

Leading Stoker Edmund “Ted” Tilley

Jean Wright continues her series on the war heroes of Shipley, near Horsham

Edmund was born and baptised in Shipley in 1890. His parents, James and Jane, bore 10 children over a 20 year span, Edmund being the youngest. Edmund was known in the family as Ted, and he was recorded in the Shipley Parish Magazine as one of the Shipley “brave young men who volunteered for service” in 1914. Edmund had joined the Navy in 1911 but the vicar ensured that his name appeared on the Roll of Honour of Shipley men in uniform. Three of his brothers survived service with the Army and appear on the Returned Voters List of 1918.

Edmund was educated at Shipley Boys’ School along with his siblings, and the Headmaster recorded in 1917 that “members of the Tilley family, old boys of the school, visited the school in uniform”. This was a big event for a small village school, where the headmaster took a keen interest in the progress of the war. He recorded with compassion those boys whose loved ones were fighting in France or being held as prisoners of war.

Edmund joined the Royal Navy on 6th March 1911 as a Stoker 2nd Class. He completed training at the Naval Barracks at Portsmouth and completed sea training on *HMS Renown*. He joined the battle cruiser *HMS Princess Royal* in November 1912, and saw active service during the Battle of Jutland in May 1916 before joining *HMS Dolphin* at Gosport in July 1916 to undertake submarine training. Edmund was on active service aboard Submarine *K17* when it collided with *HMS Fearless* during night time exercises on 31st January 1918. *K17* was at the head of a long line of submarines, and after being hit sank in about eight minutes. All 59 sailors aboard were lost, Edmund among them. He was 28 years old. The site is now a war grave.

Edmund is commemorated on the Portsmouth Royal Naval Memorial and in Shipley Church. He was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal.



HM Submarine K17 (note the twin funnels)



HMS Fearless after the collision

