

**St. Mura's Church of Ireland Churchyard,
Upper Fahan, County Donegal,
Republic of Ireland War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



2426 ABLE SEAMAN

F. A. SHEEDY

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

H.M.A.S. "SYDNEY" (H.M.S. "LAURENTIC")

25TH JANUARY, 1917 Age 19

Frederick Allen SHEEDY

Frederick Allen Sheedy was born on 2nd October, 1897 at Adamstown, near Newcastle, New South Wales to parents James and Annie Jane Sheedy (nee Cameron).

James Sheedy, father of Frederick Allen Sheedy, died 21st August, 1908 at Fremantle, Western Australia.

Frederick Allen Sheedy signed up with the Royal Australian Navy on 20th January, 1913 at the age of 15. He was 5ft 6 in with brown hair, grey eyes, a fair complexion & a scar on the bridge of his nose. His religion was Church of England & his next-of-kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Annie Sheedy, Ocean View Hospital, Solomon St., Fremantle, Western Australia. Frederick Allen Sheedy was given a service number of 2426.

Boy 2nd Class Frederick Allen Sheedy was sent to *Tingira* on 20th January, 1913. *Tingira* was a Training Ship for the Royal Australian Navy permanently moored at Rose Bay, Sydney, NSW. Boy 2nd Class Frederick Allen Sheedy was rated Boy 1st Class while still with *Tingira* on 6th October, 1913.

Boy 1st Class Frederick Allen Sheedy was transferred to H.M.A.S. *Sydney* on 15th October, 1913. He was rated Ordinary Seaman II on 2nd October, 1914. Frederick Allen Sheedy's Naval Record of Service card records that he was involved with the taking of German New Guinea on 11th September, 1914 & on 9th November, 1914 the *Sydney-Emden* action. An Emden Prize Bounty was paid on 15th December, 1916.

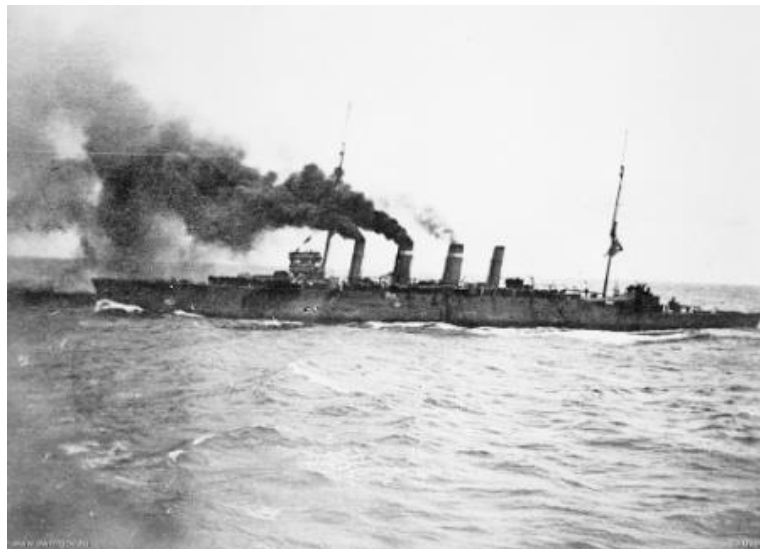
Ordinary Seaman II Frederick Allen Sheedy was rated Ordinary Seaman on 2nd October, 1915 while still with H.M.A.S. *Sydney*.

Frederick Allen Sheedy signed on for another 7 years with the Royal Australian Navy on 2nd October, 1915 at the age of 18 years. He was 5ft 8 1/2 in with brown hair, grey eyes, a fair complexion & a scar on the bridge of his nose.

Ordinary Seaman Frederick Allen Sheedy was rated Able Seaman on 1st January, 1916, still with H.M.A.S. *Sydney*.

H.M.A.S. *Sydney*

H.M.A.S. *Sydney* was a Chatham-class light cruiser of the Royal Australian Navy (R.A.N.). She was launched in 1912 and commissioned into the R.A.N. in 1913.



H.M.A.S. *Sydney*, 1914

Following the outbreak of war in August 1914, *Sydney* was engaged in operations against Germany's Pacific colonies and destroyed a radio station in the Pelew Islands. Returning to Australian waters, *Sydney* joined the escort of the first troop convoy from Australia to the Middle East, which left Albany on 1 November, 1914.

On 9 November, *Sydney* was detailed to leave the convoy to investigate reports of an unknown vessel off the Cocos (Keeling) Islands. This vessel turned out to be the German cruiser SMS *Emden*. In the resulting engagement,

Sydney was hit early by the long-ranging 10.5 cm guns of *Emden*, which resulted in four dead and twelve wounded. However, the superior firepower of the Australian cruiser's broadside soon told and *Emden* was left "beached and done for" on North Keeling Island.

