

Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent



Lest We Forget

World War 1



301117 LEADING STOKER

R. J. M. SYMONS

H.M.S. "CONQUEST"

ROYAL NAVY

25TH APRIL, 1916

Reginald James Magor (Reg) SYMONS

Reginald James Magor Symons was born on 3rd April, 1882 at Maitland, South Australia to parents James Magor Symons & Sarah Threader Symons (nee Hyde).

Reginald James Magor Symons joined the Royal Navy on 23rd July, 1902 & signed on for a period of 12 years. He was 5ft 3 in with auburn hair, grey eyes, a fresh complexion. He had a heart, 4 flags & a sailing ship tattooed on his left forearm. Reginald Symons was aged 20 & previously employed as a Seaman. He was given a Service number of 301117 (Chatham).

Reginald Symons was posted to H.M.S. *Pembroke II* on 23rd July, 1902 as Stoker 2nd Class. He was transferred to H.M.S. *Torch* on 10th April, 1903 then rated as Stoker on 1st October, 1903 while still serving on H.M.S. *Torch*.

Stoker Reginald Symons was transferred to H.M.S. *Wallaroo* on 1st January, 1906 then transferred back to H.M.S. *Pembroke II* on 11th April, 1906. He was then transferred to H.M.S. *Argonaut* on 5th June, 1906 & rated as Stoker 1st Class on 1st July, 1906 while still serving on H.M.S. *Argonaut*.

Stoker 1st Class Reginald Symons was transferred to H.M.S. *Clio* on 1st August, 1906 then transferred to H.M.S. *Crescent* on 24th September, 1908. Stoker 1st Class Symons returned back to H.M.S. *Pembroke II* on 12th December, 1908 then served on H.M.S. *Blake* from 21st January, 1909. He was transferred to H.M.S. *Tyne* on 3rd June, 1909 then transferred to H.M.S. *St. George* on 15th March, 1910. Stoker 1st Class Symons was rated as Leading Stoker on 9th August, 1910 while still serving on H.M.S. *St. George*.

Leading Stoker Reginald Symons was transferred back to H.M.S. *Pembroke II* on 13th September, 1910 then transferred back to H.M.S. *St. George* on 20th October, 1910.

The 1911 England Census recorded Reginald James Magor Symons as a 28 year old, Leading Stoker on H.M.S. *Swale*, a torpedo boat Destroyer at anchor off Grimsby, Lincolnshire on the night of the Census – 2nd April, 1911.

Leading Stoker Reginald Symons was transferred to H.M.S. *Pembroke II* on 17th July, 1914 until 22nd July, 1914 as his 12 year service had expired.

Leading Stoker Reginald Symons signed back on - on 5th October, 1914 for Hostilities only at H.M.S. *Pembroke II*. He was 5ft 4in with brown hair, blue eyes & had flags & an eagle tattooed on his chest; crossed flags on his left forearm & a snake & tree on his right forearm.

Leading Stoker Reginald Symons was transferred from H.M.S. *Pembroke II* to H.M.S. *Conquest* on 5th June, 1915.

H.M.S. Conquest

H.M.S. *Conquest* was a C-class light cruiser of the Royal Navy that saw service during World War I. She was part of the Caroline group of the C class. Constructed by Chatham Dockyard, *Conquest* was laid down on 3 March 1914, launched on 20 January 1915, and completed in June 1915.

Conquest was commissioned into service in the Royal Navy in June 1915. She was assigned to the 5th Light Cruiser Squadron in Harwich Force, which operated in the North Sea to guard the eastern approaches to the Strait of Dover and English Channel. In August 1915, she was among the ships which took part in the pursuit of the Imperial German Navy auxiliary cruiser *Meteor* in the North Sea which resulted in *Meteor* scuttling herself on 9 August 1915. She covered the force that carried out the Royal Naval Air Service seaplane raid on the German Navy airship hangars at Tondern, then in northern Germany, on 24 March 1916. On 28 March 1916 38 men were lost in a snowstorm off Harwich on one of the ship's boats, listed as a whaler, when returning from shore leave.

