

Frank BATE

Second Mate, HM Trawler "Pollensa"

Died February 7th 1919, aged 29

Memorial in Dunkirk Town Cemetery, Dunkirk, France

Frank Bate was born in 1890 to Harry and Mary Bate. In the 1901 census, Harry (38) is recorded as a master mariner, with his wife Mary (39) and their six children; Harry (15), Ben (13), Frank (11), Mary Coode and John, both 9 and presumably twins, and Joe Coode (7). There is no trace of the family in 1891, so perhaps they were all out at sea. In 1911, Mary is at home in Geranium House with Mary Coode and Joe Coode. Although Harry is shown on the census, Mary signed the census return and the enumerator has noted alongside her signature 'for head of family who left for sea early Monday morning'. There is no trace of Frank in the 1911 UK census, so perhaps he was at sea.

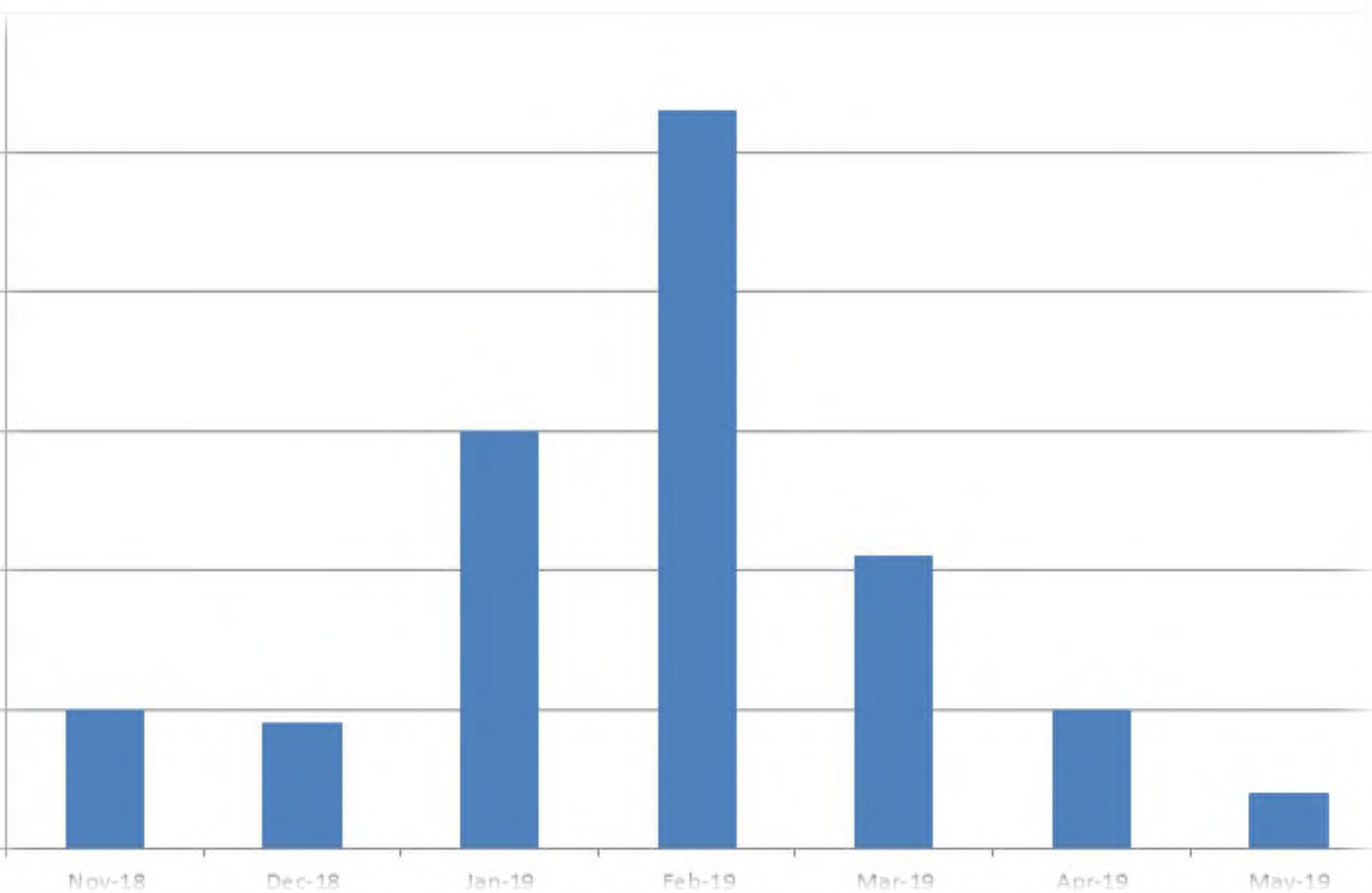
Frank served in the Royal Navy Trawler Fleet in the First World War, on the HMT Pollensa. The fleet was used primarily in minesweeping and anti-submarine duties. Fishing trawlers were particularly suited for many naval requirements because they were robust boats designed to work heavy trawls in all types of weather and had large clear working decks. One could create a mine sweeper simply by replacing the trawl with a mine sweep. Adding depth charge racks on the deck and a 3-inch (76 mm) or 4-inch (102 mm) gun in the bows equipped the trawler for anti-submarine duties. Other advantages were that shipbuilders could easily adapt existing trawler designs, and there would be a ready resale market after the war. The majority were Castle class built by Smiths Dock Co of Middlesbrough.