Sydney briefly rejoined the convoy at Colombo before proceeding to the Atlantic Ocean, via the Mediterranean Sea. In December, 1914, *Sydney* was deployed to the Caribbean and based at Bermuda. For the next 18 months, she carried out patrol duties between the islands of the West Indies and along the east coast of North America, in concert with H.M.A.S. *Melbourne*. Both ships were also detailed for occasional special patrols along the north coast of South America.

In September 1916, *Sydney* and *Melbourne* were transferred to the 2nd Light Cruiser Squadron for duties with the Royal Navy's Grand Fleet in the North Sea.

(Extract of information on HMAS Sydney from 1914-1916 from the Australian War Memorial)

Able Seaman Frederick Allen Sheedy was posted to London Depot from 24th October, 1916.

Able Seaman Frederick Allen Sheedy died on 25th January, 1917, perished at Lough Swilly, County Donegal, Ireland whilst on board S.S. *Laurentic* which had hit a mine in the North Irish Coast. The Naval Record of Service card for Frederick Allen Sheedy states "(drowned) 25. 1. 17 Lost in S.S. "*Laurentic*" whilst on passage to HMAS "*Sydney*" from Gunnery School."

S.S. *Laurentic*

S.S. *Laurentic* was a British ocean liner of the White Star Line. She was converted to an armed merchant cruiser at the onset of World War I.

On 23 January 1917, the *Laurentic* departed Liverpool en route to Halifax, under the command of Captain Reginald Norton. She carried some 479 passengers, mostly naval officers, ratings, and Naval Volunteer Reserves, as well as a secret cargo of gold which was to be used for the purchase of war munitions from Canada and the United States. On 25 January the ship made an unscheduled stop at the naval base in Buncrana, Ireland, to allow four passengers with yellow fever symptoms to disembark. The ship lifted anchor around sunset, moving toward Fanad Head, where she was to meet with a destroyer escort. The weather was bitterly cold and a blizzard affected visibility, but Captain Norton gave the order to proceed without the escort, despite reports that a German U-boat had been spotted in the area earlier. Less than an hour after leaving Buncrana, the ship struck two mines laid by the German mine-laying submarine U-80 off Lough Swilly. One of the mines exploded near the engine-room, which left the ship without power and caused it to list 20 degrees; the combination of the darkness and list made it difficult to lower the lifeboats, and made it impossible for the ship to issue a distress call. Without power the main pumps were inoperable and the ship sank within an hour.

Those who made it onto lifeboats faced extreme cold as low as -13 °C (9 °F). Survivors rowed towards Fanad Lighthouse, and some were rescued by local fishing trawlers. In the morning, many were found frozen to death in their lifeboats, with their hands still gripping the oars. The official count lists 475 passengers on board at the time of sinking, meaning that only 121 survived and 354 were lost in the disaster.

On 1 February, The New York Times reported that the last person to leave the ship was Captain Norton, who survived. He was quoted as saying: "To the best of my knowledge, all the men got safely into the boats. The best of order prevailed after the explosion. The officers and men lived up to the best traditions of the navy...The deaths were all due to exposure, owing to the coldness of the night. My own boat was almost full of water when we were picked up by a trawler the next morning, but all the men in the boat survived. Another boat, picked up at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, contained five survivors and fifteen frozen bodies. They had been exposed to the bitter cold for over twenty hours." Bodies of the dead continued to wash up on shore for several weeks.

