6. Cook’s Mate Sidney Everest, age 22

Cook’s Mate Sidney Everest was the son of John and Anne Everest of South View Terrace, Rusthall.

His father was a carter on a farm and the family originally lived in Doubleton Lane, Penshurst. Sidney went to London to work as a servant in Hanover Square and enlisted in the Royal Navy in 1908. As a former footman, he initially worked as an officer’s steward on several vessels, but moved to become a cook’s mate in 1911. Before the War, he joined the HMS Moth, renamed the HMS Torpedo No. 12, patrolling the English Channel and the North Sea.

By 1915, both navies had laid a number of mines in the seas dividing the two nations. Technology had increased the efficacy of these weapons, and compared to the severe damage they inflicted, the cost of laying was minimal. Mines were used extensively to defend coasts, coastal shipping, ports and naval bases around the globe. The Germans laid mines in shipping lanes to sink merchant and naval vessels serving Britain. 235,000 sea mines were laid during the First World War. After the War, it took 82 ships working 24 hours a day around 5 months to clear the North Sea mine Barrage.

It was on a patrol on 10th June 1915 in the North Sea that the ship hit a mine and was destroyed with all hands off the Essex coast. Sydney’s brother, John Everest had joined the army, and survived until the Battle of the Somme one year later.