

# **Durrington**

## **Roll of Honour**



*Lest we Forget*

### **World War II**



**P/JX 368196    ORDINARY SEAMAN**

**M. J. J. REED-LETHBRIDGE**

**ROYAL NAVY**

**H.M. M.G.B. 657**

**1ST AUGUST, 1943**

## Michael John Joseph REED-LETHBRIDGE

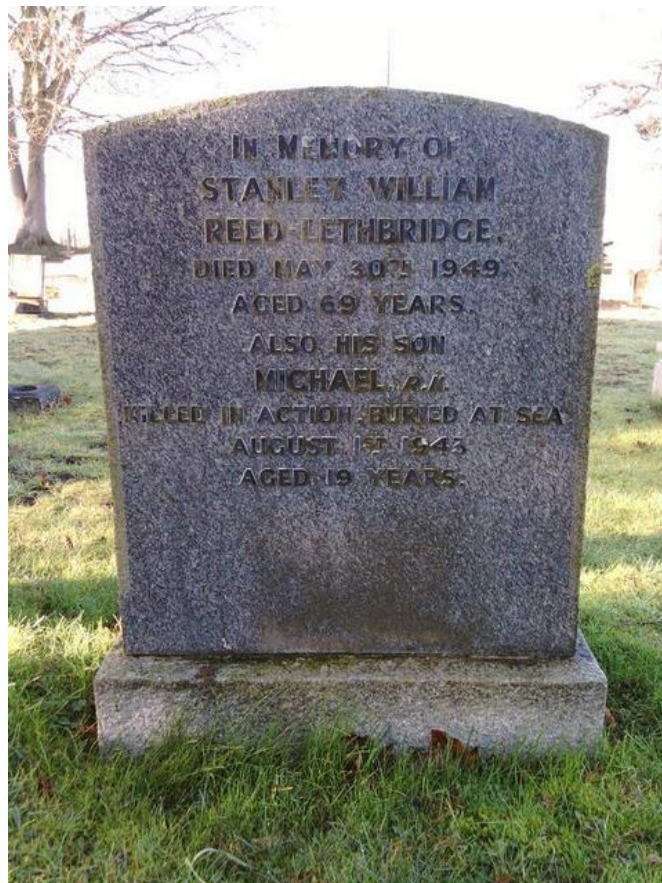
Michael John Joseph Reed-Lethbridge's birth was registered in December quarter, 1923 in the district of Lambeth, London. His mother's maiden name was listed as Browne. Michael's parents were Stanley William & Mary Reed-Lethbridge.

Michael John Joseph Reed-Lethbridge enlisted with the Royal Navy. He was given the service number of P/JX 368196. Records show that at the time of his death Ordinary Seaman Michael John Joseph Reed-Lethbridge was attached to H. M. M.G.B. 657 of the Royal Navy.

Ordinary Seaman Michael John Joseph Reed-Lethbridge was killed in action by enemy action aboard H. M. M.G.B. 657 on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1943, aged 19 years.

Ordinary Seaman Michael John Joseph Reed-Lethbridge is remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Hampshire – Panel 76, Column 2 as he has no grave. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The CWGC lists Ordinary Seaman Michael John Joseph Reed-Lethbridge as the son of Stanley and Mary Reed-Lethbridge, of Durrington, Wiltshire.

Michael Reed-Lethbridge is also remembered on his father's headstone – Stanley William Reed-Lethbridge located at Durrington Cemetery – Plot no. 970.



**Father & Son** (Photo by Anthony Bysouth)

M. R. Lethbridge is remembered on the Durrington War Memorial, Wiltshire.



**Durrington War Memorial**

*(Photo courtesy of Ian King 2010)*

### **Portsmouth Naval Memorial**

The Portsmouth Naval Memorial is situated on Southsea Common overlooking the promenade.

After the First World War, an appropriate way had to be found of commemorating those members of the Royal Navy who had no known grave, the majority of deaths having occurred at sea where no permanent memorial could be provided.

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 Portsmouth Naval Memorial was unveiled by the Duke of York (the future George VI) on 15 October 1924.

After the Second World War it was decided that the naval memorials should be extended to provide space for commemorating the naval dead without graves of that war, but since the three sites were dissimilar, a different architectural treatment was required for each. The architect for the Second World War extension at Portsmouth was Sir Edward Maufe (who also designed the Air Forces memorial at Runnymede) and the additional sculpture was by Charles Wheeler, William McMillan, and Esmond Burton. The Extension was unveiled by the Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother on 29 April 1953.

Portsmouth Naval Memorial commemorates around 10,000 sailors of the First World War and almost 15,000 of the Second World War.

