

Harold Hamner Beasley

September 3, 1920 – October 30, 1941

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The First Local Victim

Summers county has made her first supreme sacrifice to the present European war. We have reference to the death of Harold Beasley, 21, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Beasley, of Madams creek, who were notified by telegram early Tuesday morning that their son is permanently missing. The message was from government officials. Harold enlisted in the navy on July 22, 1940, at Bluefield. He was later assigned to the Reuben James, a U. S. destroyer and was regarded as a good and faithful sailor. The victim was graduated from the Hinton High school in 1938 where he was a member of the school band. The young man had enlisted with Aaron H. "Bussie" Stewart, of Beckley, another member of the Reuben James crew destroyed by a German torpedo, Thursday night. They were close friends and Stewart had visited Beasley here on his last visit to his home—in January of this year.

HAROLD HAMNER BEASLEY REPORTED AS DEFINITELY AMONG THE DEAD— SON OF MR. AND MRS. C. E. BEASLEY

"It is with the deepest regret that the navy department notifies you that from the latest available information it appears that your son, Harold Hamner Beasley, seaman, First Class, U. S. Navy lost his life in line of duty and in the service of his country when the U. S. S. Reuben James was torpedoed and sunk."

In the above words, contained in a telegram to Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Beasley of Madams Creek, the Navy Department Tuesday ended their uncertainty as to the fate of their 21-year old son, a member of the crew of the ill-fated destroyer, Reuben James, torpedoed and sunk in North Atlantic waters last Friday.

The telegram, received just after 9 o'clock, Tuesday morning, broke the tension of more than four days which began with the radio announcement of the sinking of the U. S. destroyer, but gave no word as to the fate of its crew.

"I won't give up until a telegram arrives," the mother declared, but after long waiting she was in a state of collapse, and upon the advice of the family physician the fateful message was withheld from her, for a time.

Beasley is one of 95 officers and men listed as "missing" following the disaster, and scant hope is held that few, if any of them might have been picked up by other vessels and not yet reported to the navy department.

Memorial services, in honor of the deceased, will be held next Monday at 10 a. m. and 8 p. m. in the Memorial bldg., here. Two services, both under the auspices of the Hinton High School, had to be arranged in order to seat all the student body.