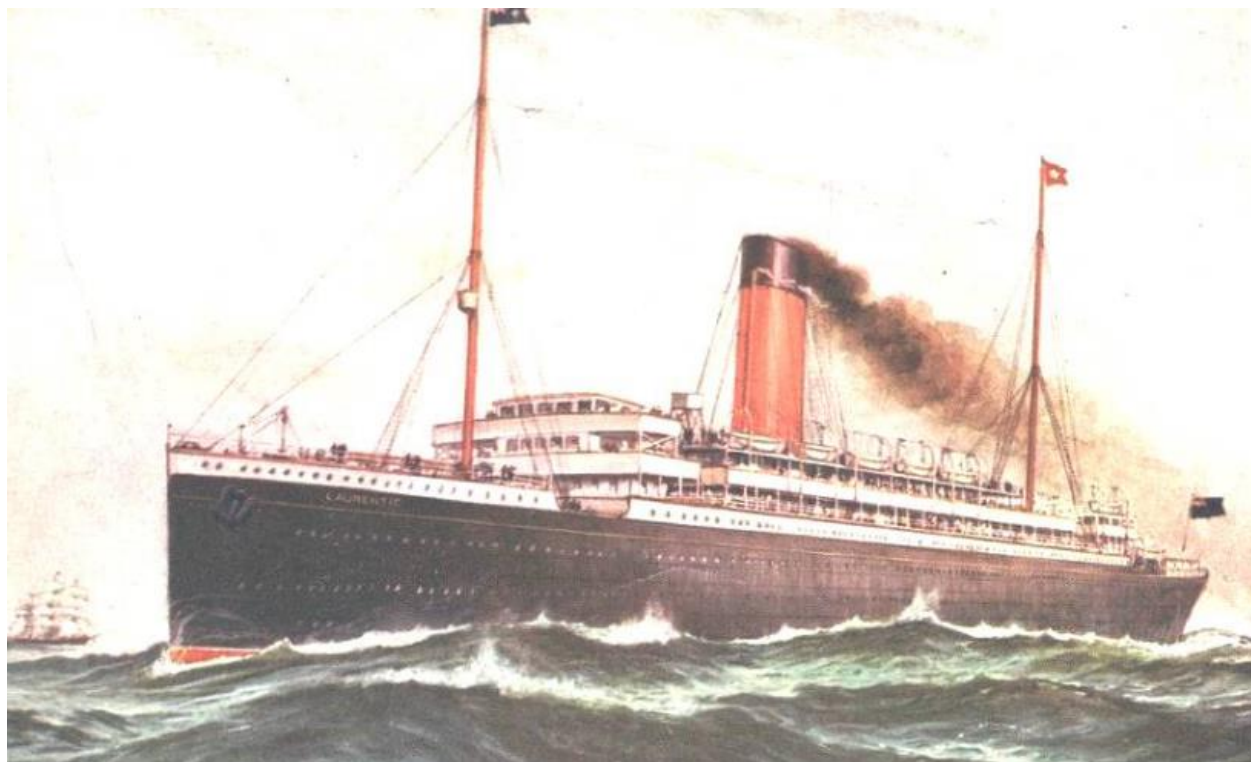
In addition to her passengers and crew, the ship was carrying 3,211 gold ingots (about 43 tons) stowed in its second class baggage room. At the time the gold was valued at £5 million (approximately £390 million in 2016) and was

intended to pay for war munitions. Royal Navy divers made over 5,000 dives to the wreck between 1917 and 1924 and recovered all but 25 of the ingots. In 1934, three more ingots were recovered by a private salvage company, while further attempts in the 1950s and 1980s recovered nothing. As of 2016, 22 bars of gold remain unaccounted for. The last of the gold recovered by the Royal Navy was some 10 metres (33.8 feet) under the sea bed, thus the remaining gold may be difficult to reach.

The wreck lies about 40 metres (131.2 feet) beneath the surface, and its salvage rights are privately owned. It is considered an official war grave under international law.

In 2007, one of the deck guns was recovered and put on permanent display at Downings pier.

(S.S. Laurentic information from Wikipedia)



Able Seaman Frederick Allen Sheedy was buried in St. Mura's Church of Ireland Churchyard, Upper Fahan, County Donegal, Ireland & his death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Newspaper article – Northern Whig, Belfast, Northern Ireland – 1 February, 1917:

FUNERAL OF SIXTY-NINE VICTIMS **Impressive Scenes**

Yesterday the funeral of sixty-nine victims of the lost Laurentic took place to a little wayside churchyard of a Northern Irish coast village. The funeral procession commenced at eleven o'clock from the port at which the survivors and victims were first landed, the distance to the place of interment being some four miles. At the head of the procession marched a detachment of Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, with arms reversed, and as they slowly marched the band of the Inniskillings played the Dead March in "Saul." Behind the band came two motor ambulances, containing the remains of the three dead officers enclosed in oak coffins with brass mounting and enveloped in Union Jacks, with beautiful floral tributes on top. Then followed twelve Army Service Corps wagons, each containing a number of coffins, on all of which were placed Union Jacks and numerous wreaths. Immediately after the remains of the victims walked the 120 survivors, officers and men, with the exception of the captain, who has gone to England. The men were dressed in the clothing which had been provided for them by the Mayor of the neighbouring borough when they were landed after the sinking of their vessel, and some of them were still looking as if they had not quite fully recovered from the effects of their terrible ordeal. Following them came the Mayor and Mayoress (who did so much

