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NAVY DEPARTMENT
BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



18 July 1944

Mr. Welborn E. Pardew
Rearing River
North Carolina

Dear Mr. Pardew:

You were informed by this Bureau on 21 August 1943 that your son, Oscar Walter Pardew, Seaman first class, U.S. Naval Reserve, was missing. He was a member of the armed guard crew serving on board the merchant ship, SS SAMUEL HEINTZELMAN, when that vessel was presumed lost in the Indian Ocean after failing to reach her destination on 14 July 1943. No message was known to have been received from the ship after it left port. The only positive indication as to what happened to the vessel so far reported to the Navy Department is that in September 1943 wreckage was washed up on an island in the Indian Ocean which included a plank with the name of the ship marked on it. Enemy vessels were known to have been operating in that area during July 1943.

Pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 490, 77th Congress, as amended, the Secretary of the Navy has given careful consideration to the available circumstances surrounding the disappearance of your son. In view of the possibility that your son may be an unreported prisoner of war, the Secretary of the Navy has directed that he be continued in a missing status until information is received or other circumstances occur which would indicate that he should no longer be continued in this status.

In order to explain certain matters of importance to you concerning the missing status, the enclosed booklet has been prepared. You are urged to read it carefully and keep it for future reference.

The Navy Department is aware of the anxiety experienced by the relatives of those men whose fate remains undetermined. You are assured that you will be promptly informed upon receipt of further information concerning your son.

By direction of the Chief of Naval Personnel.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "A. C. Jacobs".

A. C. Jacobs
Commander, U.S.N.R.
Head of Casualties and
Allotments Section

Encl.