

Durrington

Roll of Honour



Lest we Forget

World War I



K/29888 STOKER 1ST CLASS

C. STURGESS

ROYAL NAVY

31ST MAY, 1916 AGE 20

CYRIL STURGESS

Cyril Sturgess was born on 13th May, 1896 at Durrington, Wiltshire, to parents Frederick & Bertha Sturgess (nee Smith). Cyril's parents had married at All Saints Church, Durrington, Wiltshire in 1883. Cyril's birth was registered in June quarter, 1896 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire.

The 1901 Census records Cyril Sturgess as a 4 year old, living with his family at Durrington, Wiltshire. His parents were recorded as Fredrick Sturgess (Gardener, aged 37 , born Bulford) & Bertha Sturgess (aged 37, born Durrington). Cyril was the youngest of 5 children listed in this Census (All the children were born in Durrington) – Alice (aged 17), Alfred C. (General Labourer in Military Camp, aged 15), Dorothy (aged 13), Allan (aged 11) then Cyril. The next household enumerated in this Census was The Rectory.

The 1911 Census records Cyril Sturgess as a 14 year old who was unemployed, living with his family at Durrington, in a 3 roomed dwelling. His parents were listed as Frederick Sturgess (Jobbing Gardener, aged 47) & Bertha Sturgess (aged 47). Cyril's parents had been married for 27 years, with 7 children, all living. Cyril was listed with 3 of his siblings – Alan (Builder's Labourer, aged 21), then Cyril, Kathleen (aged 8) & Muriel (aged 6).

Cyril Sturgess joined the Royal Navy. He was given the official port number of K/29888 (Po).

1st Class Stoker Cyril Sturgess was killed or died as a direct result of enemy action on 31st May, 1916, aged 20 years, whilst aboard H.M.S. *Black Prince*.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission records Cyril Sturgess – Stoker 1st Class K/29888 R.N. "H.M.S. "Black Prince.". Killed in action at Battle of Jutland 31st May, 1916. Age 20. Son of Frederick & Bertha Sturgess of Cross Stones, Durrington, Salisbury."

1st Class Stoker Cyril Sturgess was entitled to the Victory Medal & the British War Medal.

H.M.S. *Black Prince* was a Duke of Edinburgh-class armoured cruiser, launched in 1904 & commissioned in 1906. At the beginning of the First World War, the *Black Prince* was one of the four armoured cruisers serving in the 1st Cruiser Squadron of the Mediterranean Fleet. She joined the Grand Fleet in December 1914. *Black Prince* was modified in March 1916, with changes to the 6 inch guns.

Black Prince participated in the Battle of Jutland, where she was sunk with heavy loss of life. The circumstances under which she sunk were mysterious for many years after. As the British had lost contact with her & did not see the ship destroyed, they were unsure as to whether a submarine or surface ship was responsible for the sinking of the *Black Prince*. During the Battle, the 1st Cruiser Squadron was deployed as part of a screening force several miles ahead of the main force of the Grand Fleet, but *Black Prince* lost contact with the rest of the Squadron as it came into contact with German forces at about 17:42. Soon after, two other members of the 1st Cruiser Squadron

HMA *Defence* & HMS *Warrior* were heavily engaged by German battleships and battle cruisers, with *Defence* blowing up & *Warrior* receiving heavy damage, which later caused her to sink.

There were no positive sightings of the *Black Prince* after that, although a wireless signal was received from her at 20:45, reporting a submarine sighting.

The German account reads that HMS *Black Prince* briefly engaged the German battleship *Rheinland* at about 23:35, scoring two hits with 6-inch shells. HMS *Black Prince* then approached the German lines and she turned away from the German battleships, but it was too late. The German battleship *Thuringen* fixed the *Black Prince* in her searchlights and opened fire. Up to five other German ships, including battleships *Nassau*, *Ostfriesland* and *Friedrich Der Grosse* joined in the bombardment, with return fire from *Black Prince* being ineffective. *Black Prince* was hit by at least twelve heavy shells and several smaller ones and sank within 15 minutes with no survivors of her 857 complement.

The wreck was briefly surveyed in 2000 & 2001. It was discovered that the stern of the wreck is upside down and the bow section lies on its starboard side. The wreck site is designated as a protected place under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986.



H.M.S. *Black Prince*



(Location of wreck of *Black Prince* from [Wrecksite](#))



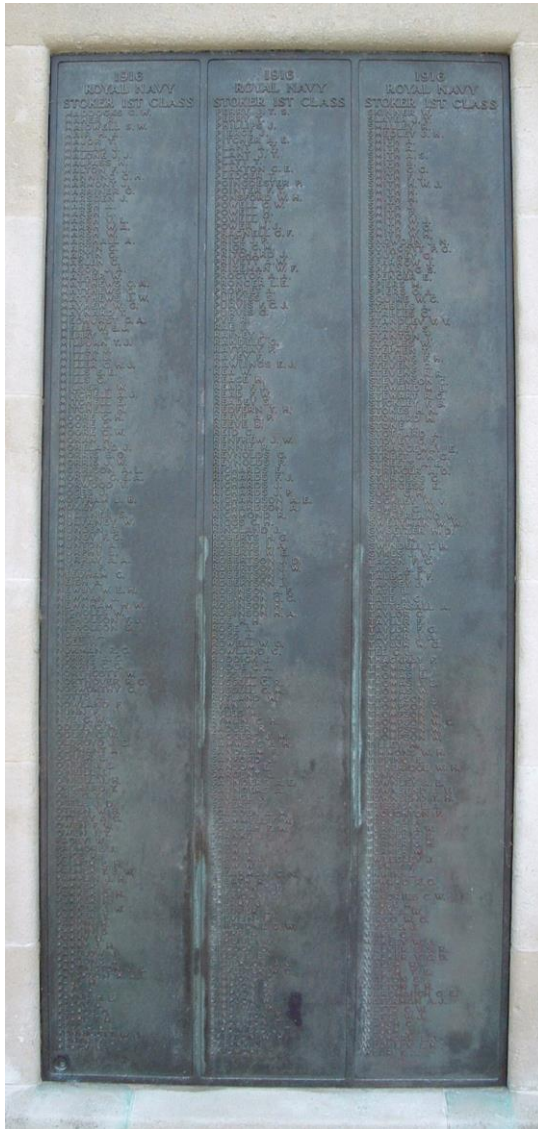
HMS Black Prince - Stokers (Photo kindly provided by Gerry Nunn for Royal British Legion)