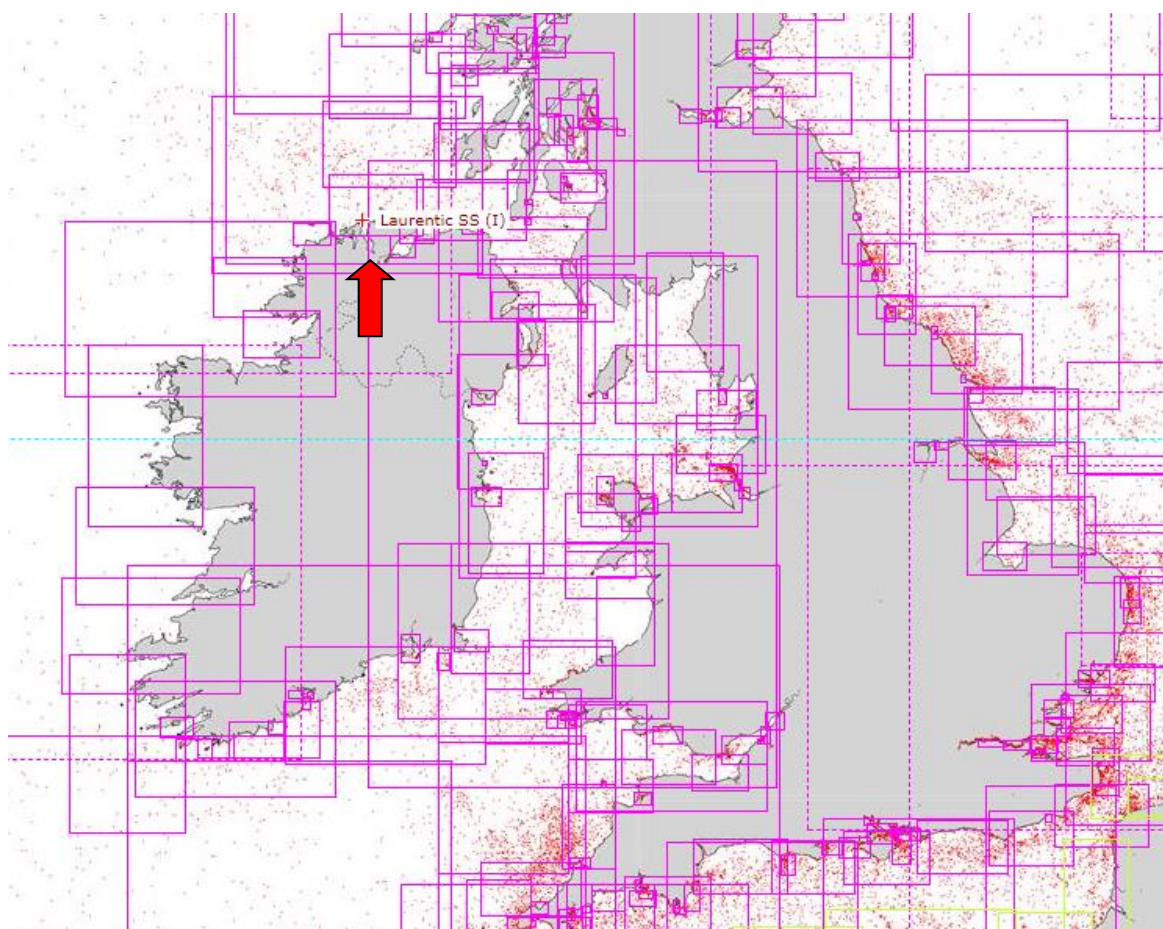
© Cathy Sedgwick 2017

for the comfort of the survivors), The Admiral in charge of the district, the officers of the naval and military staffs, representatives of local and district public bodies, coastguards, and police. Large crowds of people lined the route, and as the cortege passed they reverently uncovered their heads in honour of the brave departed. When the band had finished playing the solemn music of the Dead March the pipers commenced a Highland lament.

At the churchyard a detachment of blue-jackets met the cortege, and the coffins were placed in a huge grave, which troops from a neighbouring camp had been engaged in making for the last couple of days, part of the grave being set aside for the three officers. Along one side of the huge grave was a detachment of troops, with their hands resting on the butts of their rifles. Close by were the naval and military officers of the district, and on the other side were the surviving officers and crew of the *Laurentic*, as well as a number of other bluejackets, while there was also present a large number of the general public, the scene at the graveside being a most impressive spectacle.

