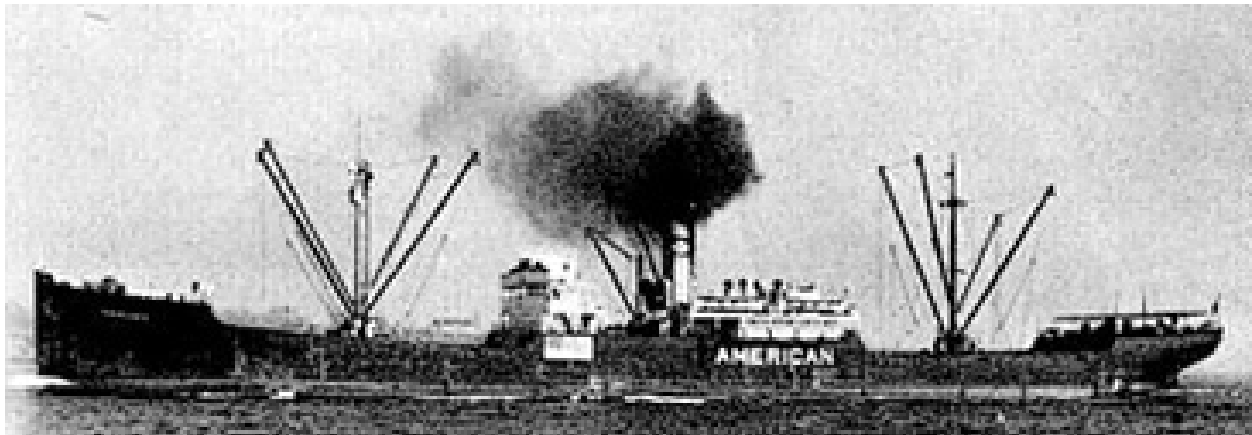


Calvert Sumner Foote

Born: April 22, 1922
Hometown: Scranton, PA
Class: 1943
Service: Merchant Marine
Position / Rank: Deck Cadet
Date / Place of death: July 6, 1942 / 71N 45E
Date / Place of burial: July 6, 1942 / Lost at Sea – 71N 45E
Age: 20



Calvert S. Foote signed on aboard the SS Pan Atlantic as Deck Cadet on April 6, 1942 at Philadelphia, PA. He was joined by his classmate, Cadet-Midshipman Carl E. Anderson. The Pan Atlantic, built in 1919, sailed from Philadelphia on April 22 for Russia via Halifax, Nova Scotia, Scotland and Reykjavik, Iceland with a cargo of tanks, steel, nickel, aluminum, food, petroleum equipment and explosives.



SS Pan Atlantic

At Reykjavik the Pan Atlantic joined with thirty-three other merchant ships, plus an oiler and three rescue ships, to form convoy PQ-17. The convoy sailed from Reykjavik (Hvalfjord) on June 27, 1942 bound for the Russian port of Archangel via an evasive route north of Bear Island into the Barents Sea. The convoy was escorted by three groups of British and American warships including covering forces of cruisers and battleships.

All went well for the first few days, although three ships had to return to Iceland. The convoy itself was not spotted by the Germans until July 1. Between July 1 and July 4 the convoy and its escorts beat back attacks by German torpedo bombers with the loss of two. However, on July 4 the British Admiralty became convinced that the battleship Tirpitz, with its escorts, was sailing to attack the convoy and its escorts. Shortly after 2100, unwilling to risk the Royal Navy's limited number of heavy warships in waters controlled by German aircraft, heavy surface ships and submarines, the Admiralty ordered the convoy's covering cruiser force to sail West, out of harms way, at high speed. A few minutes later the convoy commodore was ordered to disperse the convoy to proceed to Archangel independently. The result was as catastrophic as it was predictable. Shorn of their escorts, the merchant ships manfully tried their best to deliver the goods in the face of overwhelming odds. For many of the ships and their crews their best was not good enough.

Among the ships lost was the Pan Atlantic. By pluck and luck the ship survived all day July 5th and most of July 6th. At about 1610 GMT, when the ship was about 270 miles North of Cape Kanine, Russia, a German dive bomber found the Pan Atlantic. The Pan Atlantic's Armed Guard Sailors and its crew manned all of the guns and fiercely defended the ship. About five minutes later the aircraft dove on the ship, pulling out just out of the machine gun's range, dropping two bombs. The bombs hit forward of the bridge setting off an explosion in the cargo that broke the ship in half. Three minutes later the ship sank.

One boat was successfully launched from the Pan Atlantic by the Chief Mate, two crewmen and two Armed Guard Sailors. This boat pulled eighteen other men from the water or life rafts, including the Captain and Cadet-Midshipman Anderson. Cadet-Midshipman Calvert Foote was one of the 25 men killed during the attack. The men in the life boat spent three days in the frigid weather before being rescued by HMS Lotus (K 130) on July 9. However, their ordeal was not over. The HMS Lotus and the survivors aboard had to endure another 8 hours of German air attacks before they arrived in Archangel on July 11. Many of the survivors had to stay in Russia for weeks before they could get aboard a ship and make their way back to the United States. Even then, the return trip was as hazardous as the first trip. Many survivors, like Cadet-Midshipman Anderson, had to survive a second sinking before reaching home.

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

Calvert S. "Jack" Foote, was the only son of the Reverend Adrian B. Foote and Irene L. Foote. The Foote family traveled extensively as Reverend Foote moved from church to church. Jack and his sister Marjorie were born in South Dakota, but by the time Jack was seven and Marjorie was six they were living in Whitney Point, NY. By 1935, the family had moved to Pennsylvania where Jack attended the Methodist School in Wyoming Valley, Pennsylvania. Marjorie graduated from Johns Hopkins Medical School in Baltimore, MD. She practiced medicine in Massachusetts until her death in 1976.