John Robinson



Rank: - Engine Room Artificer 4th Class

Number: - M/27732

Regiment: - Royal Navy H.M.S. “Racoon.”

Died when the ship was wrecked on the Irish coast on the 9th January 1918 during a blizzard: - 09/01/1918 Age: 21 years

Memorial: - Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent Panel 29

Batley News, 2 Feb 1918. Dewsbury District News, 2 Feb 1918

Family Details

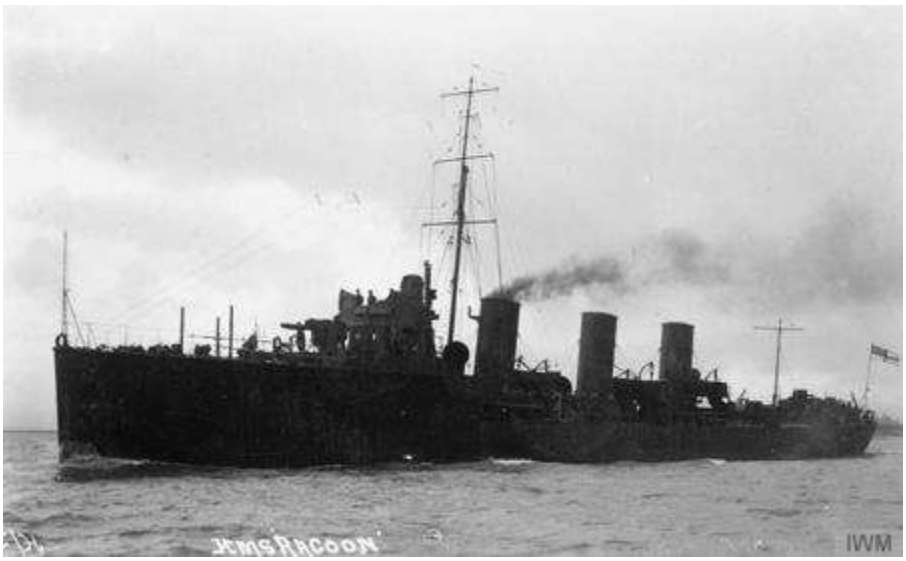
John was born in Bradford on the 6th May 1896 the son of Charles and Jane Robinson nee Hargreaves who had married on the 24th April 1886 at Eastbrook Chapel, Bradford. He was baptised at the same chapel on 13th June 1898 on the same day as his sisters, Hilda born 1894 and Eliza born 1898, she sadly died in the summer of 1899. He an elder sister Laura born 1889.

In 1901 the family was living at 66, Richmond Street, Bradford and Charles was employed as a stationary engine tenter.

Before 1911 the family moved to live at 11, Town End, Morley and fourteen-year-old John was an apprentice to engine fitting when the census was taken. The census shows another child had died in infancy.

The family moved to live at 36, Belvedere Terrace, Byron Street, Dark Lane Batley only a few years before the outbreak of war. Charles worked for Messrs. J. Auty and Co's, Clerk Green mills, Batley and John worked for a Dudley Hill firm of engineers before he volunteered for the Navy.

Service Details



H.M.S. *Racoon* was one of sixteen Beagle class destroyers completed for the Royal Navy shortly before the Great War. It was built in 1910 at Cammell Lairds shipyard.

In November, 1917, *Racoon* joined the Second Destroyer Flotilla on the Northern Division of the Coast of Ireland Station, based at Buncrana.

The ship was wrecked off the West Coast of Ireland during a snow storm on the 9th January with the loss of 96 lives.

Three funnelled destroyer HMS Racoon sank on 9th January 1918.

"It was calculated by the set of the tide and the position of the bodies that the Racoon had struck the Garrive or Grvan Isles, a little over a mile off Malin Head pier. Nothing was found of her. It was only recently that the wreck has been located, debris lying at 20 metres. Items have been recovered (though it is a war grave) most notably the engine room telegraph, which appears to have been set at half revolutions. A more alarming discovery in 1996 was live ammunition among the lobster pots hauled up by the Malin men, which brought an Irish Army team, and the press, to the scene, the first attention the Racoon had received since brief reports appeared among the war headlines in 1918. At Bonamargy Friary, near Ballycastle, is a marble monument erected to men of Racoon and Viknor. As the fast Racoon was a coal burner more than half her crew were stokers. Nine lucky men (eight stokers and a seaman) had been left behind when she sailed. She had distinguished herself in the Dardanelles campaign and in Mediterranean convoy escort"

Extract from Ian Wilson's excellent book "Donegal Shipwrecks" published 1998 (ISBN No. 0 948154 56X)

John is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial.
He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group