

Robert Lorenz

Born: June 23, 1917

Hometown: New York, NY

Class: USMCC Cadet Officer - 1941
New York Maritime - 1940

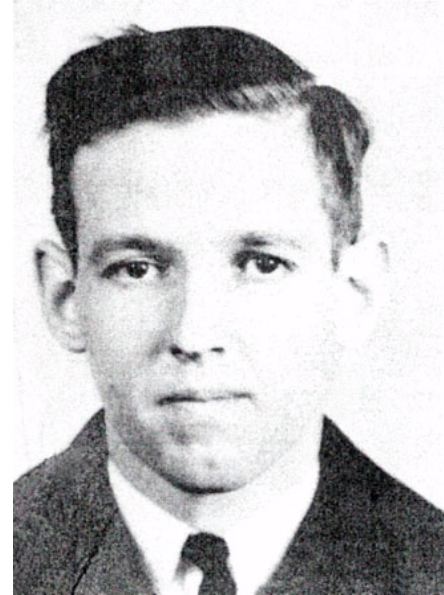
Service: U.S. Naval Reserve

Position / Rank: Lieutenant

Date / Place of death: On or about September 17,
1943 / near Shira Saki,
Honshu, Japan

Date / Place of burial: On or about September 17,
1943 / Lost at Sea – near
Shira Saki, Honshu, Japan;
Tablets of the Missing at Honolulu Memorial Honolulu,
Hawaii

Age: 25



U.S. Navy records indicate that Robert Lorenz entered the U.S. Naval Reserve on June 25, 1939 while he was a student at the New York State Merchant Marine Academy. He graduated on September 27, 1940. After graduation he applied for, and was accepted into, the Cadet Officer Program of the U.S. Merchant Marine Cadet Corps. He was assigned for training to the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Ship Explorer from October 16, 1940 until January 25, 1941. The Captain of the Explorer said in his report dated May 3, 1941,

“Mr. Lorenz displayed an unusual amount of ability and energy. He was considered the most capable of all the Cadets assigned this vessel. He is highly recommended for receiving a Certificate of Ability and for any other award that can be issued.”



**Cadet Officer (D)
Robert Lorenz**

While he was assigned to the Explorer, he applied for appointment as an Ensign, U.S. Naval Reserve and assignment to Active Duty. While he was waiting for his commission he was assigned to the U.S. Maritime Commission Cadet School at Fort Schuyler, NY. Robert Lorenz was commissioned Ensign, USNR with a date of rank of

February 14, 1941, but did not receive Active Duty orders. In the meantime he signed on as Cadet Officer aboard the passenger ship SS Uruguay as Cadet Officer (Deck) on April 11, 1941. He was promoted to Junior Third Officer for the ship's next voyage, signing on in this capacity on May 20, 1941. In July 1941 he wrote to the Navy inquiring into the status of his request for Active Duty. This letter appears to have broken a bureaucratic log jam as he was ordered to Active Duty on August 20, 1941. He signed off of the SS Uruguay on September 22, 1941 in order to accept his commission and report for Active Duty on September 24.

After initial processing, Ensign Lorenz left New York on September 29 and reported aboard the USS McCawley (AP 10) on October 4, 1941. Ensign Lorenz was assigned to duty as a Junior Watch and Division Officer and Assistant Boat Group Officer until he was detached on September 27, 1942. After initially being assigned to the Atlantic Fleet the USS McCawley was transferred to the Pacific Fleet. Upon its arrival in Wellington, New Zealand the USS McCawley became the flagship of Rear Admiral Richmond K. Turner, USN, Commander of Amphibious Forces for the Navy / Marine Corps amphibious landings at Guadalcanal. On June 15, 1942 Robert Lorenz, already a combat veteran was promoted to Lieutenant (junior grade). Upon his detachment from the USS McCawley on September 27, 1942 to attend Submarine School his Commanding Officer stated the following in his Report on Fitness of Officers,

“Very good personal and military character. In action at Guadalcanal Aug. 7 - 9 & Sept 18, 1942 with creditable performance of duty.”

On October 19, 1942 Lt. (j.g.) Lorenz reported to Submarine School at New London, CT for training to become a submarine officer. Two days later he was assigned to USS O-6 (SS 67), a World War I-era submarine used by that time for training submarine Sailors. He was detached from the O-6 on December 18, 1942 to report to the Submarine School to complete his training in submarines. Shortly before being detached from USS O-6 he applied for transfer to the Regular U.S. Navy. His request was denied because New York Merchant Marine Academy was not recognized as a Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps unit. On March 27, 1943 Lt. (j.g.) Lorenz completed his training and was transferred to Commander, Submarine Force Pacific for duty. Upon his arrival in Pearl Harbor Lt. (j.g.) Lorenz was assigned to Submarine Division Forth Three for temporary duty aboard one of its submarines and ultimate assignment to USS Pompano (SS 181).



USS Pompano (SS 181)

According to his service record, Robert Lorenz was promoted to full Lieutenant on May

1, 1943. He reported aboard the USS Pompano on May 12, 1943, the day after it began its refit period following its fifth war patrol. Lieutenant Lorenz was aboard for the Pompano's sixth war patrol, although he was not fully qualified in submarines until the very last days of the patrol. After a thirty-day long refit at Midway, the Pompano departed for its seventh war patrol on August 20, 1943. The Pompano's orders were to patrol the east coast of Honshu, Japan from August 29 to September 27, and then to return to Pearl Harbor. The Pompano attacked and sank two Japanese ships, and damaged a third, in early September.

A recent re-analysis of Japanese Navy records indicates that unbeknownst to the Pompano's crew, one of its fuel tanks had been damaged and was leaking oil. On September 17 Japanese anti-submarine forces spotted a moving oil slick off the northern coast of Honshu, about a mile off of the Shira Saki Lighthouse. The oil slick was attacked by both aircraft and anti-submarine patrol craft, resulting in large quantities of oil floating to the surface in a fixed location. On July 23, 2012 a U.S. Navy minesweeper operating off Shira Saki detected what is described as a "possible submarine" laying on the bottom.



**USS Pompano (SS-181) memorial
Juniper Hill Park, Frankfort, Kentucky**

The USS Pompano was stricken from the U.S. Naval Vessel Register on January 12, 1944. Lt. Robert Lorenz and the rest of the crew of the USS Pompano were declared dead on January 4, 1946.

Lieutenant Robert Lorenz, USNR was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart, American Defense Service Medal, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, the World War II Victory Medal and Submarine Combat Patrol

Insignia with one star. He was also awarded the Merchant Marine Defense Bar. His name is inscribed on the Tablets of the Missing at the Honolulu Memorial, Honolulu, Hawaii

Robert Lorenz was the youngest of Julius Lorenz and Eugenia Rieger Lorenz' two sons. Following graduation from Straubenmuller Textile High School in June 1936 Robert attended New York University and Columbian Preparatory School (Washington, D.C.) before entering New York Merchant Marine Academy in 1938. Robert and his older brother Theodore grew up in a hotel in Westchester, NY where their father was either the owner or manager.