

Memorial: (WMR 88176) Halling, Kent

PETTY OFFICER STOKER

## WALTER EDWARDS

Service Number: 309780(Ch)  
Regiment & Unit/Ship: Royal Navy  
H.M.S. "Racoon"  
Date of Death: Died 09 January 1918  
Age 40 years old  
Buried/commemorated at: RATHMULLAN (ST. COLUMB) CHURCH OF IRELAND CHURCHYARD  
Ireland, Republic of  
Additional Info: Husband of M. Edwards, of Crabb's Corner, Upper Halling, Kent.

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Date of Birth 17-Mar-1884 Wouldham, Kent. Parents Walter Edward and Sarah Elizabeth.

Married Millicent Margaret Slingsby on 24-Dec-1910 At Cuxton Parish Church



H.M.S. Racoon was a Royal Navy Beagle class destroyer. In November 1917, Racoon joined the Second Destroyer Flotilla on the Northern Division of the Coast of Ireland Station, based at Bunrana in Donegal.

During the early morning of 9 January 1918, she was on her way from Liverpool to Lough Swilly to begin anti-submarine and convoy duties in the

Northern Approaches. In blizzards and heavy sea conditions she struck rocks at the Garvan Isles just off Malin Head and sank with the loss of all hands.

The navigational error was revealed in a subsequent enquiry when it emerged that *Racoon* was taken between the isles, rather than going around, which would have been standard in the weather conditions. Visibility failed and she ran straight into one of the islands. Lt George L.M. Napier and her entire crew of 95 men were lost.

**OFFICIAL REPORTS.**  
**BRITISH DESTROYER LOST.**  
**Foundered Off Donegal Coast.**  
**ALL THE CREW DROWNED.**

The Admiralty announces:—  
H.M.S. *Racoon* (Lieutenant-Commander J. M. Matier, R.N.) struck a rock off the North of Ireland coast about two o'clock on the morning of the 9th inst. during a snowstorm, and subsequently foundered with all hands.  
Nine of the crew had been left behind at her last port of call, and these are the sole survivors.  
Seventeen bodies have been picked up by patrol craft, and are being buried at Rathmullen.  
Five more bodies have been washed ashore, and are being buried locally.  
All the next-of-kin have been informed.  
Note—The *Racoon*, a destroyer of the G class built in 1910, had a displacement of 915 tons and a speed of 27 knots. Her armament consisted of one 4-inch and three 3-inch guns, and two torpedo tubes. Her complement was 105 officers and men.

A few of her deceased were washed ashore in the locality and their bodies lie in graveyards across Antrim and Donegal as well as a few on the Scottish Isles. Those who were not recovered are remembered on the Chatham and Portsmouth Naval Memorials.

