

**St. Mary's Churchyard,
Shotley, Suffolk, England**

War Grave



Lest We Forget

World War 1



EDWD. J. NETTLESHIP

DECKHAND

H. M. TRAWLER "BOY ARTHUR"

DIED

29TH APRIL, 1916 Age 21

Edward James NETTLESHIP

Edward James Nettleship was born on 2nd June, 1894 at Waterloo, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia to parents Edward and Alice Maud Nettleship (nee Spicer).

Alice Maud Nettleship, mother of Edward James Nettleship, died on 1st November, 1904 at Waterloo, Sydney, NSW.

Edward James Nettleship joined Royal Naval Reserve on 9th June, 1915 & was issued an Official number of 7485 D.A. (Portsmouth).

Royal Naval Reserve

The Royal Naval Reserve (R.N.R.) is the volunteer reserve force of the Royal Navy in the United Kingdom. The present R.N.R. was formed by merging the original Royal Naval Reserve, created in 1859, and the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (R.N.V.R.), created 1903. On mobilisation in 1914, the R.N.R. consisted of 30,000 officers and men. Officers of the permanent R.N.R. on general service quickly took up seagoing appointments in the fleet, many in command, in destroyers, submarines, auxiliary cruisers and Q-ships. Others served in larger units of the battle fleet including a large number with the West Indies Squadron who became casualties at the Battle of Coronel and later at Jutland. Fishermen of the R.N.R. (T) section served with distinction on board trawlers fitted out as minesweepers for mine clearance operations at home and abroad throughout the war where they suffered heavy casualties and losses.

(Information on R.N.R. from Wikipedia)

Edward James Nettleship served in H.T. *Lily Jane* from August, 1915. He was transferred to H. T. *Arimathea* (hired Drifter) on 10th June, 1915 then transferred to H.M.S. *Actaeon* on 29th April, 1916.

Deck hand Edward James Nettleship was serving in HM *Boy Arthur* (hired next drifter/minesweeper).

Minesweepers & Trawlers – World War 1

The task of the mine-sweeping force was to keep shipping lanes clear.

A naval drifter was a boat built along the lines of a commercial fishing drifter but fitted out for naval purposes. The use of naval drifters was paralleled by the use of naval trawlers.

Fishing trawlers were designed to tow heavy trawls, so they were easily adapted to tow minesweepers, with the crew and layout already suited to the task. Drifters were robust boats built, like trawlers, to work in most weather conditions, but designed to deploy and retrieve drift nets. They were generally smaller and slower than trawlers. If requisitioned by navies, they were typically armed with an anti-submarine gun and depth charges and used to maintain and patrol anti-submarine nets.

By 8 August 1914, 94 fishing trawlers had been mobilised and converted for minesweeping.

362 naval drifters were ordered to Admiralty specifications (and thus are often referred to as "Admiralty drifters"). Shipyards used to building fishing trawlers or drifters could easily switch to constructing naval versions. As a bonus these drifters could be sold to commercial fishing interests when the war ended.

(Wikipedia)

Deck hand Edward James Nettleship died on 29th April, 1916 as a result of an Accidental Mine explosion (Source: AWM).

According to R.N.R. Casualties – Edward James Nettleship, 7485 D.A, born 1894, from Poole R.N.R. District was "*Killed by accident on board H.M. Drifter "Boy Arthur". Body at RN Barracks Shotley.*" His father, of Superior Public School, Maitland, New South Wales, Australia, was notified of his son's death.

The Register of Report of Death for H.M.S. *Actaeon* recorded the following for 1916:

Record	Name	Age	Quality	Date of Death	Place	Cause of Death
5151	Mathers, Chapman	22	RNR "Boy Arthur"	April 29	At Sea	Due to explosion of charge _____ to head & torso (?)
"	Nettleship, E.J.	21	"	"	"	" Result injuries

Newspaper item – *The Maitland Daily Mercury*, NSW – 4 July, 1916:

Mr. E. Nettleship, headmaster of the Superior Public School, West Maitland, has received word of the death of his son, Edward James Nettleship, of the Royal Naval Reserve, who was killed through an accidental explosion while engaged in mine-sweeping in the North Sea. His death occurred on April 29 and this is the first intimation that Mr. Nettleship has received. The delay is explained possibly by the nature of the service. Deceased, who was 21 years of age, left Australia three years ago, while Mr. Nettleship was touring the Continent, and ultimately reached England, where he got into the military service. He later joined a patrol boat, and was subsequently transferred to a destroyer, on which he was doing duty when last heard from in October. It may be mentioned that Mr. Nettleship has another son, Hector; in the A.I.F., who, when last heard of, was in Egypt. General sympathy will be felt with Mr. Nettleship in his sad loss, but there is the consolation that his son did his duty nobly to his King and country.

A death for Edward J. Nettleship, aged 21, was registered in the June quarter, 1916 in the district of Samford, Suffolk, England.

