

## Ronald George Stephen Brewer

My granddad Walter survived WW1 but his nephew Ronnie was not so lucky. Ronnie always wanted to be on a ship and be in military band. With help from Walter he filled in enrolment forms and joined the new ship *HMS Trinidad*, launched in 1941. Ronnie was on board just a year before he went down with the ship in 1942. He sent 3 letters home from 3 separate but secret locations as their orders were not to reveal anything. He was cheerful in the letters but nervous about engagement soon to take place especially in last letter month before death. His obituary reads:

RMB/X1015 Musician Ronald George Stephen Brewer of the Royal Marine Band. Son of Charles Stephen and Annie Rose Brewer (née Hollingdale). Born in Midhurst in the September Quarter of 1922. Died 29 March 1942 aged 19.

On that March night Action Stations had been sounded and the whole band had gone to the Transmitting Station where they joined others and took up their complementary duties as gunners, switchboard operators etc. A single ladder provided the only exit from this compartment. A gyro fault on a torpedo fired from the ship caused it to move in an arc and return to *HMS Trinidad* from which it had been fired, hitting the compartment immediately below the Transmitting Station.

Of the 21 men in the Transmitting Station, only 4 were to survive, including Bandsman George Lloyd. George, although severely traumatised, went on to become a composer and years later composed a march called *HMS Trinidad* in remembrance of his colleagues and the sinking of the ship. It was played on The Last Night of the Proms in 2013.

Ronnie's name is on Southsea memorial. In the picture below, taken at the cemetery before he went off to ship, he is wearing his marine bandsman uniform. His mum died in 1944 and his sister had over 9 years lost her dad, Ronnie her brother then mum. Tragedy for her.

- as told by Colin Tuffnell in November 2018



HMS Trinidad