



Doug Glading

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16. The Story of John W Spanner

Able Seaman John Woodman Spanner, Royal Navy. [service number P/JX129498].

Died 28/11/1939. Cause of death listed as 'lost overboard'. Aged 28.

- He was on HMS "Faulknor", a destroyer on patrol in the North Sea. At the time it was escorting HMS Nelson, in appalling weather..

In Peter Smith's comprehensive story



of Faulknor, Shipmate Vernon Coles remembered:

“Our first death was that of Leading Seaman Spanner. We were in very heavy seas right up near the North Cape early in 1940 and poor Spanner was an LTO on board and he had just been relieved of his watch - he was one of the depth-charge party.

He tried to get forward in very heavy weather, with the upper deck being continually washed down. We who were in Nos. 2 & 3 boiler rooms and the engine room were also changing watches and, although life lines had been rigged, it was hell's own job getting for'rard as, of course, in destroyers there was no companionway below decks.

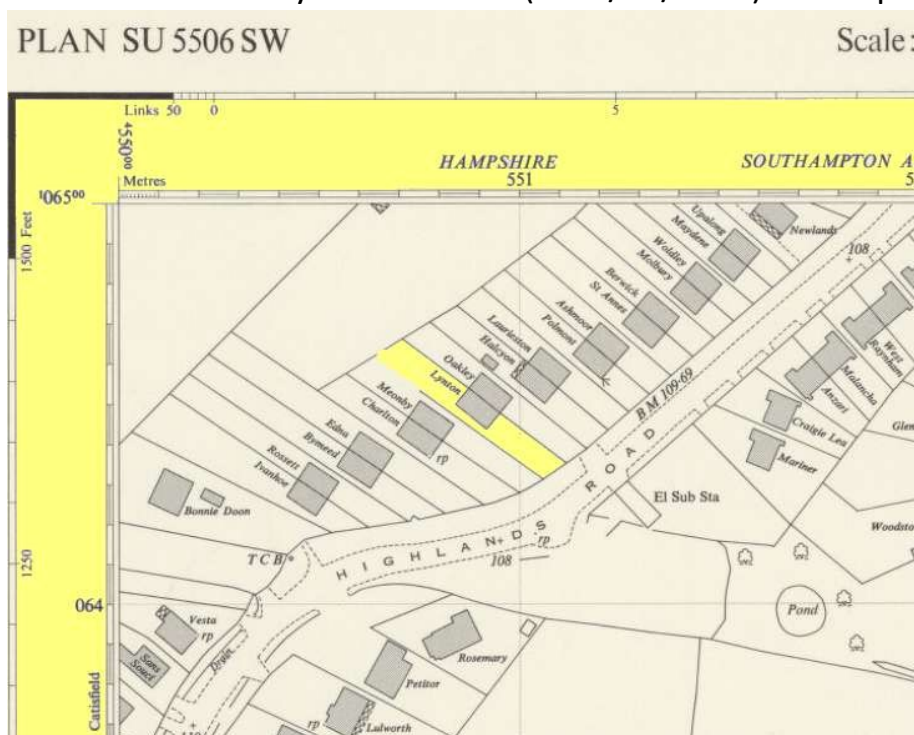
On his attempting to come for'rard along the upper deck, we were 'pooped' and a huge wave caught him, carrying him right over the ship and he was never seen again.”

(LTO stands for Leading Torpedo Operator.)

- John is remembered on Portsmouth Naval Memorial.

- Catisfield connection:

John married Gladys Rose Collins (b 19/07/1914) at Gosport 3Q1935



They lived at 'Lynton',
Highlands Road.

Further tragedy: Gladys went
on to re-marry sailor Robert S
Millener in 1942 – who in
turn died 1944 and is also on
the Catisfield Plaque!