

Robert Ray Everhart

Born: March 30, 1922
Hometown: Bala-Cynwd, PA
Class: 1943
Service: Merchant Marine
Position / Rank: Deck Cadet
Date / Place of death: November 4, 1942 / 71-05N,
13-20W
Date / Place of burial: November 4, 1942 / Lost at Sea
– 71-05 N, 13-20 W-
Age: 20



Robert R. Everhart reported aboard the Liberty Ship SS William Clark in New York harbor on August 17, 1942. Also joining the ship on the same day were Cadet Midshipmen Herman Garritsen, Richard Holland and Peter Smith. They joined a crew of 38 merchant ship officers and seamen along with 30 officers and men of the Navy's Armed Guard.



SS William Clark

The ship sailed on August 22, 1942, carrying a cargo of general military supplies in its holds and a deck cargo of aircraft and tanks to Murmansk, Russia. The William Clark traveled with convoys via Boston (BX-35) and Halifax, Nova Scotia (SC-99) to Reykjavik, Iceland where the ship would normally have joined a Murmansk bound convoy. However, due to the high losses of the previous two Murmansk Convoys, PQ-17 and PQ-18, and the demand for warships to support the landings in North Africa, the Murmansk convoys were suspended. In the interim, supplies still had to flow to Russia. So, the seven British, five U.S. and one Russian merchant ships that would have been

in the next Murmansk convoy were ordered to sail independently from Reykjavik in twelve hour intervals between October 29 and November 2, 1942 in what was called Operation FB. Of the thirteen ships, three turned back to Reykjavik, five arrived safely and five, including the SS William Clark, were lost.

At 1135 on November 4, 1942, near Jan Mayen Island, the SS William Clark was hit on the port side, amidships, by one of three torpedoes by U-354. The explosion completely destroyed the engine room killing all five of the engineers on duty, including Engine Cadet Peter J. Smith. The remaining crew abandoned ship into two life boats and a motorboat. Although the motorboat was able to keep the survivors together by towing the lifeboats, the towline was eventually broken and the boats became separated. One boat with 26 survivors was rescued after three days afloat by HMS Elstan (FY 240). The second boat with fourteen survivors were rescued by HMS Cape Passiser (FY 256) after over a week at sea. Robert Everhart apparently was in the motorboat which, with twenty other crew members, was under the command of the Captain. This boat was never heard from again.

Cadet-Midshipman Robert R. Everhart was posthumously awarded the Mariners Medal, Combat Bar with star, the Atlantic War Zone Bar, the Victory Medal, and the Presidential Testimonial Letter.

Robert R. Everhart was the youngest son of William T. Everhart and Helen Louisa Van Reed Everhart. His older brothers were Jack and William. Bob attended Lower Merion High School in Ardmore, Pennsylvania. He is described by his family as an excellent tennis player who was respected by his teammates and the student body in general. According to his niece, Bob was deeply loved by his family.

*And when the stream
Which overflowed the soul has passed away,
A consciousness remained that it had left
Deposited upon the silent shore
Of memory images and precious thoughts
That shall not die, and cannot be destroyed*

William Wordsworth