



**Name:** Edgar Charles Boyle

**Position:** Able Seaman

**DOB-DOD:** 1907- 8 June 1940

Edgar Charles Bloye, Able Seaman, died aged 33 serving in the Royal Navy. Edgar was one of many sailors on board the HMS Ardent (H41), a Class A destroyer, on 8 June 1940, when it was capsized after intense enemy fire.

Edgar is remembered by his wife Lily and his parents, Henry and Laura. Previously working for the Post Office, Edgar's name is inscribed on a memorial at Norwich ATE and is recorded in the Plymouth Naval memorial.



### **HMS Ardent**

When Britain declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939, the HMS Ardent was one of the escorts for the aircraft carrier Courageous whose aircrafts were tasked with searching for U-boats in the Western Approaches. In October, the Ardent was transferred to the Western Approaches Command and escorted 17 convoys between October and April the following year. This included escorting the light cruiser Ajax into Portsmouth, alongside the destroyer Whitshed, on her return from battle with the heavy cruiser Admiral Graf Spee.



After the invasion of Norway on 9 April, the Ardent was transferred to the Home Fleet, joining the escort for Convoy NP1 a few days later to provide safe passage for troops on their way to Narvik, Norway. Later that month, Ardent and Polish destroyer Blyskawica ferried 150 men to the Scots Guards to Bodø.

In early May, the Ardents' ASDIC dome was damaged and the ship had to return to the UK for repairs (6-19 May). Three days later, the Ardent escorted the troopship SS Ulster Prince as she took troops to the Faroe Islands, replacing the Royal Marines who had been there since April as part of Operation Valentine.

On 31 May, the Ardent and the destroyers Acasta, Acheron, Highlander and Diana escorted the aircraft carriers Ark Royal and Glorious from the Clyde to the Norwegian coast. These aircrafts assisted with air operations in support of the evacuation of Allied forces from Norway in Operation Alphabet. Ardent remained with the carriers' escort throughout early June.

### **The final battle**

Destroyers Ardent and Acasta escorted the aircraft carrier Glorious back to Scapa Flow on 8 June 1940. Enroute, the three ships were spotted by German war ships, which changed course to investigate at 15:46. The two German ships changed course to investigate and at 16:00 the Ardent was ordered to identify the ships whilst Acasta and Glorious remained on course. Scharnhorst and Gneisenau were the ships identified by the Ardent and as she turned back to re-join the convoy the German ships opened fire at 16:27.

The Ardent was engaged by the 15 centimetre (5.9 inch) secondary armament, mostly by Scharnhorst, while both German ships fired at Glorious with their main batteries. Ardent was hit in the first salvo in her forward boiler room which reduced her speed. The ship zigzagged to evade the German shells and laid a smoke screen to hide herself, firing torpedo attacks whenever she emerged from the smoke. All torpedo attacks were evaded by Scharnhorst and one 4.7 inch gun hit proved insignificant.

The Ardent was not seriously damaged until 17:01 when she emerged from the smoke and was repeatedly hit, losing speed, and on fire as the ship turned away. Narrowly avoiding a torpedo from Scharnhorst at 17:13, the Ardent capsized shortly after 17:25.

Only two of the Ardents' crew survived, picked up by a German seaplane five days after the attack. One of the two later died from exposure, the other was eventually repatriated to Britain in 1943 due to ill health.