

Michael Frank Kostal, Jr.

Born: September 12, 1922
Hometown: Coraopolis, PA
Class: 1942
Service: U.S. Navy
Position / Rank: Lieutenant (junior grade)
Date / Place of death: June 1, 1944 / North Pacific,
near Matsuwa Island
Date / Place of burial: June 1, 1944 / Lost At Sea --
near Matsuwa Island;
Tablets of the Missing at
Honolulu Memorial
Honolulu, Hawaii
Age: 21



Michael F. Kostal, Jr. entered the U.S. Merchant Marine Cadet Corps in the spring of 1941 and received his basic training at Fort Schuyler. After sailing as Engine Cadet aboard the SS Mormacrey and SS Argentina. He returned to Kings Point for his advanced training. While at the Academy he earned the affectionate moniker "The Moving Man" because he was "always on the go." He was one of 11 members of the 34 young men in his graduating class to volunteer for active duty in the Navy.

After he received his commission on 1 February, 1943 Michael Kostal was initially assigned to the USS Stevens (DD 479) as the ship's Assistant Engineering Officer. In October he was transferred to the USS Pollack (SS 180), where he served as the submarine's Assistant First Lieutenant until April 26, 1944. From April 28 to May 3, 1944, he was assigned to Submarine Division Forty Three where he served in relief crews aboard submarines whose crews were relieved for rest between patrols.



USS Herring (SS 233)

At some point in early May, Michael Kostal reported aboard the USS Herring (SS 233) as a permanent member of the crew. On May 16th, the Herring departed Pearl Harbor on its eighth war patrol. A week later, the Herring stopped at Midway Island to top off its fuel supply. From there, the submarine headed to a patrol area off the Kuril Islands. On May 31, the submarine had a rendezvous with the USS Barb (SS 220). Later that day, the crew of the Barb heard depth charges, which the Barb's Commanding Officer concluded were due to an attack by the Herring on Japanese shipping. The Barb later picked up a prisoner who confirmed that the Herring had sunk one of the escorts from an enemy convoy.

Japanese records later revealed that the Herring had also sunk a merchantman in the convoy. The following day, the Herring attacked and sank another two merchant ships. However, in the attack, the submarine itself was sunk by a shore battery, which scored direct hits on the conning tower. However, since there were no Allied witnesses to the attack, the fate of the Herring remained unknown for the duration of the war. When the submarine was not heard from by the middle of July, she was listed as missing and presumed lost.

Lieutenant (j.g.) Michael F. Kostal, Jr., USNR was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal and World War II Victory Medal. His name is engraved on the Tablets of the Missing at the Honolulu Memorial. For his merchant marine service he earned the Atlantic War Zone Bar and Presidential Testimonial Letter. Ironically, a shipmate of Kostal's aboard the SS Argentina, George Greishaber, was also killed in action with the Navy.

Michael F. Kostal, Jr. was the only son and oldest child of Michael F. Kostal and Mary Kostal. His younger sister was Marie. The 1930 U.S. Census indicates that the senior Kostal was a "boat engineer" at a steel mill. Ten years later Mr. Kostal's occupation was identified as "machinist" at a foundry.