The three Church of Ireland clergymen read the burial service, and when they had concluded two ministers of the Presbyterian Church read a portion of Scripture and said several prayers. Then two Roman Catholic priests read the prayers for the dead, each burial service of course being separate and distinct. When this had concluded the band of the Inniskillings played "When our heads are bowed with woe," the troops joining in the singing of this beautiful hymn of Dean Millman. The firing party discharged a volley, and afterwards the band played the first verse of "Peace, Perfect Peace." This was followed by another volley, and again the band play, this time the second verse of "Peace, Perfect Peace," while after the third volley they played the last verse of this hymn. The firing party, having fixed bayonets, presented arms, and the band played "The Last Post."

Many beautiful tributes were sent by the surviving officers and men of the *Laurentic*, the naval and military officers of the district, the troops of the district, the officers and crews of the ships of the port, and a number of leading people of the district. One wreath bore the inscription:- "In loving memory of our fallen shipmates; from four who are left to carry on." Others were:- "To the undying memory of the officers and men of the *Laurentic* who perished, January __," and "All honour to the brave who are no more."



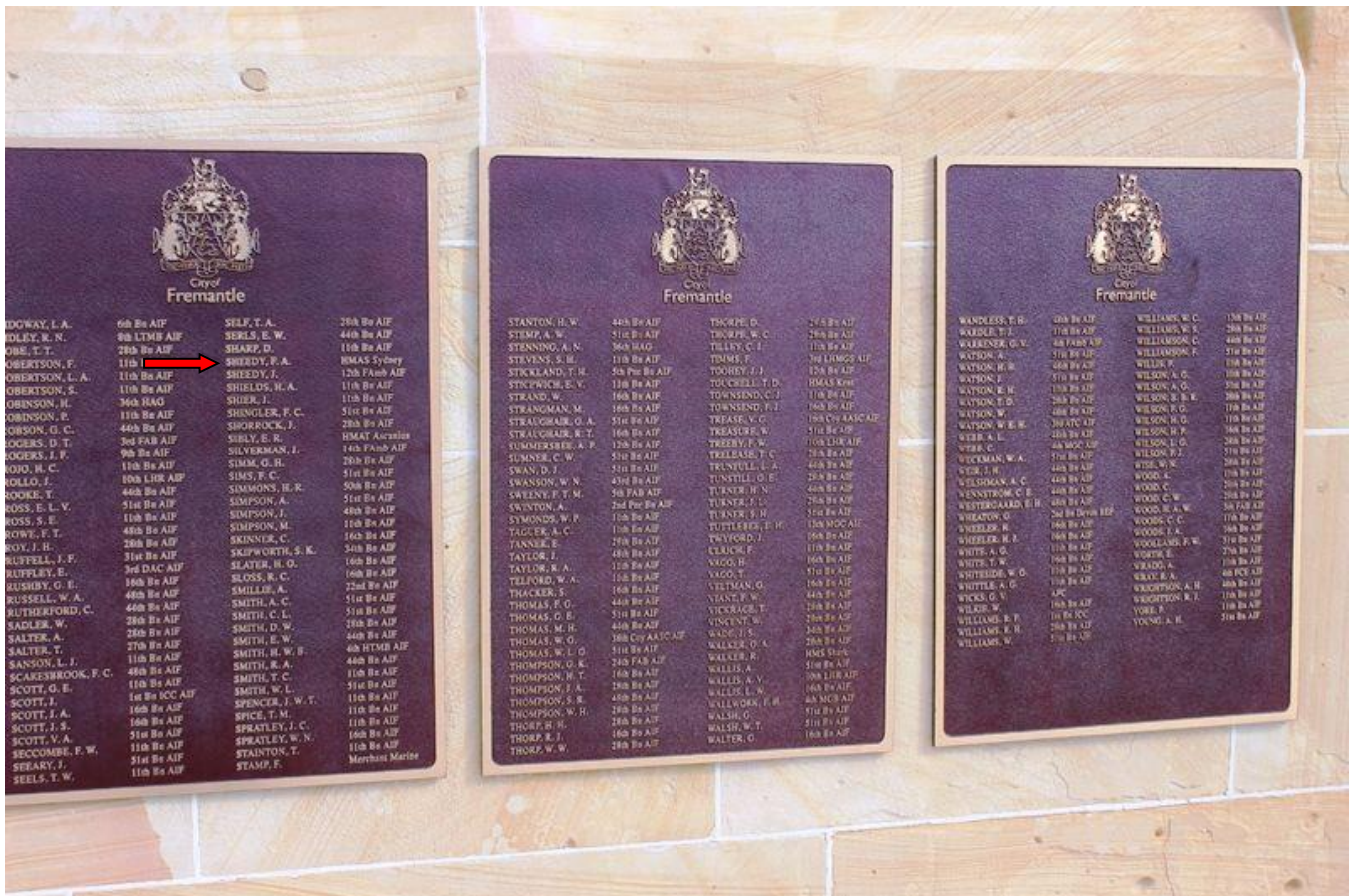
The wreck of S.S. Laurentic (From wrecksite)

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Able Seaman Frederick Allen Sheedy – service number 2426, aged 19, of H.M.A.S. “Sydney” (H.M.S. “Laurentic”), Royal Australian Navy. He was the son of James and Annie J. Sheedy, of Ocean View Hospital, Solomon St., Fremantle, Western Australia. Born at Adamstown, New South Wales.