Frank Bate died in Dunkirk during February 1919, three months after the war ended. It is likely that he fell victim to the 1918 flu pandemic. The second wave of the pandemic was centred at Étaples, and Dunkirk is only 50 miles from there. Dunkirk was also a French hospital base during the First World War, as well as the 8th Canadian Stationary Hospital being there from November 1918 to April 1919. Analysis of the number of casualties buried in Dunkirk Town Cemetery by month shows a massive spike in February 1919. There were an average of 12 burials a month in wartime 1917 and 1918, but this rose to 30 in January 1919 and 53 in February 1919, before falling back to 10 in April and four in May.



First World War 'Castle' class Trawler

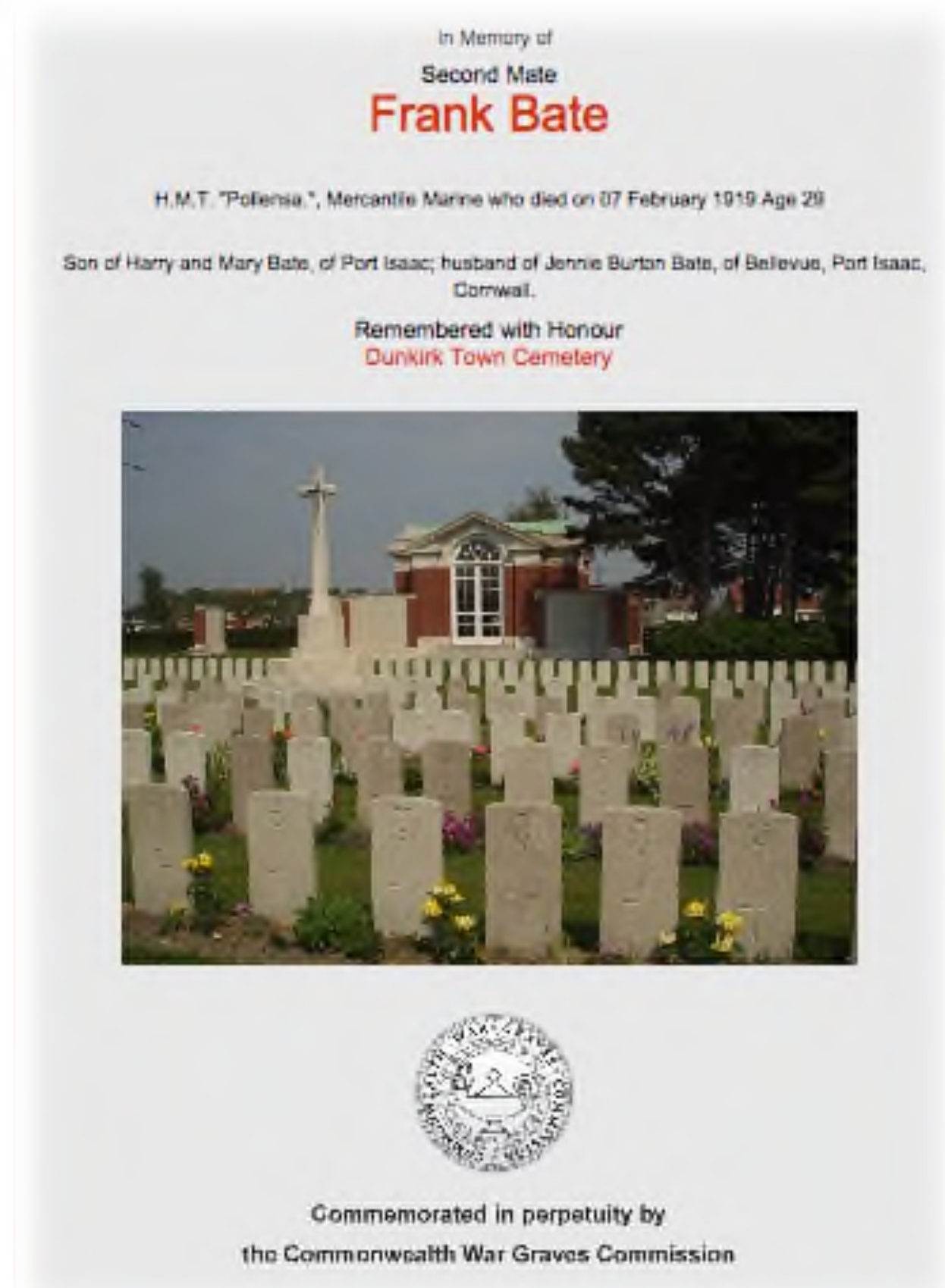
Second Mate Frank Bate has his memorial in Dunkirk Town Cemetery in Dunkirk, France.



Military Deaths by month in Dunkirk Town Cemetery



The memorial to Frank Bate in St Endellion Churchyard



Sources

Naval Trawlers: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval_trawler