1st Class Stoker Cyril Sturgess is remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial – Panel 19 - in Hampshire as he has no known grave.

Portsmouth Naval Memorial

The Portsmouth Naval Memorial is situated in Southsea Common, overlooking the Promenade in Hampshire. It lists 24,600 identified casualties – 10,000 sailors from WW1 and almost 15,000 from WW2.

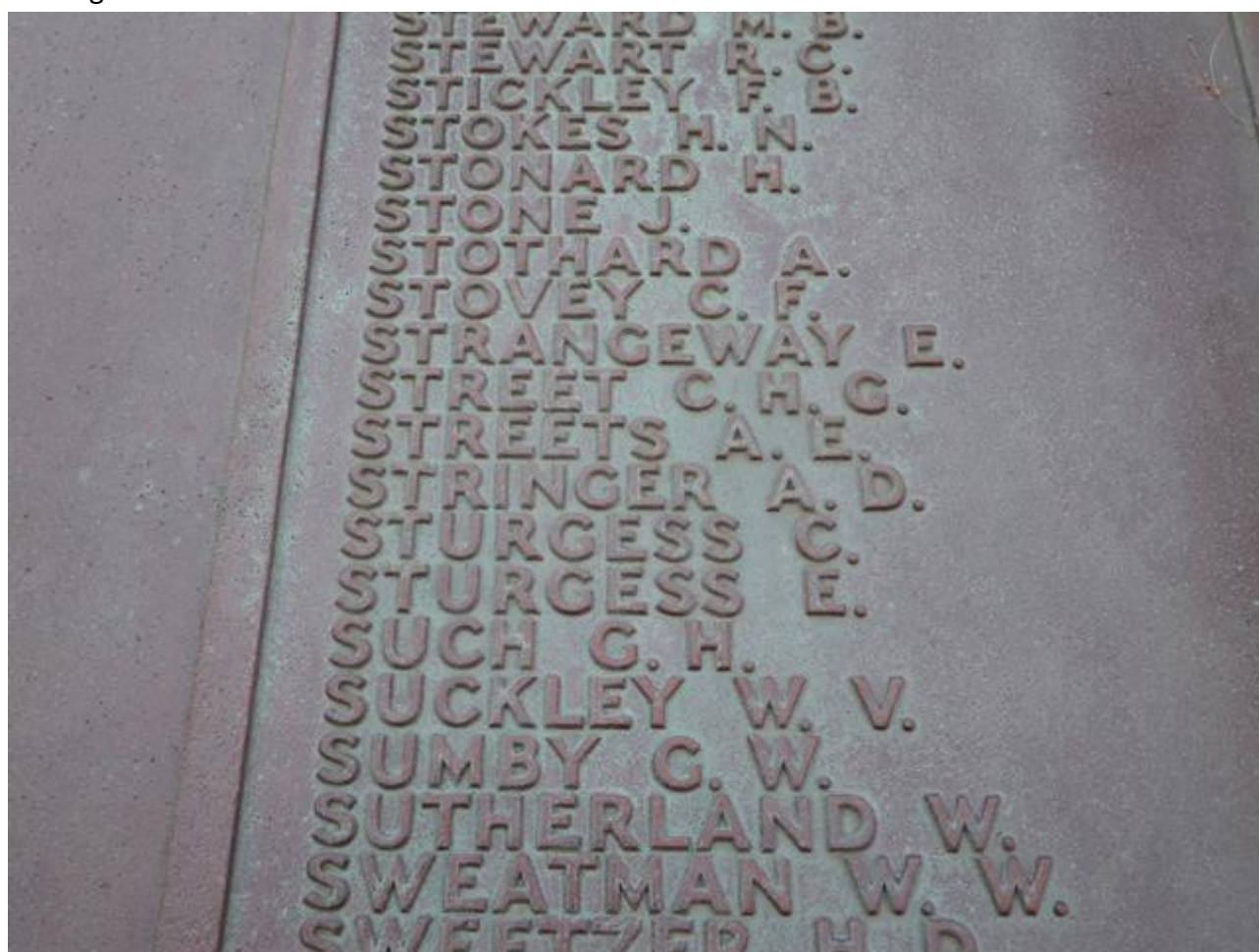
After the First World War, an appropriate way had to be found of commemorating those members of the Royal Navy who had no known grave, the majority of deaths having occurred at sea where no permanent memorial could be provided.



Portsmouth Naval Memorial (Panel 19)

C. Sturges is also remembered as a Casualty of WW1 in the Diocese of Salisbury Memorial Book for

Durrington.



1st Class Stoker Cyril Sturgess is also remembered on the Durrington War Memorial, Wiltshire.



(Photo courtesy of Ian King 2010)