F. A. Sheedy is remembered on the Fallen Sailors and Soldiers Memorial, Monument Hill Memorial Reserve, High & Swanbourne Streets, Fremantle, Western Australia. There are 12 plaques containing the names of the Fremantle servicemen who died in service or were killed in action during World War 1.



(Photos from Monument Australia - Diane Watson & Harry Frochter)



Able Seaman F. A. Sheedy is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 1.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Able Seaman F. A. Sheedy is remembered on Royal Australian Navy WW1 Memorial, located at HMAS Cerberus Protestant Chapel of St Mark, Nelson Road, Crib Point, Victoria.



HMAS Cerberus Protestant Chapel of St Mark, Crib Point, Victoria (Photo courtesy of Karen Standen)



(Photo courtesy of Karen Standen)

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour) & National Archives

[Connected to Able Seaman Frederick Allen Sheedy:](#)

Older Brother – Private James Sheedy, 13186, 12th Field Ambulance, Australian Army Medical Corps. Died of wounds on 4 September, 1916.



Able Seaman Frederick Allen Sheedy

Newspaper Notices

KILLED IN ACTION

SHEEDY – ON September 8, died of wounds, France, Private James Sheedy, the dearly beloved son of the late James and Nurse Annie J. Sheedy, of 130 Hampton-road, Fremantle; dearly-loved brother of Frederick Allen, H.M.A.S. Sydney; Arthur Frances of Henderson Naval Base; and Michael, of Christian Brothers' School, Fremantle; also cousin of Arthur (on active service) and Rose Williamson, Arthur and Marie, of Malcolm-street, Fremantle.

(The West Australian, Perth, Western Australia – 30 September, 1916)

BEREAVEMENT NOTICES

Mrs Sheedy and Boys and F. A. Sheedy, late of H.M.A.S. Sydney, now of H.M.S. Excellent, Portsmouth, England, desire to THANK all friends and acquaintances for the many letters, telegrams, and cards of sympathy during their recent sad bereavement.

(The West Australian, Perth, Western Australia – 1 January, 1917)

DEATHS

SHEEDY – On January 25 1917, at sea, on the s.s. Laurentic, on the North Irish coast, Frederick Allen, dearly loved third son of the late James and Nurse Annie J. Sheedy, of 130 Hampton-road, Fremantle; beloved brother of James, who died of wounds in France; Arthur Frances of Henderson Naval Base; and Robert Michael, of Christian Brothers' School, Fremantle; also cousin of Mrs Rose, Arthur and Marie Williamson, of 42 Malcolm-street, Fremantle.

For us the choking, bling tears;

For them a glorious name

(*Western Mail*, Perth, Western Australia – 9 February, 1917)

DEATHS

SHEEDY – On January 25, at sea, on the Laurentic, the dearly loved friend (Fred.) of Elsie Stonce (?), of 105 Attfield-street.

Rest in peace.

(*The West Australian*, Perth, Western Australia – 10 February, 1917)

DEATHS

SHEEDY – On January 25, at sea, on the Laurentic, the dearly loved friend (Fred.) of Elsie Hones, of 105 Attfield-street.

Rest in peace.

SHEEDY – On January 25, at sea, on the Laurentic, the dearly loved friend (Fred.) of Elsie Stonce (?), of 105 Attfield-street.

Rest in peace.

(*Western Mail*, Perth, Western Australia – 16 February, 1917)

IN MEMORIAM

SHEEDY – A tribute to the memory of my dear friend Frederick A. Sheedy, who was killed on January 26, 1917, on board the s.s. Laurentic, which struck a mine.

Until the day breaks and shadows flee away.

-Inserted by his sincere friend Frank Wilkinson (on active service).

(*The West Australian*, Perth, Western Australia – 17 February, 1917)

IN MEMORIAM

Anzac Hero

SHEEDY – In fond and loving memory of our dear son and brother, Frederick Allen Sheedy, who perished off North Irish coast on January 25, 1917, aged 19 years and 4 months.

