

Bio

Every fall we are warned to get our flu shots to counter the danger of the impending flu du jour. We have learned that all flues are not created equal. In a few weeks in autumn 1918 an epidemic of Spanish Influenza ravaged the United States. It was called the Spanish Flu because it was believed to have been carried to the USA on a Coast Guard Cutter from Spain. You would be working with someone one day, they would go home because they didn't feel well and within days they were gone. The death toll around the world was 21 million of which 548,452 were in the USA – ten times more than the 53,513 American lives lost in WWI. Remote Eskimo villages in inaccessible Alaskan regions were completely wiped out. The flu first appeared in March 1918, began with a high fever and aching bones. After about four days, many cases developed pneumonia. The lungs of the victims would fill with fluid, causing death. Highly contagious, "open face sneezing" in public was subject to fines and imprisonment. By May it had consumed two continents as US troop ships, unaware that they carried with them the virus, transported it to Europe and by July was officially pandemic. The Spanish Flu killed its millions and then mysteriously disappeared. It also circulated in the military, striking first at Fort Riley, Kansas in March 1918 but remaining relatively dormant until the fall. Eventually a call-up of 140,000 draftees was canceled because camp hospitals were full. Two of Ridgewood's 113 Honored Dead fell victim to this flu. A stellar Ridgewood High School graduate from Allendale also died of this epidemic.

Born in 1896, James Hubbard lived on West Crescent Avenue in Allendale where his father was President of the Board of Education for many years. He finished the Allendale School in 1910 and graduated from Ridgewood High School in the class of 1914 where he won the prestigious Frank A. Thayer Prize for good citizenship. His classmates named him Best Student, he played football, was on the Arrow staff for two years and was class treasurer his Junior and Senior years. The Mary A. Hubbard School in Ramsey was eventually named for his sister.

He went on to graduate from Rutgers, enlisted in the Navy in Philadelphia October 22, 1917, trained at Norfolk and then was piped aboard the USS Arizona January 25, 1918. The Arizona was commissioned October 17, 1916 and her fate was written in infamy December 7, 1941 at Pearl Harbor.

Operating out of Norfolk throughout the war, the Arizona served with the Atlantic fleet starting in March 1917, initially as a gunnery training ship, and patrolling the eastern seaboard from the Virginia to New York. She proudly sailed out of Hampton Roads for Portland, England in November 1918 – one week after the armistice – to rendezvous December 12 with the George Washington which was transporting President Wilson to the Paris Peace Conference. She thus became part of the honor escort that arrived in Brest, France on December 13.

On that same December 13th day, as the Arizona sailed from Brest for home with 238 WWI veterans, Hubbard became ill. He died December 23, 1918 of Spanish Meningitis aboard the Arizona. The official report states "illness commenced December 13, 1918 with mental symptoms, followed later by partial hemiplegia. On December 19, 1918 meningitis set in. A gram-negative diplococcus was found in the spinal fluid, not intracellular. Fluid clear and under pressure. Serum treatment instituted." Because of the number of deaths, the US Navy issued a directive that men who died at sea be shrouded in the US flag and released overboard. Seaman Hubbard is listed on the memorial plaques in Allendale. At death he was 22 years old.

Findagrave.com

Chris Stout

Burial:

[Cedar Lawn Cemetery](#)

Paterson

Passaic County

New Jersey, USA

Plot: Sec 18