

Joseph Williams Vance, Jr., T-36
4 December 1918 – 8 August 1942
(aged 23)



MEMPHIAN REPORTED MISSING IN SEA ACTION.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph W. Vance of 1976 Higbee last midnight were advised by official Washington source that their son, Lieutenant Joseph W. Vance, Jr., has been reported missing in action following a naval engagement in the Southwest Pacific.

Lieutenant Vance was 22 and entered the Naval Reserve exactly two years ago. He took special training on the USS Arkansas in a cruise from New York to Panama, and after further training for three months was commissioned February 28, 1941.

The young officer was well known in Memphis. He was a graduate of Tech High and attended Southwestern two years and the University of Florida one year. He was a member of St. John's Methodist Church. His father is associated with the Memphis Realty Company. Besides his parents, he has a sister, Willa Vance, also from Memphis.

Information from the Commercial Appeal, Thursday, August 20, 1942.

Naval Memphis Hero's Name Lives Again in Sleek Ship

Sound of blocks being knocked away, the explosive crash of a splintering bottle, rumble of a great weight immediately lost in the rising shout, hiss of water protesting the slap of a gigantic steel hull.....then riding the waves eager for battle, was the proud ship, claimant of a name honored here ----Lieutenant Joseph W. Vance, Jr., a hero who died a hero's death fighting the Japs.

With the lieutenant's mother, Mrs. Joseph W. Vance, Sr., 1976 Higbee, blessing the ship, a destroyer escort vessel yesterday carried the white letters, U. S. S. Vance, down the ways in the yards of the Brown Shipbuilding Corporation, Houston TX. The hull fell sideways into the quiet harbor, rocked violently, slowly came erect, and was still.

CITED FOR BRAVERY

She seemed to be waiting, hoping for orders which should send those letters back to the Solomons, not to haunt, but to hunt the enemy.

Lieutenant Vance was one of the first officers from Memphis killed in action. While serving on the U. S. S. Parent, a destroyer, he was cited for bravery and coolness in action. Soon afterward he was raised in rank and assigned to the Canberra, an Australian ship, in covering Marine landings on Guadalcanal last August.

Prior to his enlistment he was an employee of the First National Bank here. He entered the Navy in 1940 and was commissioned in February of the next year.

Also attending the launching yesterday were the officer's father and sister, Miss Willa Vance, who served as maid of honor.

Information from The Commercial Appeal, Saturday, July 17, 1943.