But death met with three British cheers,

 Cheers of immortal fame,

For us the choking, blinding tears,

 For them a glorious name.

-Inserted by Annie J., Arthur F., and Robert M. Sheedy.

SHEEDY – A tribute to the memory of Fred. Sheedy, late of H.M.A.S. Sydney, who lost his life while taking passage in s.s. Laurentic, January 25, 1917, aged 19 years and 4 months.

One of the best. To know him was to love him.

-Inserted by brothers on furlough, George and Ted Jamieson, Melbourne.

SHEEDY – In fond and loving memory of our dear cousin, Fred., who was lost off s.s. Laurentic, North Irish coast, January 25, 1917.

-Inserted by Rose and Arthur Williamson, 159 Glyde-street, East Fremantle.

SHEEDY – In proud & loving memory of my brave young kinsman, Frederick Allen Sheedy, aged 19 years and 4 months, who died on the North Irish coast on January 25, 1917. Interred at Fahan Cemetery, County Donegal, Ireland.

-Inserted by his grand-aunt Mary Shannon, Lisnarick, Ireland.

SHEEDY – In loving memory of our late shipmate, Fred, aged 19 years and 4 months, of H.M.A.S. Sydney, who lost his life while serving temporarily in s.s. Laurentic on January 25, 1917.

 Oh! Sad to toil and forgo

 One presence which has made us know

 The God-like souls. How deep our debt

 We would not, if we could, forget.

-Inserted by his mates E. T. Smart, R. Corder, J. Williams, W. A. Taylor, D. Truscott, J. Broadley, S. Duncan, G. Venables, and J. G. Weeks (now serving on H.M.A.S. Brisbane).

SHEEDY – In fond and loving memory of our late shipmate, Frederick A. Sheedy, who lost his life while taking passage on s.s. Laurentic, January 25, 1917.

Oh, England ! While thy sailor host

 Can live and die like these

Be thy bread hand won or lost,

 Thou'rt mistress of the seas.

-Inserted by his mates, Marcus Young and Claud Harris, of H.M.A.S. Encounter.

SHEEDY – A tribute to the memory of our dear young mate, Frederick A. Sheedy, who was lost on North Irish coast, from s.s. Laurentic, on January 25, 1917, aged 19 years and 4 months.

-Inserted by Sullivan Wilson, and Aylett, on behalf of all boys on H.M.A.S. Sydney, who are left to carry on. R.I.P.

(*The West Australian*, Perth, Western Australia – 25 January, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

Anzac Hero

SHEEDY – In fond memory of my dear friend, Frederick A. Sheedy, who lost his life while taking passage on s.s. Laurentic on January 25, 1917, aged 19 years and 4 months.

Blessed are the meek in heart for they shall see God.

-Inserted by his loving friend, Frank Wilkinson, of H.M.A.S. Melbourne (on active service)

(*The West Australian*, Perth, Western Australia – 26 January, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

Anzac Hero

SHEEDY – In fond and loving memory of our dear son and brother, Frederick Allen Sheedy, who perished off North Irish coast while temporarily serving in s.s. Laurentic, January 25, 1917, aged 19 years and 4 months.

But death met with three British cheers,

 Cheers of immortal fame,

For us the choking, blinding tears,

 For them a glorious name.

-Inserted by Annie J., Arthur F., and Robert M. Sheedy.

SHEEDY – In proud remembrance of my brave young Australia kinsman, Frederick Allen Sheedy, who perished of our coast on January 25, 1917, and interred at Fahan Cemetery, County Donegal, Ireland.

-Inserted by his loving aunt Mary Shannon, Lisnarick, Ireland.

SHEEDY – In loving memory of our late shipmate, Fred Sheedy, aged 19 years and 4 months, of H.M.A.S. Sydney, who lost his life while serving temporarily in s.s. Laurentic January 25, 1917.

 Oh! Said to toil and forego

 One presence which has made us know

 The God-like souls, how deep our debt

 We would not, if we could, forget.

-Inserted by his mates E. T. Smart, R. Corder, J. Williams, W. H. Taylor, H. Truscott, J. Broadley, S. Duncan, G. Venables, and J. G. Weeks (now serving on H.M.A.S. Brisbane).

SHEEDY – In fond and loving memory of our late shipmate, Frederick A. Sheedy, who lost his life while taking passage on s.s. Laurentic, January 25, 1917; aged 19 years and 4 months.

Oh, England ! While thy sailor host

 Can live and die like these

Be thy broad lands won or lost,

 Thou'rt mistress of the seas.

-Inserted by his mates, Marcus Young and Claud Harris H.M.A.S. Encounter.

