

Francis Parfitt, Radio Man Second Class 1916-1942

Francis Parfitt grew up at 203 Blackburn Street just down the street from the current American Legion building, and was a 1936 graduate of Ripon High School.

He enlisted in the U.S. Navy on January 19, 1939 and was a radio operator. The December 7, 1945 Commonwealth reported that Parfitt, “missing in action since March 1942, he is now presumed to have been killed in action.” On or around March 2, 1942, Parfitt’s ship, the U.S.S. Pillsbury, was sunk by Japanese cruisers, approximately 200 miles east of Christmas Island which is south of Singapore.

The ship was one of two major American surface war ships lost in WWII with no survivors. The only reports from the battle came from later interrogations of Japanese participants in the battle. Parfitt was officially declared dead on November 25th, 1945, three years after he went missing.

Following World War II, the the Frank H. Brown chapter of the American Legion Post was renamed the “Brown-Parfitt Post 43” to commemorate Francis Parfitt, the first fallen Ripon soldier of World War II.

