

## **RAYNHAM FALLEN HERO**

### **SEAMAN FIRST CLASS AUGUSTUS C. OLIVER, JR., USN**

Augustus C. Oliver, Jr. was born in Raynham, Massachusetts on February 27, 1926. He was the son of Augustus C. and Anne V. (Britton) Oliver. Augustus had 5 sisters and no brothers. Prior to enlisting, Augustus worked with his father operating the former Oliver's General Store in Raynham.

Augustus enlisted for the duration of the war in the United States Navy in Boston. He was assigned serial number 2056215.

Seaman First Class Oliver was assigned to the ammunition ship USN Hood (AE-11). She was the lead ship of her class of ammunition ships for the United States Navy in World War II. She was the first ship named after Mount Hood, a volcano in the Cascade Range in Oregon.

She set sail on her maiden voyage on August 21, 1944, loaded with a hold full of ordinance for the troops in the Pacific. She arrived in Manus on September 22, 1944 and began supplying the ships destined for the Philippine invasion.

On the morning of November 10, 1944, the USN Hood was anchored in about 35 feet of water in Seadler Harbor at Manus Island. It was loaded with 3,800 tons of ordinance material. At 08:55 am, the ship exploded, killing the entire crew. The ship was obliterated, while also sinking or severely damaging 22 smaller craft nearby.

Seaman First Class Oliver's remains, along with his 350 shipmates, were never recovered. Eighty two sailors from adjacent ships were also killed in the explosion. A Naval Inquiry was convened to investigate the explosion but was unable to ascertain the exact cause of the blast. A tablet was erected in the Manila American Cemetery, Manila, Philippines in commemoration of the lost crew.

Seaman First Class Oliver was only 18 when he died. He received the following military awards for his honorable service:

Purple Heart Medal with white cross distinguishing device to denote a posthumous award

American Campaign Medal

Asiatic - Pacific Campaign Medal

World War II Victory Medal

The Route 104 bridge over Route 24 in Bridgewater is named after Seaman First Class Augustus C. Oliver, Jr. USN.

Seaman First Class Oliver's family home was at 120 Broadway, near what is now WalMart. The Oliver General Store was located near Mel's Diner. For this reason, it is appropriate that his FALLEN HERO sign be erected on Broadway, at the highly visible intersection with Center Street.