

# FREDERICK JAMES MARSH

Rank/Number:

Stoker

K25507

Vessel:

HMS Torrent

Frederick James Marsh was born on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1894, the third son of Alfred and Selina Jane Marsh, of West Cliffe Cottages, Dover. In 1911 his father died aged 43 leaving his widow with a large family to support; his 12 children ranged in age from one to nineteen. Selina is later recorded as living at Swing Gate Cottages, Dover.

Frederick was working as a farm labourer but joined the navy in April 1914, signing up for 12 years' service. His home base was HMS Pembroke in Chatham and he was rated as Stoker 2<sup>nd</sup> Class. He was based at Chatham for five months before being appointed to HMS Myngs, based at Harwich.

HMS Myngs was an M-Class Destroyer which entered service in February 1915. She had a company of 80, a top speed of 34.5 knots and was engaged on patrol work in the North Sea. In February 1916, Marsh was promoted to Stoker 1<sup>st</sup> Class.

A year later he was transferred to HMS Torrent, an R-Class Destroyer within the 9<sup>th</sup> Destroyer Flotilla. Launched in November 1916, she had a complement of 82 men, a displacement of 975 tons and a top speed of 36 knots.

On the night of 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> December 1917, HMS Torrent was sailing to meet a convoy in the North Sea, together with three other R-Class vessels. Off the Dutch coast, near the Maas light buoy, they ran into a recently laid minefield. HMS Torrent was the first to be hit. HMS Surprise, which went to assist her, was also mined. HMS Tornado tried to get clear but detonated two mines and sank with only one survivor. Only HMS Radiant returned home, having risked entering the minefield to rescue survivors from the icy waters. This incident took the lives of 252 men, one of whom was Frederick James Marsh.



Stoker 1<sup>st</sup> Class Frederick James Marsh was lost at sea and his name is inscribed on Panel 24 of the Chatham Naval Memorial. The memorial, which overlooks the town, bears the names of 8417 Royal Navy personnel who were based at

Chatham and have no known grave, the majority having been lost at sea.