

Gilbert Wardle



Rank: - Able Seaman

Number: - D/SSX 19389

Service: - Royal Navy H.M.S. Glorious

Died: - Killed in Action. 08/06/1940 Age: 21 years.

Memorial: - Plymouth Naval Memorial Panel 38, Column 3.

Gilbert was born on 6 March 1919, in Halifax, the son of Albert and Lily Agnes Wardle nee Evans who had married on 11 January at St. Thomas's Church, Charlestown, in the Halifax registration district. Evelyn, who was born 1914, married Kenneth Goodall at St. John's Carlinghow in 1935 and lived at Carlinghow Lane in 1939. Their sister, May, was born in 1917. Albert died in 1927.

The large and fast aircraft carrier HMS *Glorious* was sent to Narvik in Norway to evacuate the men and aircraft along with HMS *Ark Royal*. She set off for Scapa Flow before the rest of the convoy with two destroyer escorts HMS *Ardent* and *Acasta*. She was surprised shortly afterwards and intercepted by two German battle-cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*.

The *Glorious* was unable to escape or fly off any aircraft and was repeatedly hit and set on fire, eventually sinking. Her two escorting destroyers tried to shield her with smoke screens and suicidal torpedo attacks. During this action both were sunk with guns blazing defiantly to the last. The *Scharnhorst* was hit by a torpedo causing serious damage and withdrew without picking up any survivors.

The HMS *Devonshire* passed close by but the Commander had instructions not to stop for anything because on board was the Norwegian Government and Royal Family. Some of the few survivors from the ships were picked up three days later by a Norwegian merchant ship.

In total 1,519 men died, one of Britain's largest losses of life at sea during the war.

When Gilbert's Will was proved in 1943 his mother's address was given as 9, Ladyship Terrace, Halifax.

Gilbert is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial. He was awarded the 1939-45 Star and the 1939-1945 War Medal.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group