

20 Engine Room Artificer 4th class Billy Thompson



CWGC has:

Service No: D/MX 59394

Date of Death: 15/12/1941

Memorial: PLYMOUTH NAVAL

MEMORIAL Panel Reference: Panel 51, Column 2.

Additional Information: Son of Harry and S. Blanche Thompson, of Walney, Lancashire.

The *Barrow News* 24 January 1942 reported:

BARROW ENGINEER TWICE TORPEDOED RESCUED AT DUNKIRK NOW PRESUMED KILLED

A Barrow engineer in the Royal Navy who was rescued when his ship was sunk while bringing survivors from Dunkirk, E.R.A. William Davies (*Davis on CWGC*) Thompson, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, of 48, Plymouth-street, Walney, has now been reported missing presumed killed.

He was serving on board H.M.S. Galatea which was recently announced to have been sunk after being torpedoed by a U-boat.

Twenty-five years of age, he was educated at Ocean-road School and the Barrow Technical College. He served his apprenticeship at Messrs. Vickers-Armstrongs Ltd. and joined the Navy about three years ago.

He was well known in local dancing and cycling circles.

Wikipedia tells us: On 14 December 1941 before midnight Galatea (Captain E.W.B. Sim) was torpedoed and sunk by the German submarine U-557 off Alexandria, Egypt. Captain Sim, 22 officers and 447 ratings were killed. Some 100 survivors were picked up by the destroyers Griffin and Hotspur. Less than 48 hours later, U-557 was rammed by the Italian torpedo boat Orione and sunk with all hands.¹



Photographer, John Abrahams, Naval Photographer, Queen Street, Portsmouth.² The website from which this photo is copied, <http://www.yourtotaevent.com/events/galatea.htm>, has a full account of HMS Galatea's career, and an eye-witness account of the sinking.

¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_Galatea_\(71\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_Galatea_(71))

² <http://www.yourtotaevent.com/events/HMS%20Galatea%20at%20Sea.htm>