

# Long Missing Sailor Pals Reported Dead

Wallace, Robert W.

Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox yesterday informed the parents of Robert W. Wallace of 124 North Fourteenth Street, and John H. Williamson, of 2123 Hanover Avenue (Rittersville section), both of Allentown, that the two seamen, who enlisted together, trained together and were reported missing on November 12, 1942 when their ship was sunk off Casablanca, are now listed as "deceased."

Mr. and Mrs. D. R. Wallace and Mr. and Mrs. Harvey J. Williamson received similar letters from the Secretary of the Navy in which details of the action in which the two boys were lost and efforts to rescue survivors were described.

Good friends in civilian life, the Navy careers of the two young men—Wallace was 20 years old and Williamson 22—ran parallel lines.

From the time they were sworn in on June 7, 1942 as "Pearl Harbor Avengers," the two boys advanced parallelly. They received their basic training at Newport, R. I., and received advancements to ratings of fireman, third class. Later they both received training in the operation of landing barges. The telegrams which reported them missing in action gave their rank as seamen, second class.

DEC 3 1943



JOHN H. WILLIAMSON

The letter from Mr. Knox stated, "A year has now elapsed since your son was reported missing in action. He was a member of the crew on board the U. S. S. Hugh L. Scott when that vessel was torpedoed and sunk by the enemy while participating in amphibious operations in the North African area on November 12, 1942.

"Rescue forces were aided by a calm sea, life boats and rafts which were put over the side of the ship and nearby American vessels.

"In view of immediate and subsequent searches made for personnel following this action and considering the length of time that has elapsed, and the fact that there are no known prisoners of war from this ship, I am reluctantly forced to the conclusion that your son is deceased.

"Pursuant to law, his death is presumed to have occurred on the day following expiration of an absence of 12 months.

"I wish to extend to you my sincere sympathy in your great loss and hope you may find comfort in the knowledge that your son gave his life for his country, upholding the highest traditions of the Navy. The Navy shares in your sense of be-

service."

The letter bore the personal signature of Secretary Knox.

A graduate of Catasauqua High School in 1939, Wallace played basketball and was a cheerleader at the school. After graduation, he worked as an apprentice at Bethlehem Steel until he joined the Navy.

He is survived by his parents, a sister, Mary E., wife of Henry Snyder of Catasauqua; another sister, Nettie Lou, at home; and the grandparents, former Burgess and Mrs. Robert McClellan of Catasauqua.

Williamson, too, was employed at Bethlehem Steel prior to his enlistment. He attended Allentown High school. Surviving are his parents and a sister, Mrs. Norman Geisinger of Allentown.

December 3, 1943