

## War Era Story Project 2012

Submitted by: Patty Lee Ziskin

Current home town: Dayton

Age: Not given

My dad, Joseph Potasky, enlisted in the Navy in March, 1944. I was 9 and he was 36. His shipmates called him "Pop." I believe he had basic training somewhere on the east coast, but I'm not sure exactly where. He was assigned to serve aboard the *USS LST-971*, which was sailing in a convoy en route to Liverpool, England, when it was struck by a torpedo from a German U-Boat.



My mother and I lived in an apartment on Euclid Avenue in Dayton. Her mom and dad lived around the corner on Cambridge Avenue. The back doors of each apartment opened into a shared hall. I was in my grandparents' apartment as much as my own.

My grandpa had a serious heart condition and had to be in an oxygen tent, but he wanted to stay at home. When my mother received the telegram from the War Department stating my dad was missing in action, no one told my grandpa as he and my dad were very close. We all walked around grandpa trying to be cheerful.

The War Department confirmed my dad's death on August 14, 1944. The enclosed newspaper article states his death was not made known because of grandpa's serious health condition. When grandpa died three months later, all of that information was published.

Soon after the death of my grandpa, my grandmother moved in with my mom and me. My mother went to work as a typist for her brother-in-law, Julius Ruttenberg. Grandma looked after me when school was over. After graduation, my mother looked to the Navy for financial support so I could attend college. The government had passed the War Orphans Educational Assistance Act of 1956 and I was eligible. I remember standing in line with ex-servicemen to receive financial aid. I was able to graduate from The Ohio State University.

A few years ago, I found more information about my dad's death on the computer. I learned the name of the captain of the German submarine *U-667*, which torpedoed dad's ship. I also learned the number of survivors, other information about his ship, as well as the rest of the convoy. My dad was awarded the Purple Heart, the European Middle- Eastern Campaign medal and the American Campaign medal. His name is engraved on a wall in England.

# Philip Kohn Dies, Unaware Son-In-Law Killed In War



**PHILIP KOHN**

Philip Kohn, 60, Dayton jeweler for the past 33 years, died at 3:40 p. m. Tuesday at his home, 333 Cambridge av., having been kept in ignorance of the fact that his son-in-law, Second Class Seaman Joseph Potasky, had been killed in action on Aug. 14.

Potasky was listed as missing in action after the LST on which he served had been torpedoed in the European war theater. His death was later confirmed by the War department. Because of the seriousness of Mr. Kohn's illness, he was not told of Seaman Potasky's death, and, complying with a request from the family, The Dayton News withheld publication of the casualty until now.

Mr. Kohn was born in Springfield and moved to Dayton in 1911. He was president of the Philip Kohn Co., wholesale jewelers; vice president of Kohn's Inc., operating a retail store at 39 E. Fifth st., and vice president of the Maybrook Co., 20 W. Fifth st.

He was a member of Temple Israel and Eshcol lodge of the B'nai B'rith, one of the founders of the B'nai B'rith bowling team



**JOSEPH POTASKY**

and a member of the YMCA volley ball team.

Surviving are the widow, Ida; two daughters, Mrs. Julius Ruttenberg and Mrs. Joseph Potasky, both of Dayton; a brother, Henry Kohn, of Hollywood, Fla., and two sisters, Mrs. Harry Bernstein of Springfield and Mrs. Fanny Salzburg of Miami, Fla.

Funeral services will be held Thursday at 2:30 p. m. at the R. J. Worst funeral home, 635 Salem av., with Rabbi Louis Witt officiating. Burial will be in Riverview cemetery. Friends may call at the funeral home after 4 p. m. Wednesday.

Seaman Potasky, a graduate of Steele high school, was 36. He enlisted in the navy in March, 1944. Surviving, besides the widow, Ruth, are a daughter, Lee Ann, 9; his parents, Mr. and Mrs. L. J. Potasky, of Dayton; three brothers, Moe, Harry and Jack of Dayton, and four sisters, Mrs. Harry Magaziner of Zanesville, Mrs. Ben Greenblatt of Brookville, Mrs. Louis Pollack of Long Island, N. Y., and Mrs. Dan Spivack of Detroit.