

## Norbert Amborski

Born: September 6, 1920  
Hometown: Buffalo, NY  
Class: 1943  
Service: Merchant Marine  
Position / Rank: Engine Cadet  
Date / Place of death: September 13, 1942 / 48-18N, 39-43W  
Date / Place of burial: September 13, 1942 / Lost at Sea – 48-18N, 39-43W  
Age: 22



Norbert Amborski signed on as Engine Cadet aboard the SS Stone Street on June 29, 1942 at the Port of New York. Joining him was Cadet-Midshipman Robert L. Vetter (Deck). The Stone Street (ex-Cara), a 20-year old Italian freighter seized at Savannah, GA in December 1941, was scheduled to sail for Belfast, Northern Ireland on July 6, 1942. Built in 1922, the ex-Cara's Italian boilers were difficult for its crew to operate and maintain. The Stone Street's Armed Guard Officer noted in his report that it was not unusual for the ship to throw a "tremendous shower of sparks from our funnel".

The SS Stone Street left Liverpool in ballast on September 5, 1942, in a coastal convoy that joined Convoy ON-127 on September 6 for the return voyage to New York. The convoy was accompanied by a Royal Canadian Navy Escort Group of two destroyers and four corvettes. For four days the convoy, shielded by stormy weather, avoided detection by searching U-Boats. However, around midday on September 10 the convoy was located and attacked by U-96, one of the twelve submarines of Wolfpack "Vorwarts". This first attack began a five day running battle with the wolfpack.

On the evening of September 12 the Stone Street was ordered to leave the convoy because of its inability to keep up with the convoy and constant marking of the convoy's position with its smoke and sparks. The Stone Street took up a course parallel to the convoy about 12 miles off its starboard side. At 0130 September 13, the Stone Street's lookouts observed a huge explosion in the direction of the convoy. The captain ordered the Stone Street to pull another 12 miles away from the convoy, but the maneuvering proved fruitless. At 1045 the Stone Street was found by U-594, one of the wolfpack submarines. The submarine fired three torpedoes at the straggling ship with one hitting amidships on the port side.

The ship immediately listed 45 degrees to port, making it impossible to man the guns or lower the port side lifeboats. Although the radio operator tried to send an "SOS" the signal was not received since the radio antenna was knocked out by the torpedo explosion. The Captain gave the order to abandon ship, but the crew was only able to successfully launch one of its two un-damaged lifeboats. Fortunately, two of its life rafts were also launched. Accounts differ on how Cadet-Midshipman Norbert Amborski wound up in the water, but all agree that he died when he was pulled into the ship's propeller while it was turning. One crew member, Messman John Watt, was killed trying to save Norbert Amborski. Several other crew members drowned while attempting to make it to the lifeboat.

Cadet-Midshipman Vetter and ten other volunteers were left on one of the life rafts, with Vetter in charge, while the Captain took the lifeboat and picked survivors out of the water. The Captain was still picking up survivors when U-594 surfaced and approached the raft, asking for the Captain and Chief Engineer. Cadet Vetter directed them to the lifeboat. In the process, the U-594 capsized the lifeboat, although the crew rescued the 17 men who had been on it, and placed them on two rafts with food and provisions. However, the U-594 took Captain Harald Anderson prisoner. Two days later the men in the rafts found the capsized life boat and were able to right it, finding nearly all of the provisions and supplies intact. On September 19, the SS Irish Larch found and rescued the 29 survivors of the Stone Street's crew and 10 of the ship's Naval Armed Guard.

Cadet-Midshipman Norbert Amborski was posthumously awarded the Mariners Medal, Combat Bar with star, Atlantic War Zone Bar, the Victory Medal and Presidential Testimonial Letter

Norbert Amborski, was the oldest of the two sons and two daughters of Nicholas Amborski and Angeline Amborski. Nicholas Amborski was a Pressman for the local newspaper. Norbert was a newspaper carrier for ten years, helping to support his family during the Depression. He is remembered by his brother, Dr. Leonard Amborski (author of "The Last Voyage" a tribute to his brother and the others who died aboard the Stone Street), as a devout Catholic and a good student, who finished high school with the highest grades in his class. After graduating from High School Norbert and his brother Leonard both entered Canisius College in the class of 1943. However, after only one year Norbert dropped out to accept an appointment to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy at New London, CT. He later resigned from the Coast Guard Academy but was subsequently accepted for admission to Kings Point. He was the first student from his High School to give his life in World War II.

According to Leonard, Norbert frequently told his mother that he would buy the family a house one day. In the end he did, with the insurance money from his death.