

Peter Chung Ying Chue

Born: August 15, 1920
Hometown: Berkeley, CA
Class: 1944
Service: Merchant Marine
Position / Rank: Third Assistant Engineer
Date / Place of death: January 4, 1945 / Mindoro, Philippines
Date / Place of burial: January 4, 1945 / Lost at Sea -- Mindoro, Philippines; Memorial Service held at True Sunshine Episcopal Mission, Oakland, CA, February 23, 1947
Age: 24



Peter C. Y. Chue graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Plant Pathology in May 1941. In November 1942, he began his cadet training at the San Mateo Basic School. On January 23, 1943 he signed on as the Engine Cadet aboard the SS Egbert Benson and returned to San Francisco from Australia on April 4. After making another voyage on the Egbert Benson, Peter was transferred to the brand new Liberty Ship SS John Ross, where he signed on as Engine Cadet on August 4, 1943. When he signed on aboard the *John Ross*, Peter Chue had already been sailing for seven months. He signed off the John Ross when it returned to San Francisco from Milne Bay, New Guinea on July 7, 1944. After graduating from the Academy Peter C. Y. Chue applied for active duty in the Navy, but was rejected on the basis that he did not meet the physical requirements.

Shortly after graduation from Kings Point, Peter C. Y. Chue signed on aboard the SS Lewis L. Dyche as the ship's Third Assistant Engineer. On the morning of January 4, 1945 the Lewis L. Dyche, loaded with a cargo of ammunition and explosives, was anchored in Mindoro Harbor. Other ships, including the USS Monadnock (CM 9), USS Pecos (AO 6) and USS Susquehanna (AOG 5) were anchored nearby. At 0755 GCT an air raid warning was sent to the ships by Army authorities ashore, bringing the ships' crews to battle stations. Twenty-five minutes later Japanese aircraft were sighted bombing the adjacent seaplane anchorage. Shortly thereafter, a Japanese "Val" dive bomber was seen diving on the SS Lewis L. Dyche. The attacking aircraft leveled off about twenty feet above the sea and headed straight for the Dyche, hitting it amidships.

According to the USS Monadnock's after action report,

“The resultant explosion completely disintegrated the Dyche and showered this ship with debris which caused one death, twelve casualties and minor damage.”

Peter C. Y. Chue was posthumously awarded the Mariners Medal, Combat Bar, Pacific War Zone Bar, Philippine Liberation Bar, Victory Medal and Presidential Testimonial Letter.

Peter Chue was the only son of Bak Yuen (also known as Min Yin Shea) Chue's four children. The 1940 U.S. Census identifies Bak Yuen Chue as widow. Peter's sisters were Ruth (three years older), Alice (one year younger) and Helen (two years younger). The 1940 Census identifies Bak Yuen Chue as a language instructor, while Ruth and Alice worked in a department store. The same document shows that Peter was working as a laboratory technician in a public health laboratory.

Peter's last letter to his family, dated December 26, 1944, tells of a Christmas morning trip ashore in the Philippines,

“We went ashore Christmas morning bright and early, and attended mass at a native Catholic church. The church is an old stone structure whose walls showed its age by the presence of moss and vines. It was a quiet and beautiful ceremony.... We felt like bums walking into the service, the Filipinos wore neat white suits... and the womenfolk were well decked out. And here we came, tromping in our khakis and mud up to our knees!”

Peter was remembered as being active in the Phi Epsilon Chi and Pi Alpha Pi fraternities and the U.C. Chinese Students Club in college. He taught English to Chinese boys at the Oakland True Sunshine Mission and helped with the church's Sunday School. The program for his memorial service included the following;

To Peter

Your life, too brief here among us,
Shines on within our hearts;
It lifts our thoughts from sorrow –
New hope and faith imparts.

Your brave devotion to duty
Will be a guiding light
To others who are seeking
The way to Peace with Right.

Your valiant spirit is with us,
Dispelling doubt and fear;
It bids us face the future
With Courage and Good Cheer!

