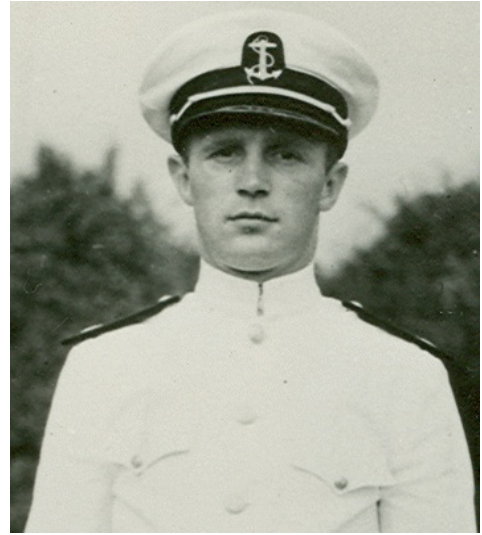


Randall Price Bourell

Born: January 4, 1921
Hometown: Olney, IL
Class: 1944
Service: Merchant Marine
Position / Rank: Deck Cadet
Date / Place of death: March 2, 1943 / 62-10N,
28-25W
Date / Place of burial: March 2, 1943 / Lost at
Sea - 62-10N, 28-25W
Age: 22



Randall P. Bourell signed on aboard the SS Meriwether Lewis as Deck Cadet on October 15, 1942 at New York, NY. His classmate Alan Clark had signed on as Deck Cadet two days earlier. The ship's two Engine Cadets were Walter E. Johnson and Daniel J. Maher. After an uneventful voyage to Casablanca, French Morocco the ship returned to New York on January 10, 1943. Walter Johnson was replaced by Francis McCann around January 25, 1943. On February 18, 1943 the Meriwether Lewis with its four Kings Point cadets sailed from New York as part of convoy HX-227 bound for the United Kingdom and then to Murmansk, Russia. The ship was loaded with a cargo of vehicle tires, ammunition, and according to some references, a deck cargo of PT Boats.

According to German Navy records, the Meriwether Lewis was identified as a straggler from a convoy, and unsuccessfully attacked, by U-759 in the early morning of March 2. The submarine was unable to re-attack the Meriwether Lewis due to problems with its engines, but it was able to contact U-634 and lead it to the straggler. The U-634 fired four torpedoes at the Meriwether Lewis, hitting it with one of them. The damage was apparently sufficient to stop the ship, but did not sink it. The submarine hit the Meriwether Lewis with two more torpedoes, the last of which detonated the ship's ammunition cargo. Although there was plenty of time to abandon ship, the USCGC Ingham (WPG 35) found only a 30-mile line of floating tires during its two day long search for the SS Meriwether Lewis and crew. Thus, the ship's entire crew of 44, including four Kings Point Cadet-Midshipmen, and 28 members of the Naval Armed Guard perished in the sinking.

Cadet-Midshipman Randall P. Bourrell was posthumously awarded the Mariner's Medal, Combat Bar, Atlantic War Zone Bar, the Victory Medal, and the Presidential Testimonial Letter.

Randall P. "Bud" Bourrell was the youngest child and only son of Claude A. Bourell and Aileen L. Bourell. According to his niece, Martha Hall, Bud loved the outdoors. He spent his early summers fishing, swimming, and boating at the family cabin on a lake. During his teenage years, Bud was a lifeguard at the Olney Community Pool. He was a standout athlete who was voted the football team's most valuable player for two years in a row and captain of the team in his senior year at Olney High School in 1939. He was also an accomplished woodworker and built a bedstead for his parents that they slept on for the rest of their lives.

Randall's name was engraved on the his parent's tombstone in the Haven Hill Cemetery, Olney, IL



Bourell Family Headstone, Haven Hill Cemetery, Olney, Illinois