

HOPKINS, WILLIAM HENRY. Pilot.

Lighthouse and Pilotage Authorities. Trinity House Service, M.V. Arinia (London).

Died 19 December 1940. Aged 67.

Son of Thomas Hopkins and of Jane Hopkins (née Payton).

Husband of Fanny Edith Hopkins of Whitfield, Dover, Kent.

Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 122, and in the Dover, Kent, Second World War Book of Remembrance.

Off the pier of Southend-on-Sea, Essex, the 8,024 ton tanker M.V. Arinia (London), which was owned by the Anglo Saxon Petroleum Co, and commanded by 48 year old Benjamin B. Bannister from Southsea, Hampshire, was sunk by a mine. Having travelled from the island of Aruba in the Caribbean to the Isle of Grain, Kent, the tanker had dropped anchor and were waiting for the gates to open. The 1st Officer instructed the engines to be shut off, which resulted in fatal consequences. With the engines off the vessels anti-magnetic system was simultaneously also turned off. This system allowed ships to avoid mines that had been place in the water. Unfortunately the tanker had dropped anchor directly adjacent to a mine, which was amongst 186 acoustic mines which had been dropped by a force of 93 enemy bombers in the Thames Estuary on the night of 12/13 December 1940. When the tankers engines were turned off, the mine exploded. In addition to William, 54 merchant seaman, and 5 D.E.M.S. Gunners were lost. Eyewitness accounts of the tragedy state that following the initial explosion, the tanker was quickly ablaze from stem to stern. The M.V. Arinia was amongst sixteen vessels that were lost as the direct result of the 186 acoustic mines which were drooped.