

**Able Seaman ALEC JACK HOWES**

D/JX 249788, H.M.S. President III, Royal Navy  
who died age 29 on 3 March 1943

Remembered with honour on the PLYMOUTH NAVAL MEMORIAL

The Tewkesbury Register reported his death on 3 April 1943:



TEWKESBURY NAVAL MAN MISSING

Official news has been received that Gunner, Alec. Jack Howes, of the Royal Navy, whose home is at 17 Gravel Walk, Tewkesbury, is missing whilst serving as a gunner with the Merchant Navy.

On Friday of last week his wife [Edith Annie Albina] and Mrs W. Sprackling, of Gravel Walk, his mother-in-law, received the news.

The missing sailor, who is 29 years of age, is the son of Mr E. Howes and the late Mrs. Howes, of Shipston-on Stour. He came to Tewkesbury when he was 6 years of age to live with Mrs. Sprackling in Gravel Walk.

He is a sawyer by trade and was for some time in the employ of Messrs. Sharpe & Fisher, of Cheltenham, until he joined the staff of the Refuge Insurance Company, and worked the Tewkesbury district. He joined the Navy in February 1941.

His brother, Richard, is also serving with the Royal Navy.

The CWGC recorded that he was serving with H.M. President III. However, a search of the internet revealed that this was not a ship.

*“My uncle was killed aboard a merchant ship, but he was in the Royal Navy. Three names: **HMS Glendower**, **HMS President III**, and **HMS Wellesley**, do not refer to actual ships, but were Royal Navy bases that trained gunners to man Merchant ships, known as DEMS (Defense Equipped Merchant Ships). The name of a DEMS gunner assigned to a Merchant ship appears on the ships articles, but he was not a Merchant seaman. If killed, his name appears under the name of his Royal Navy training base, not the merchant ship.”<sup>1</sup>*

It would seem, therefore, that Alec Howes lost his life during the Battle of the Atlantic as merchant ships tried to supply Britain with its food and developed sophisticated methods for defending these ships.



<sup>1</sup> For more information, please see [British Merchant Navy - DEMS](#)