SHEEDY – A tribute to the memory of our dear young shipmate, Frederick A. Sheedy, who was lost on North Irish coast from s.s. Laurentic, on January 25, 191, aged 19 years and 4 months.

-Inserted by Carl Ehler Osbourne, Wilson, and Sullivan (returned), on behalf of all boys on H.M.A.S. Sydney, who are left to “carry on”.

SHEEDY – A loving tribute to the memory of my dear young friend, Freddy Sheedy, late of H.M.A.S. Sydney, who perished on January 25, 1917, aged 19 years and 4 months.

He died so others might live.

What can a man do more ?

Inserted by J. M. Clune (returned).

SHEEDY – In fond memory of my dear shipmate, Frederick Sheedy, who lost his life while serving on board H.M.S. Laurentic on January 25, 1917. Aged 19 years 4 months.

To know him was to love him.

-Inserted by his loving pal, Frank Wilkinson, of H.M.A.S. Melbourne (on furlough in Australia)

(*The West Australian*, Perth, Western Australia – 25 January, 1919)

St. Mura's Church of Ireland Churchyard, Upper Fahan, County Donegal, Republic of Ireland

St. Mura's Church of Ireland Churchyard, Upper Fahan contains 71 identified War Graves. There are 62 World War 1 War Graves & 6 which are unidentified & 9 World War 2 War Graves & 2 which are unidentified.

A Naval Plot was purchased in the Churchyard of St. Mura's Church by the Admiralty for victims of H.M.S. *Laurentic*. A permanent Memorial in the form of a 12 foot granite Celtic Cross, with 4 large marble panels at the base bearing the names of the deceased sailors was erected.



H.M.S. Laurentic Memorial (Photo from CWGC)



Name Panel in St. Mura's Church of Ireland Churchyard



Laurentic Memorial Name Panel in St. Mura's Church of Ireland Churchyard - note listed as *F.A. Sheehy*



08 April 2010

A large crowd gathered around the pier in the seaside village of Downings on Easter Monday for the official unveiling of the plaque at the recently mounted gun from the ill-fated liner, the *Laurentic*. After a careful restoration project the *Laurentic* Gun has now been mounted for permanent display at the pier and was unveiled by local Councillor Noel McBride on Monday afternoon.

The gun was recovered from the seabed some 90 years after the sinking of the ill-fated White Star Liner the SS *Laurentic*. During the First World War years the former luxury passenger cruise ship was converted to an auxiliary gun ship. Whilst on a mission to purchase arms and munitions from the United States and Canadian, the famed gold ship struck German laid mines as she rounded Malin Head shortly after leaving port at Bunclara, carrying a valuable payload of some 35 imperial tonnes of pure gold, worth in excess of €300million today.

Today, some 20 bars of the gold have yet to be recovered, which still proves an alluring prospect by visiting divers!

It was not the boat's original intention to call to Bunclara but shortly after departing Liverpool some crew members showed signs of fever and were left at Bunclara for medical attention. Just one hour after leaving Inishowen on January 25, 1917, the ship was holed and rapidly sank to her watery grave with the loss of over half her 722 crew and of her treasured gold.

The wreck of the *Laurentic* now lies three miles north-east of Fanad Lighthouse at the entrance to Lough Swilly at a depth of 40 metres.

On September 30, 2007 a group of local Downings divers who raised one of the two bow guns. Led by Kevin McShane, with the diving expertise of Eoin Fogarty, Ivan Irwin and Mícheál McBride ably assisted and supported by Michael McVeigh, Liam Gillespie, Ivan Kerr, Tommy McKeemey, Noel McShane, Eamonn Doherty, Sean Doherty, Charlie McBride and Joe Devenney, the gun broke the surface of the Atlantic waters for the first time in almost a century and now sits proudly at its new home as a striking visitor attraction



The Gun from the *Laurentic* (Photo by John Campbell)



The Gun from the *Laurentic* & Memorial (Photos by John Campbell)



Frederick Allen Sheedy is remembered on the Family Headstone in Fremantle Cemetery, Western Australia.



Sacred to the Memory

of

JAMES

Beloved Husband Of

ANNIE J. SHEEDY

Died Aug. 18, 1908 Aged 49 Years

Also CHARLES AUGUSTUS

Died Jan. 18, 1910, Aged 16 Years

Also JAMES

Died Of Wounds In France Sept. 3, 1916

Aged 23 Years

Also FREDERICK ALLEN

Perished Of North West Coast Of Ireland

Jan. 25, 1917 Aged 19 Years

Dearly Loved Sons Of Above



Other Plaques on Grave