During the Lowestoft Raid – the German naval bombardment of Yarmouth and Lowestoft – on 25 April 1916, German battle cruisers opened fire on *Conquest* and she suffered a 12-inch (305-mm) shell hit which destroyed her aerials and killed 25 and wounded 13 of her crew, but was able to maintain 20 knots.



H.M.S. Conquest

Leading Stoker Reginald James Magor Symons was killed as a direct result of enemy action. He was buried at Sea. His father – Mr James Symons, 9 Hackney Rd, St, Peters, Adelaide, South Australia was advised.

Leading Stoker Reginald James Magor Symons was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission records Leading Stoker Reginald James Magor Symons – service number 301117, of H.M.S. “Conquest”, Royal Navy. No family details are listed.

Leading Stoker R. J. M. Symons 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 Area of the Australian War Memorial (Capital Photographer)

R. Symons is remembered on the National Soldiers Memorial in Adelaide. The Adelaide National War Memorial commemorates those from South Australia that served in the First World War. The names of those that died are listed inside the Memorial, which is located on the corner of North Terrace & Kintore Avenue, Adelaide.



National War Memorial – Adelaide (Photos by Bilby)

R. J. M. Symons is remembered on the St. Peter's Heroes Memorial, located in St. Peters Street, St. Peters, South Australia. The memorial which was erected in 1922 was one of the Great War Memorials that did not feature the names of the fallen. A grant was awarded along with other funding & on 24th April, 2019 the memorial was re-dedicated with the names of 145 men from the suburbs of Hackney, College Park, East Adelaide, St. Peters, Stepney, Evandale and Maylands.



St. Peters Heroes Memorial (Photo courtesy of St Peters Residents Association Inc.)

The Great War

LANYON C. J.	PETTERSEN G. S.
LESCHEN A. F.	POYNTZ R. R.
LIGERTWOOD J. A.	PRATT W. F.
MACLAREN D. M.	RICHARDS H. S.
MACLAREN E. H. L.	RICHARDSON H. R.
MALONE A. J. L.	ROBERTS G. E.
MARKS B. E.	ROBIN P. de Q.
MARTIN E. V. H.	SALTER J.
MARTIN M. S.	SANDERCOCK W. E.
McLEOD D.	SHEPLEY J. M.
McMASTER J. C.	SMITH E.
McMURRAY E. J.	SMITH S. E. G.
McQUEEN L.	SPARKS R.
MIELL A.	SPARKS W. G.
MILLAR R. G.	STEER G. C.
MOORE R.	SUMMERS R. W.
MOULE C. L.	SYMONS P. W. T.
MUNRO D. S.	SYMONS R. J. M. ←
MURRAY J. A.	TAYLOR G. F.
MURRAY R. G.	TAYLOR H. M.
OLDFIELD E.	TAYLOR L. T.
OLDHAM D. C.	TAYLOR T. B.
OLDHAM E. C.	TERNAN B. F. G.
O'MEARA J. J.	TIDSWELL C. T. H.
O'MEARA V. B.	TILLET R. T. B.
OSBORNE H. W.	TUCKER H. S.
OSBORNE J. W.	UNDERWOOD R. W.
O'TOOLE E.	WATERS J.
PADMAN C. S.	WENDT K. K.
PADMAN E. G.	WHITE F. E.
PAGE E. J. L.	WILLIAMS G. S.
PARFITT F. H.	WILLIAMS J. H.
PARK W. W.	WILLIAMS L.
PEARCE L. E.	WRIGHT A.
PERRERS H. C. B.	WRIGHT T. W.
PERRY C. M.	

St. Peters Heroes Memorial (Photo courtesy of St Peters Residents Association Inc.)





