

BEYOND THE CATSFIELD MEMORIAL ¶

The Stories Behind Each of the Names on the ¶

Memorial Plaque at Catsfield Memorial Hall. ¶

This is a Summary of what has been learned... So far... ¶



Doug Glading

Last Update 1/7/2026

The Story of Frank McLeod

- Lieutenant (E) Frank McLeod was killed in 27/2/1942 age 42.

He was the Engineering Officer on the Destroyer Electra.



action

HMS

A colleague Tim Cain, the Gunnery Officer on Electra authored a book about his experiences. He described Frank joining the ship:... *"Changes in the Wardroom: Whilst they were at Troon, where Engineer Lieutenant Frank MacLeod arrived.*

The new Chief, a Scot [?], had entered the Navy as a boy artificer or apprentice. Having risen to the ranks at a time when promotion was most difficult, he was the first-class engineer with a long experience with destroyers. He was rather slightly built, and he soon found his place amongst us, becoming one of the family."

Electra was part of the Combined Striking Task Force in the 'Battle of the Java Sea'. The force was attacked by air and sea.

"The first shell cut off all communications, the third hit the boiler room. I bumped into MacLeod, his white overall stained with oil as he came up from the engine room to report. 'What's it like, I've lost a lot of bodies. Give me half-an-hour and I think I'll get her moving'.

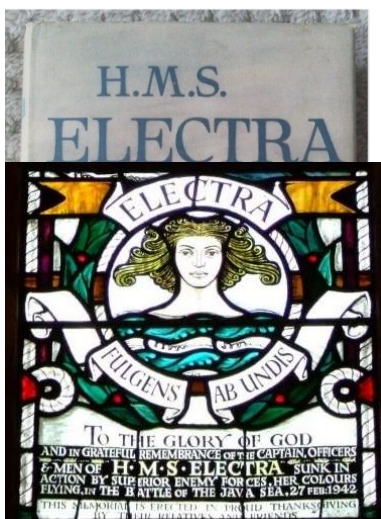
As Electra lay there not moving a Jap Destroyer came out, blazing at us. A fire started, and the message came from the bridge 'Abandon Ship'.

His eyes blinking in the unacustomed light Frank McLeod arrived up from the engine-room, his face as black as a miner. A miner who's seen his comrades dying. I said 'The jobs done Chief, join the whaler'. He said 'she's been a grand ship. Good luck to you, Guns'.

The whaler had pulled away from the ship, so Frank had to swim for it. Seconds later, shells caught a direct hit on the boat, throwing her into the air and then hurling her back into the sea. So died one friend, many with him.

Electra sank shortly afterwards on the afternoon of 27 February 1942, bow first, with the White Ensign still flying. 122 of the 173 men on board died.

Because his body was not recovered for burial at sea, Frank McLeod is officially



commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial in Kent, England. Additionally, a dedicated stained-glass window inside St. George's Chapel at the Royal Naval Barracks in Chatham honours the brave crew of HMS Electra.



Tim Cain, the senior surviving officer, suffered shrapnel and splinter wounds but was rescued by a US submarine and taken to Australia to convalesce. While travelling to his next posting in Ceylon, his ship was attacked by the Japanese, and he spent the last three years of the war as a prisoner of war. After the war, Tim became an income tax collector.

Catisfield connection:

His memorial entry says “Son of Frank and Ellen McLeod; husband of Sheila Jane McLeod, of Fareham, Hampshire”

However this connection to Catisfield is rather difficult to verify. (as at June 2026).

Ellen McLeod was born in Liverpool in 1873. In 1881 she was living in Plymouth with her parents and 8 siblings. In 1911 she was still Ellen McLeod, single, a dressmaker in Plymouth.

In 1921 she is still in Plymouth, now listed as ‘widowed’. At that census Frank was staying with her, on leave from his ship the destroyer HMS Dehli. In the 1939 Register she is living in Portsmouth (probably alone?).

So there is no sign of there having been a Frank McLeod senior, and no father is named on Frank junior’s birth certificate...

Frank junior did marry Sheila Jane Cockbill of Portsmouth in April 1939.

There is no evidence of Ellen or Sheila residing in Catisfield, nor Fareham.