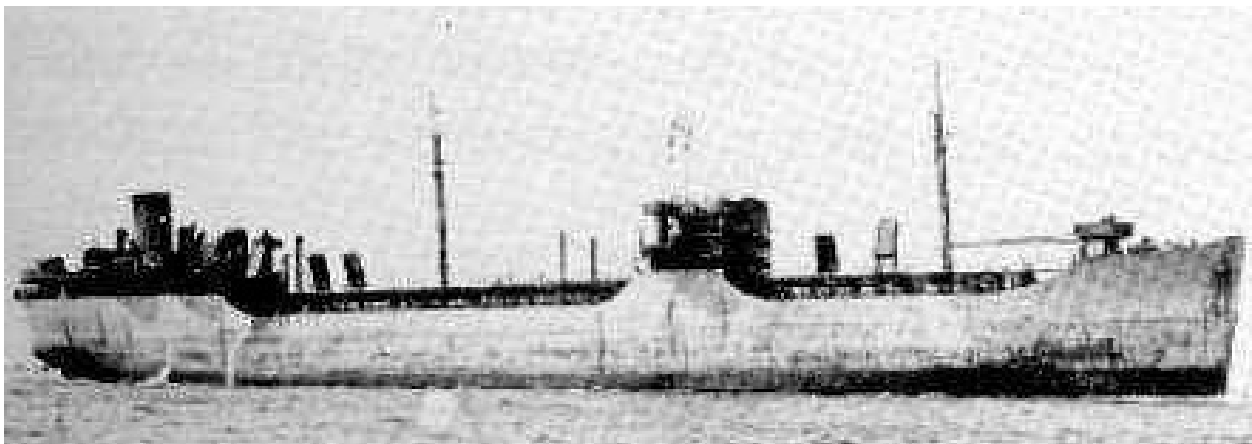


## Robie Knowles Wentworth

Born: June 19, 1921  
Hometown: Kennebunk Beach, ME  
Class: 1944  
Service: Merchant Marine  
Position / Rank: Third Assistant Engineer  
Date / Place of death: August 30, 1944 / 55-30N,  
7-30W  
Date / Place of burial: August 30, 1944 / Lost at Sea -  
55-30N, 7-30W  
Age: 23



On October 29, 1942 Robie K. Wentworth and a friend, James Wallace, left Kennebunk Beach, ME for the U.S. Maritime Service School at Sheepshead Bay, NY. Six weeks later, on December 15, 1942 Robie Wentworth wrote to his parents that he, and James, had been accepted to the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. During his Cadet training at sea Robie sailed as Engine Cadet on the *SS William Cullen Bryant*, *SS John P. Holland* and the *SS Abner Nash*. Following his graduation with section B-318, Robie Wentworth signed on aboard the *SS Jacksonville*, a T2-SE-A1 tanker, as Third Assistant Engineer on August 19, 1944. Also signing on aboard the *Jacksonville* was Cadet-Midshipman Leroy P. Lawrence, the Deck Cadet.



**SS Jacksonville**

On August 30<sup>th</sup>, about 50 miles north of Londonderry, Northern Ireland the *Jacksonville* was maneuvering with four other ships to split off from Convoy CU-36 to sail for Loch

Ewe, Scotland. The ship had just completed an 86-degree turn to take its place at the end of a single column on the port side of the convoy when it was struck by a torpedo from U-482. The *Jacksonville's* gasoline cargo ignited immediately. Within seconds of the torpedo's explosion the entire ship was on fire with flames shooting hundreds of feet into the air. Witnesses on other ships said that they could hear the ammunition in the ready service boxes exploding. Less than five minutes after the first torpedo, U-482 fired another torpedo, breaking the ship in two. With no time to launch either lifeboats or rafts, all but two members of the ship's crew and Armed Guard, perished. The only survivors were two men who jumped overboard before the flames caught them.

Based on his merchant marine service Robie K. Wentworth was posthumously awarded the Mariners Medal, Combat Bar with star, Atlantic War Zone Bar, the Victory Medal and Presidential Testimonial Letter.

Robie K. Wentworth was the eldest of Warren K. Wentworth and Mabel V. Wentworth's thirteen children. He graduated from Kennebunk high School in 1940 where he played football, basketball and baseball. Robie's family owned and operated the Wentworth Hotel. The family lived in the hotel during the winter months and in a nearby cottage during the summer "tourist" months. Robie's college plans were dashed by a combination of his father's high medical bills for rheumatic fever and a severe drop in the tourist trade in 1939 and 1940. In September 1941 Robie and his brother Bailey began working at the South Portland Shipyard building Liberty Ships. Robie's long time girl friend Irmena was known as the "pin up" of Section B-318. The two were engaged to be married when the *Jacksonville* returned from this voyage.

In 1988 eleven of his section mates placed a plaque in the Memorial Arbors at Kings Point in Robie's honor. Sometime later his family wrote a detailed biography of Robie. The following poem was found in the memorabilia that Robie's Mother's kept of him.

### **To My Soldier Son**

Today I watched you go away,  
You left on that long, long ride.  
You were so straight, my tall dark son  
My heart just swelled with pride.  
When you are so far away, my dear  
I'll miss you so, I know,  
But I feel that whatever may come,  
I'll be proud of where'er you go.  
You've been such a pal to your mother, dear,  
I'll treasure each precious hour,  
And pray that God will keep you safe,  
'Till you're come home with me once more.

To the day she died Robie's mother believed that he would somehow return to her.