

## **Able Seaman Henry Miller RN GC**

The George Cross is the second highest award for gallantry (whilst not in the face of the enemy) after the Victoria Cross

Able Seaman Henry Miller was Leading Torpedo Operator in H M Submarine **Unity**. She had been operating out of Blyth, Northumberland and on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1940 had made an unsuccessful attack on a German U-Boat, U-2. Her Captain, Lt. F J Brooks RN (on the first day of his first patrol, on his first command) had been involved in an accident in the North Sea.

At 1730 hours on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1940 **Unity** sailed from Blyth for Norway. The weather was poor, with visibility down to 200 yards as Unity moved out of the harbour. In the main channel the Norwegian ship **Atle Jarl** was proceeding inbound, part of a convoy from Scotland to the Tyne. Neither vessel was aware of the other until the submarine spotted the ship 50 yards away on a collision course. There was just time to shut the bulkhead doors and order the engines astern before the **Atle Jarl** slammed into the submarine at 1907 hrs.

Although the submarine sank in 5 minutes, all the crew, bar two, escaped from the stricken vessel. Those two, Lt J N A Low and Able Seaman H J Miller, had been on duty in the control room. When the order to abandon ship was given, they were instrumental in helping every member of the crew to escape in those 5 minutes, resulting in the selfless sacrifice of their own lives. Both men were awarded a posthumous Empire Gallantry Medal, later exchanged in September 1940 for the George Cross upon its inauguration.