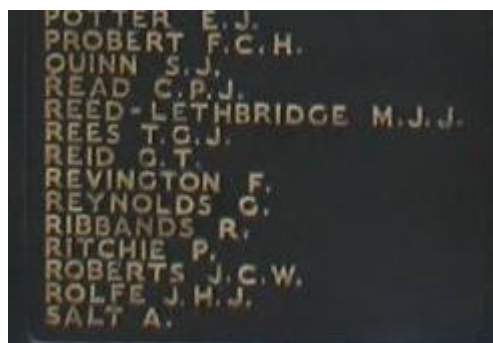
*(Information & Photo from CWGC)*

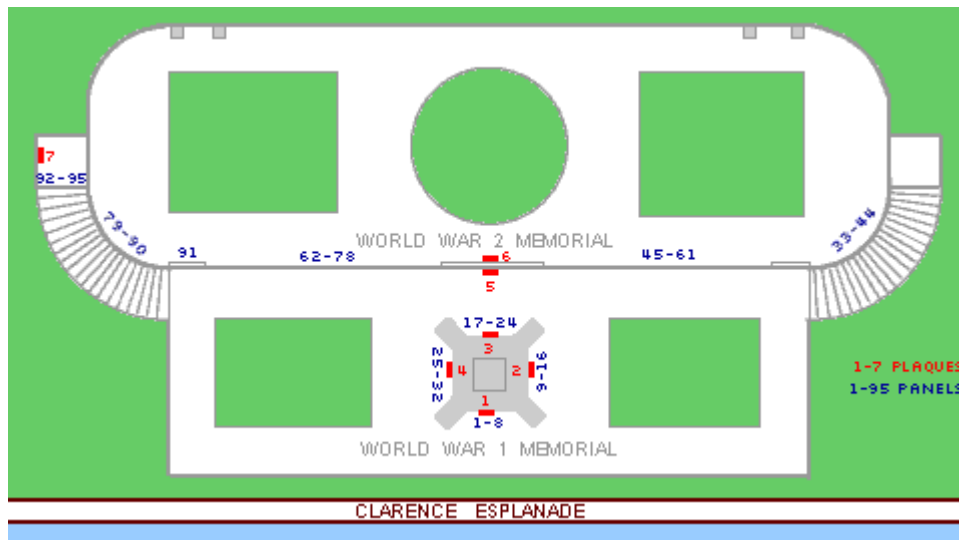


**Portsmouth Naval Memorial**



Panel 76 (Photos from Memorial & Monuments in [Portsmouth](#) – Tim Backhouse/Geoff Allen)





## H.M. M.G.B. 657

Motor Gun Boat 657 was commissioned on 9 February, 1943.

Motor Gun Boat was a Royal Navy term for a small military vessel of the Second World War. Such boats were physically similar to Motor Torpedo Boats, but equipped with a mix of guns instead of torpedoes. Their small size and high speed made them difficult targets for E-boats or torpedo bombers, but they were particularly vulnerable to mines and heavy weather. The large number of guns meant the crew was relatively large, numbering as high as thirty men.

In the Mediterranean, they were used offensively to sink Italian and German shipping. They were formed into flotillas which often operated alongside Motor Torpedo Boats (or US PT boats) and helped interdict supplies being sent from Italy to North Africa in 1943. After this campaign, they moved northwards and assisted with the invasion of Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica and Elba. From island bases they patrolled along the western coast of Italy attacking small coastal ships and E-boats until mid-1944. As Italy was progressively liberated, certain flotillas, such as the 56th, were sent around to the Adriatic to assist partisans in the islands off Yugoslavia.

They did not take the prefix HMS as they were only boats and instead used the prefix "HMMGB" on formal occasions. The crews generally referred to them by their numbers.

### War Activities (Information from World Naval Ships):

20th MGB Flotilla

10 July, 1943 - Operation Husky Invasion of Sicily

20th MGB Flotilla - MGB 657, MGB 658, MGB 659, MGB 660, MGB 662

14 July, 1943 - MGB 659 and MGB 662 escort Ulster Monarch and Tetcott, with a special reconnaissance column embarked, into Augusta Harbour Sicily. MGB 659 runs aground 600 yds from an enemy held fort. Whilst stranded, MGB 659 claims a Fw190 aircraft shot down. MGB 659 is towed

off by a destroyer on the following day.

26-27 July, 1943 - MGB 657, MGB 658 and 659, bombard the railway station and sidings at Taormina, Sicily.

1943 Raids with French commandos in the Tyrrhenian Sea

M.G.B. 657 was mined off Rimini, Italy on 12 September, 1944 & declared a total loss.

\*The National Archives, Kew has records relating to the Awards to 22 Officers & Men of HM MTB 637, MGB 657, 658, 662, 663 and 674 for services against enemy forces in the Adriatic Aug-Sept, 1944.



Motor Gun Boat similar to M.G.B. 657