (born 9 July 1890) and Caroline (born 29 April 1892) were married in 1915, registered in the Basford R D in the September quarter.

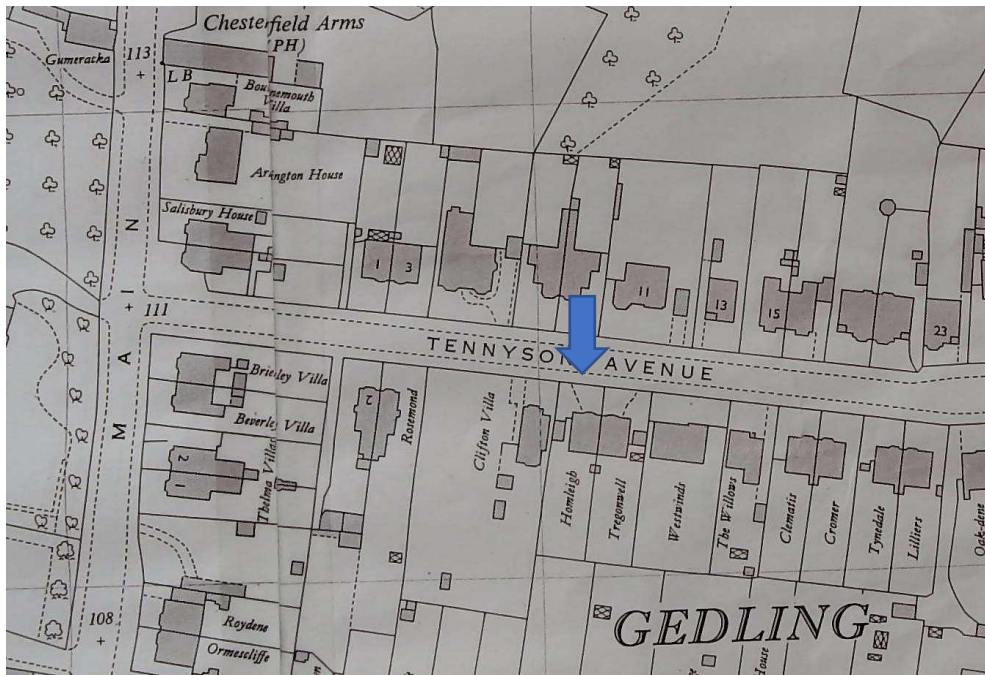
They had 7 children

- Margery E born 1916;
- Dorothy M born 10 April 1919;
- Connie born 1921;
- William E born 1924 (registered in the June quarter)
- Henry A born 24 September 1926;
- Derrick A born 4 November 1930;
- Jean born 1932.

All births were registered in the Basford R D.

I have no information about where the family were living and where the children went to school until 1924 and 25 Albert and Caroline are listed in the Electoral Register as residing on Salop Street Arnold. (Arnold is in the Basford R D)

By 1928 they are residing on Tennyson Avenue Gedling so William Ernest or Ernest William (as he is listed on the CWGC website) would have attended All Hallows School.



On the 1939 Register the family is living on Tennyson Avenue at 'Holmleigh' Albert's occupation is a Loco Fireman (Heavy work) Caroline is 'Unpaid domestic duties' (or housewife) Dorothy M is 'Order assemblance (looks like?) Henry A and Derrick A are at school. There are 3 closed records and Ernest William is likely to be one of these.

Ernest would have been conscripted when he was aged 18 in 1942. He trained as a telegraphist and by 1945 was assigned to MTB 255 (Motor Torpedo Boat)

MTB 255 was in Ostend Belgium as part of an MTB flotilla. On 14 February 1945, some thirty-one MTBs along with other assorted craft, were moored alongside one another in the harbour at Ostend. Some of the boat crews had been granted shore

leave, whilst others were preparing for patrols scheduled for that evening. At around 3 o'clock in the afternoon, flames and smoke were seen rising from the middle of a group of Power Boats that were berthed in a large lock entrance. One boat blew up which triggered other fires and explosions, ammunition was exploding, torpedoes going off, pieces of flaming boats were everywhere.

The combined explosive power of so much fuel and ammunition including torpedoes, on boats held in close proximity to one another, proved devastating to the crews onboard them at the time, as well as to personnel in the surrounding dockside area.

The final outcome was that twenty-six sailors of the Royal Canadian Navy were killed and five of their boats destroyed, and thirty-six British sailors were killed and the Royal Navy lost seven boats. In all twelve boats blew up and sixty-two sailors died.

Ernest William Webster aged 20 was one of the casualties.

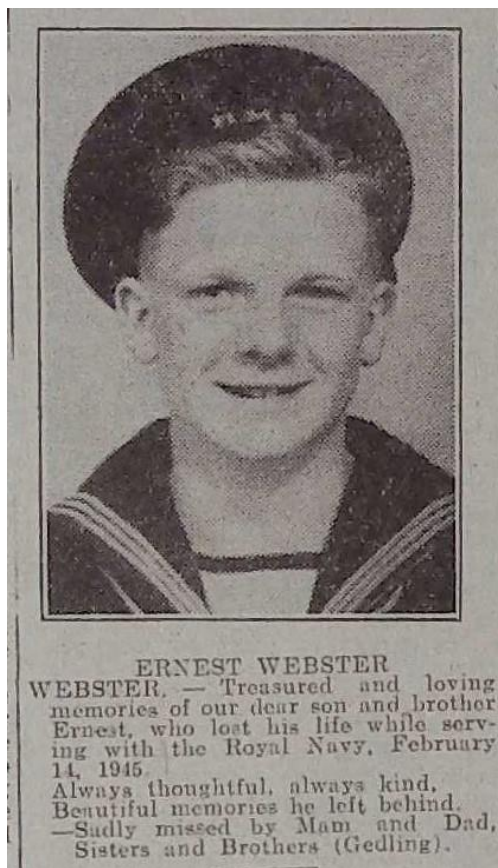
He is commemorated on the naval Memorial at Plymouth

For photographs of this memorial please see

<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2138329/plymouth-naval-memorial>

And the plaque with Ernest Websters name.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/13307624/ernest-william-webster#view-photo=3087983>



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