Leading Stoker Reginald James Magor Symons

(Photo courtesy of City of Norwood Payneham & St, Peters, Cultural Heritage Collection)



Newspaper Notices

BIOGRAPHICAL PARTICULARS

STOKER R. J. M. SYMONS

Mr James M. Symons, of 9, Hackney-road, St. Peters, has received a cable message conveying the sad news of the death of his son, Leading Stoker Reginald J. M. Symons, who was killed in action on Tuesday last. In the cable news published, in "The Chronicle" last week concerning the bombardment of Lowestoft and Yarmouth by a German squadron it was stated that a destroyer that previously played a prominent part in the North Sea was in the thick of the Lowestoft fight, and a shot penetrated her engine-room, four men being scalded. It is understood that Stoker Symons was serving on this vessel when his death occurred.



The late leading Stoker Reginald J. M. Symons

He was a native of South Australia, having been born at Maitland 34 years ago. He was educated at Way College, and afterwards was employed as a compositor by Messrs Hicks & Hughes at Moonta. He had a great love for the sea, and at the age of 19 he left for England to join the British Navy. Having undergone six months' training at Portsmouth, he spent three years on the Australian station, and then remained for a similar period on the China station. For the following six years he was with the Home Fleet. About six weeks before the outbreak of war he completed his 12 years' service in the navy, and had made up his mind to return to South Australia. He was a fine cricketer and he played in London for Braby and Co.'s team. On account of his skill in the cricket field he was prevailed upon to remain in England and play for the team for another season. Then came the declaration of war, and he again offered to serve in the navy. He was accepted, and in October of last year he was slightly wounded in the face on board H.M.S. Wildfire in a fight off the Belgian coast. Stoker Symons was a first-class revolver shot, and was the best marksman in the engineering branch of H.M.S. Swale in 1911, and on H.M.S. Stour in 1914. He was at that time captain of his ship's football club and a member of the champion stokers' rowing crew on H.M.S. Clio. He was latterly on H.M.S. Conquest.

Reginald Symons was the eldest son, and his three brothers are now playing their part for the Empire. Lionel Symons is serving in the Light Horse, and after 5½ months in the trenches is in hospital at Mudros. Lavenaille Symons is in the artillery, and will be leaving Melbourne shortly for the front. The youngest son, Fenley, is on the Psyche, of the Australian Squadron.

(*The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia – 28 April, 1916 (no photo was included in story) & (*Chronicle*, South Australia – 6 May, 1916 photo was included in story)

FOR KING AND COUNTRY

SYMONS – On Anzac Day, 25th April, killed in action, Reginald J. M. (late leading stoker H.M.S. Conquest), eldest beloved son of Mr and Mrs J. M. Symons, No. 9 Hackney road, St. Peters, aged 34 years)

(*The Register*, Adelaide, South Australia – 28 April, 1916) & (*The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia – 28 April, 1916)

& (*The Express and Telegraph*, Adelaide, South Australia – 28 April, 1916)

& (*The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia – 29 April, 1916)

&(*The Register*, Adelaide, South Australia – 4 May, 1916) & (*Chronicle*, Adelaide, South Australia – 6 May, 1916)

IN MEMORY OF THE BRAVE

SYMONS – In fond and loving memory of Reginald James Magor (“Reg”), late leading stoker H.M.S. Conquest, killed in action on Anzac Day, 1916. “He did his duty.” – Inserted by his parents, brothers and sisters.

(*The Journal*, Adelaide, South Australia – 25 April, 1917)

IN MEMORY OF THE BRAVE

SYMONS – In loving memory of Reginald J. M. (Reg.), late Leading Stoker H.M.S. Conquest (13 ½ years’ service in the English Navy), killed in action, Anzac Day, 1916.

His duty noble done.

– Inserted by his parents, brothers and sisters.

(*The Register*, Adelaide, South Australia – 25 April, 1918)

HEROES OF THE GREAT WAR

SYMONS – In loving memory of Reginald J. M. (Reg.), late Leading Stoker H.M.S. Conquest (13 ½ years’ service in the English Navy), killed in action, Anzac Day, 1916.

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(*The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia – 25 April, 1919)

Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent, England

Chatham Naval Memorial overlooks the town of Chatham, Kent, England. It commemorates more than 8,500 Royal Navy personnel from World War 1 & over 10,000 Navy personnel from World War 2 who were lost or buried at sea.

