

World War II

Birmingham City Police

PC B William PORTER

Able Seaman 224617

H.M.S. Princess Irene Royal Navy

Died in England 27th May 1915



William was born 19th March 1886 in Barking in Essex

On 19th March 1904, William joined the Royal Navy aged 18 years of age. He served various times, on numerous ships including the Northampton, Victory, Excellent, Venus, Hawke, Tamar, Kings Alfred, Latona, and on 16th August 1911, William joined RFR Portsmouth

After leaving the Navy, William joined Birmingham City Police on 29th August 1911 aged 24. He served on the B Division with warrant number 7882

On 19th October 1912 William now a 26-year-old Police Constable married Amy Elizabeth Foster at St James Holloway, Islington, London

On 4th August 1914, William was recalled to the Navy and from 2nd to 24th August 1914, served on the Victory, from 25th August to 8th March 1915 he served on the Latona

On 9th March 1915 William was serving on H.M.S. Princess Irene where he was to lose his life a few months later on 27th May

The ship was completed in Scotland in 1914 but, before she was able to leave for the Pacific, was requisitioned by the Royal Navy and converted into a mine layer. She was launched on 20th October 1914. On 27th May 1915, the 'Princess Irene' was anchored near Grain on the River Medway when she suddenly suffered a massive internal explosion

The cause of the disaster was thought to have been due to a faulty primer (pistol) although evidence at the Official Enquiry showed that the work of priming the lethal mines was carried out in a hurry and by untrained personnel

William's body was not recovered for burial: His wife Amy was notified of his death at 4, Ashburton Grove, Holloway, London

William is commemorated on Portsmouth Naval Memorial Panel 8



William's portrait photograph is courtesy of Mr Graeme Clarke

