

A Plaque in the Church

Robert Alec Farquhar (Buster) CHURCHILL. Mentioned in Despatches.

Lieutenant, *HMS Victorious*, Royal Navy.

He died on 12 August 1942 age 31 protecting a convoy to Malta.

He is remembered on bay 3, panel 1 of the Lee-on-Solent Memorial and a stone plaque on the wall of Deddington Parish Church.

He was the son of Alec F and Elinor Churchill and the husband of Olive H D Churchill (née Townroe) of Cuckfield, Sussex.

Additional information:

Robert Churchill was serving in 884 Squadron embarked on the aircraft carrier *HMS Victorious*. At the time of his death he was protecting a convoy known as Operation Pedestal which was the last opportunity to deliver essential supplies to the besieged island of Malta. The operation succeeded but, as the diary for Operation Pedestal on 12 August 1942 shows, the cost was very high:

20 Junker 88s attack convoy.

Submarine attacks.

100 German and Italian planes attack. *MV Deucalion* sunk by aerial torpedo, dud hits aircraft carrier *HMS Victorious*.

Italian submarine forced to surface by depth charges.

30 Junker 87s attack carrier *HMS Indomitable* which is hit three times.

Destroyer *HMS Foresight* damaged by aerial torpedo and had to be sunk.

Cruisers *HMS Cairo* and *HMS Nigeria* torpedoed by Italian submarines, *HMS Cairo* abandoned, *HMS Nigeria* returns to Gibraltar.

The oil tanker *Ohio* (carrying vital oil supplies) torpedoed and bombed several times, eventually reached Malta supported and towed by destroyers and minesweepers.

20 Junker 88s attack. Gunners on *MV Almeria Lykes* shoot down two planes.

MV Empire Hope bombed, high octane gas on fire, abandoned and sunk by escort.

MV Clan Ferguson hit and explodes. Italian submarine rescues 53 survivors.

MV Brisbane Star hit by torpedo,

Cruiser *HMS Kenya* damaged by torpedo from Italian submarine.

A Grave in the Churchyard

William Charles COULTON

Private, 1st Battalion, The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.

He died on 8 September 1941 age 27 on a training exercise.

He is buried in the churchyard of St Peter and St Paul, Deddington.

He was the son of Charles and Kate Coulton and the husband of Ivy M Busby, formerly Coulton, of Deddington.