After the Armistice, the Naval Authorities and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission were determined to find an appropriate way to commemorate naval personnel who had no grave.

An Admiralty committee recommended that the three manning ports in Great Britain - Chatham, Plymouth and Portsmouth - should each have an identical memorial of unmistakable naval form, an obelisk, which would serve as a leading mark for shipping.

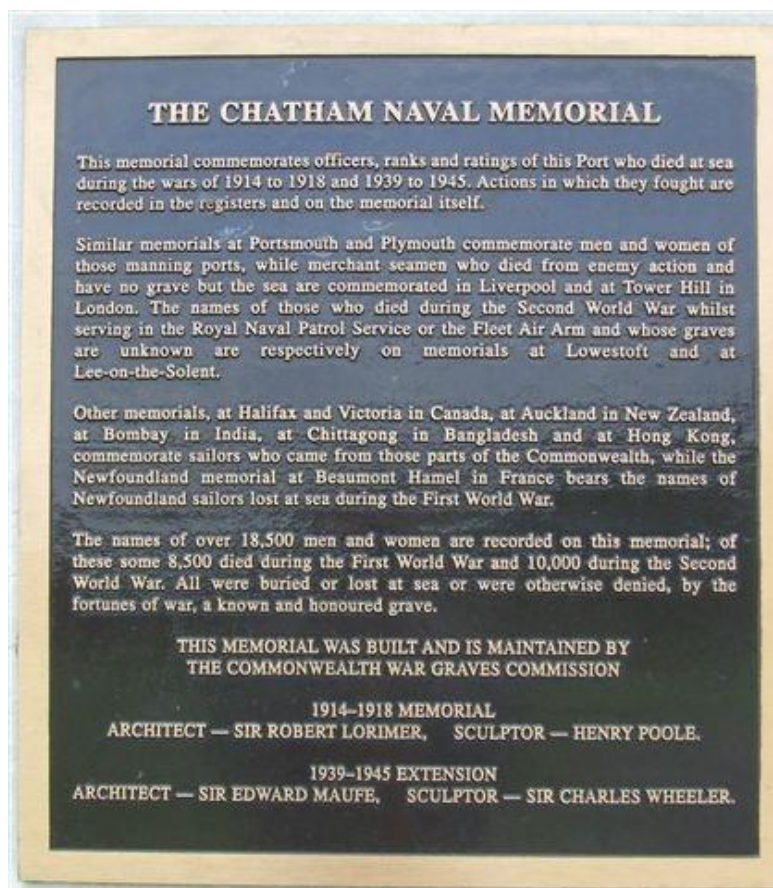
The Chatham Naval Memorial was unveiled by The Prince of Wales, the future Edward VIII, on 26 April 1924.



Chatham Naval Memorial (Photo by Clem Rutter)



Chatham Naval Memorial (Photos from CWGC)

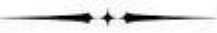


(Photo by Geoffrey Gillon)

Leading Stoker R. J. M. Symons is remembered on the Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent, England as he has no known grave - Memorial reference 17.



(Photo by Brad Evans)



Research on the Australians remembered on the Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent, England was completed as part of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's "For Those In Peril" project.

'For Those in Peril' is an initiative to encourage people to research, remember and share local stories of those who left their homes to join the war at sea, whose names are engraved on the Commission's three naval memorials at Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham.

The project has been launched to coincide with the opening of the Poppies: Wave at the CWGC Plymouth Naval Memorial, presented by 14-18 NOW: WW1 Centenary Art Commissions, to mark the centenary of the First World War.



(Photo from 1418 NOW)



**Poppies: Wave By Paul Cummins, Artist and Tom Piper, Designer
at CWGC Plymouth Naval Memorial**

23 August - 19 November, 2017

(Photo from 1418 NOW)

Poppies: Wave, a sweeping arch of bright red poppy heads suspended on towering stalks, was originally seen at the Tower of London as part of the installation Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red. It can currently be seen at the CWGC Plymouth Naval Memorial.