Deck hand Edward James Nettleship was buried in St. Mary's Churchyard, Shotley, Suffolk, England – Plot number R.N. Plot 92 and now has an Admiralty Cross. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Deckhand Edward James Nettleship – service number 7485/DA, aged 23, of H. M. Drifter "Boy Arthur", Royal Naval Reserve. He was the son of Edward and Alice Maud Nettleship, of "Alverstone" 86 Boundary St., Roseville, Sydney, Australia.

Deckhand Edward James Nettleship is remembered on the Commemorative Roll Book, located in the Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. The Commemorative Roll records the names of those Australians who died during or as a result of wars in which Australians served, but who were not serving in the Australian Armed Forces and therefore not eligible for inclusion on the Roll of Honour.



Commemorative Roll (Photo from AWM)



Commemorative Area of the Australian War Memorial (Capital Photographer)

Edward Nettleship is remembered on the St. Peter's Church of England Roll of Honour, located in St. Peter's Anglican Church, 187 Princes Highway, St. Peters, Sydney, NSW.



St. Peter's Church of England Roll of Honour (Photo from War Memorial Register of NSW)

(2 pages of Deckhand Edward James Nettleship's Service records are available for paid viewing at National Archives UK website).

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Commemorative Roll) & National Archives UK



Newspaper Notices

ROLL OF HONOR

NETTLESHIP – In loving memory of a dear son and brother, Edward James, Royal Naval Reserve, accidentally killed, mine-sweeping in North Sea. Inserted by E. Nettleship (West Maitland), brothers and sisters.

(The Daily Telegraph, Sydney, NSW – 29 June, 1916)

AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

NAVAL RESERVE MAN

Mr. E. Nettleship, head master of the Superior Public School, West Maitland, has received word of the death of his son, Edward James Nettleship, of the Royal Naval Reserve, through an accidental explosion while mine-sweeping in the North Sea. Deceased was 21 years of age. He left Australia three years ago, and entered the naval service in England. He was on a patrol boat, but was subsequently transferred to a destroyer, on which he was doing duty when last heard from in October, 1915. Mr. Nettleship has another son, Hector, in the A.I.F.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 6 July, 1916)

Week to Week

Edward Nettleship, of the Royal Navy Reserve, son of Mr E. Nettleship, formerly assistant at Windsor Public School, was killed by an accidental explosion whilst engaged in mine sweeping in the North Sea, on April 29th.

(Windsor and Richmond Gazette, NSW – 7 July, 1916)

IN BROKEN HILL

PRIVATE H. NETTLESHIP WOUNDED

Mr E. Nettleship, headmaster of the Superior School, West Maitland (and late of Broken Hill), has received a telegram from the military authorities, stating that his son, Hector Nettleship, has been admitted to hospital suffering from a severe gunshot wound in the leg. Mr Nettleship's eldest son was killed in April whilst mine-sweeping in the North Sea.

(Barrier Miner, Broken Hill, NSW – 27 November, 1916)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for cemeteries and memorials in 23,000 locations, in 153 countries. In all 1.7 million men and women from the Commonwealth forces from WWI and WWII have been honoured and commemorated in perpetuity.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as part of its mandate, is responsible for commemorating all Commonwealth war dead individually and equally. To this end, the war dead are commemorated by name on a headstone, at an identified site of a burial, or on a memorial. War dead are commemorated uniformly and equally, irrespective of military or civil rank, race or creed.

Not all service personnel have a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. In some instances the relative chose to have their own memorial/headstone placed on the deceased's grave. These private headstones are not maintained by the CWGC as they have no jurisdiction to maintain them.

Deck Hand E. J. Nettleship has an Admiralty Cross Headstone

St. Mary's Churchyard, Shotley, Suffolk, England

The Royal Naval Training Establishment, H.M.S. "Ganges" was based at Shotley from 1905 until 1976. As a result, an area (called the Naval Reservation) was set aside in Shotley (St. Mary) Churchyard for navy burials. There are 201 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war here (8 of which are unidentified) and 34 of the 1939-1945 war (2 of which are unidentified Royal Navy Seaman and 2 of which are Merchant Navy seamen from the S.S. Skagerak). In addition, there are 13 German burials of the 1914-18 war, 1 of which is unidentified. Besides burials, the plot also contains the "Submarine Enclosure," with a memorial to the officers and men of H.M. Submarines and the graves of many, particularly from "C 16," "E 4" and "E 41."

(Information from CWGC)



(Photo by Len – Find a Grave)



St. Mary's Churchyard, Shotley (Photo from CWGC)



(Photo by Alan Denney – Flickr)

Photo of Deck Hand Edwd. J. Nettleship's Admiralty Cross Headstone in St. Mary's Churchyard, Shotley, Suffolk, England.



(Photos by Simon Knott)

