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THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON

16 January 1946

Mr. and Mrs. Wilborn E. Pardew
Roaring River
North Carolina

My dear Mr. and Mrs. Pardew:

Your son, Oscar Walter Pardew, Seaman first class, United States Naval Reserve, has been carried on the official records of the Navy Department in the status of missing in action as of 14 July 1943. He was a member of an armed guard crew serving on board the SS SAMUEL HEINTZELMAN when that vessel was reported overdue from patrol and presumed lost.

On 1 July 1943 the SAMUEL HEINTZELMAN sailed singly from Fremantle, Australia for Colombo, Ceylon, where she was due to arrive on 14 July 1943. No message was known to have been received from that ship following her departure. She did not arrive at Colombo or any other known port. However, on 30 September 1943 debris from a vessel, including a plank marked SS SAMUEL HEINTZELMAN was washed up off Minni Minni Village, Maldives Islands. On the previous day, two life boats, apparently unoccupied, were sighted and later disappeared in the same area. Enemy naval units were known to be operating in the Indian Ocean at the time the SAMUEL HEINTZELMAN was lost. To date, no further word has been received concerning that vessel or her crew.

In view of the additional length of time that has now elapsed since your son was determined to have been missing in action, and in view of the fact that his name has not appeared on any list of personnel liberated from Japanese prisoner of war camps, I am reluctantly forced to the conclusion that your son is deceased. In compliance with Section 5 of Public Law 490, 77th Congress, as amended, the death of your son is, for the purposes of termination of pay and allowances, settlement of accounts, and payment of death gratuities, presumed to have occurred as of 7 January 1946.

I know what little solace the formal and written word can be to help meet the burden of your loss, but in spite of that knowledge, I cannot refrain from saying very simply, that I am sorry. It is hoped that you may find comfort in the thought that your son gave his life for his country, upholding the highest traditions of the Navy.

Sincerely yours,

James Forrestal