

Radioman Paul E. Hope USCG WIKOO - Home state Vermont - Mr. Hope's heritage was Canadian and his people settled in Northern Vermont. Not many will ever know that Paul Hope existed but there will be a few references in the annals of time if you now where to look. Paul was a Coast Guard Radioman during WWII - he was assigned transport duty. The vessel, leased, US Army Transport Dorchester radio sign WOBO. Their mission, transporting troops and material to Greenland in convoy.



The night of 3 Feb 1943 only 150 miles from making port and safety, the SS Dorchester loaded with troops bound for Europe was stalked by a German U-boat - The thunder struck the Dorchester and foundered in 25 minutes. On the way down (4) military chaplains gave their life preservers to the men who did not have them. There were many rescues that night by the escort Cutters Comanche and Escanaba but the Chaplain's were not among the living nor our RM - Paul E. Hope. Of 902 men only 227 survived.

Paul Hope our subject was aboard the ill fated Dorchester that night, under strict orders for radio silence. The power went off immediately due to the torpedoed engine room.

The angle of list caused only a short time to prepare for ditching. One of the convoy escorts was running Sonar and heard the explosion & knew a convoy ship was hit and alerted his skipper. The Cutter Comanche found 13 life rafts and rescued many men in the water.

Hope is remembered in Vermont as the Burlington Radio Club honors his old call WIKOO & in NYC at Battery Point in Manhattan at the East Coast Memorial which lists 4,601 servicemen who lost their lives in the Atlantic Ocean during World War II. The befitting memorial features eight 19 foot high granite walls, or pylons inscribed with the names, rank and home state of the four thousand six hundred plus one casualties. The monument was restored in 1997 by a coalition of arts and conservation groups.

Another memorial at Battery park, The Wireless Operators Memorial, dedicated in 1915 to the days when radiomen were indispensable members, who served under often perilous conditions. Indeed the first name inscribed on the memorial is that of Jack Phillips, the radio operator on the ill fated Titanic. The memorial is modest - a simple square column inscribed with names. Drawing the attention of the novelist Willa Cather, who wrote "This Monument is one of the most attractive and most friendly commemorative works in New York. These men died in storm and terror, but their names are brought together here and abide in a pleasant place with cheerful companionship.

Pictured the USAT Dorchester (converted troop carrier) after torpedo impact, the small red emergency lights are seen on the life jackets of the men aboard and in the water. Painted by Retired C.G. Radioman Dick Levesque.. He has a wonderful page on the Internet.



The Dorchester radio call WOBO is reissued to a Cincinnati FM Radio outlet, ironically one of the station engineers was a member of the convoy helping rescue war time survivors of the SS Dorchester that dreaded night in 1943. Continued

The radio engineer in Cincinnati was none other than Radioman Bruno Yoka 1920-2004 aboard the Cutter Comanche on convoy duty. Yoka was also a ham issued W8SKK. A sad note, the Cutter Escanaba suffered the same fate as the Dorchester afterwards with only two survivors.

I later learned Paul Hope joined the Coast Guard October 14th 1942 and approx 4 months later was a war casualty aboard the Dorchester. He left behind his wife Katherine, mother and dad and a brother in Burlington VT. His dad was in the printing and sign business. Paul's full name was Paul Emile Hope - his QSL card is on file at the club as it was obtained and some records were kept in safe keeping.

Mr. Hope wrote a letter to the Burlington Club the night before they left port on that fatal trip in 1943 and it was kept and housed in the local rectory for many years, but due to a fire, the letter was lost. In that letter Paul described the ship and how he liked the Coast Guard and his radioman position.

We were told Paul's QSL W1KOO is a picture type and had a lake on the face. It was obtained from a W7 station in the northwest. I've tried several times to procure a copy but no avail.

W8SU 2008

