

Gordon Morrison PHILLIPS

Born: 1924

School Years: 1935-1939 – Chichester High School for Boys
Form Prize Winner – March 1937

Civilian Occupation: ‘The Martlet’ Roll of Service –December 1943– ‘Mate’ Merchant Navy
Later transferred to the Royal Navy

Armed Forces Record

Service Rank: Ordinary Seaman

Service Number: P/JX 625189

Service Record: Royal Navy

Service Base: HMS Quorn (L66)

Date of Death 3 August 1944



HMS “Quorn” - “Hunt” class destroyer

‘The Martlet’ School Notes December 1944

“Gordon M. Phillips, who had transferred from the Merchant Navy to the Royal Navy, and who was reported missing, has now been presumed to have lost his life. To his sorrowing parents and relatives of this gallant lad, we extend our sincerest sympathy in their terrible loss”.

On the night of 3rd August 1944, the British ‘Hunt’ Class Destroyer ‘Quorn’ (Lt. Ivan Hall RN) was positioned in the invasion area off Le Havre whilst taking part in Operation ‘Neptune’ during the D-Day Landings. The ship was struck by a German ‘Linsen’ explosive motorboat, or, by an enemy ‘Neger’ human manned torpedo.

'The Fortunes of War'

Below is a part of an eye-witness account by Seaman Norman Ackroyd (a survivor), who was manning No 3 gun crew on the quarterdeck, of the events on the night of 3rd August 1944:

"As part of the beachhead defence force for some nights before August 3rd, we sailed as normal just before dusk and went to our night station as normal. We were accompanied by an American Radar ship in attendance who was to control our shelling of German E-boat pens at Le Havre.

Just before midnight, there was a massive explosion amidships hitting the boiler room. The ship broke in two and sank within a few minutes. I was personally blown overboard and found myself in the water fully dressed. A large number of my shipmates must have gone down with the ship but there were quite a lot of us in the water.

The American radar ship left the scene at full speed which caused a lot of resentment at the time, but it was explained to us later that if she had stayed she would possibly sustain the same fate as the *Quorn*.

A lot of those with me in the water did not last the night but quickly slipped away. I was in the water for 8 ½ hours before being picked up by an armed trawler looking for us, by that time there was only a small band left".

One hundred and twenty-three officers and ratings including *Old Boy* Gordon Morrison PHILLIPS did not survive the attack. He was 20.

Note: It was also reported that some of the crew were trapped within the ship's structure and could not escape due to the 'inadequate' facilities. This deficiency was corrected in later ships of its class.

Commemorated

Chichester High School for Boys

Chichester War Memorial

Bognor Regis War Memorial

The Royal Naval Memorial, Portsmouth, Hampshire