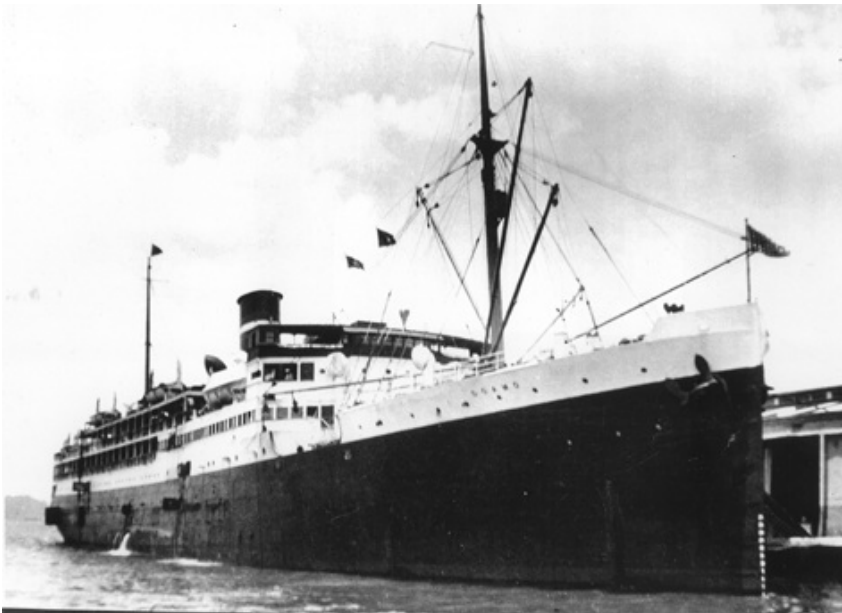


## Joseph Giovinco

Born: April 2, 1924  
Hometown: Brooklyn, NY  
Class: 1943  
Service: Merchant Marine  
Position / Rank: Deck Cadet  
Date / Place of death: December 2, 1942 / 48-45N, 23-30W  
Date / Place of burial: December 2, 1942 / Lost at Sea – 48-45N, 23-30W  
Age: 18



Joseph Giovinco signed on as Deck Cadet aboard the SS Coamo on October 2, 1942 at New York, NY. He was joined by Cadet-Midshipman Henry Levett who also signed on as Deck Cadet. The Coamo was built in 1925 for the East Coast to Puerto Rico passenger trade. When World War II began the ship was chartered by the Army Transport Service for use as a Troop Ship.



**SS Coamo**

After a voyage to Algiers, the Coamo sailed with sixteen other merchant ships in convoy MKF-3 on November 23, 1942, bound for the West Coast of Scotland. On December 1, 1942, as the convoy was nearing the British Isles, the Coamo was ordered by the British Admiralty to proceed independently to New York, without escort.

On the evening of the following day the Coamo was sighted by U-604 in a rising gale. According to

German Navy records U-604 closed to within 800 yards of its target and fired one torpedo. At 1818 GCT the torpedo struck the Coamo underneath its bridge. The

Coamo sank within five minutes of the attack without launching a single lifeboat. Although the submarine's crew reported seeing some survivors leave the ship on rafts none of the sixteen passengers, 37 Armed Guard Sailors and 133 crew including Cadet-Midshipmen Joseph Giovinco and Henry Levett, were seen again. It is believed that any survivors who left the Coamo died in the gale that swept the area for the next three days. The sinking of the SS Coamo was the largest loss of merchant crew on any U.S. Flag merchant vessel during the Second World War. All of the other ships in Convoy MKF-3 arrived safely at their destinations.

Cadet-Midshipman Joseph Giovinco was posthumously awarded the Mariners Medal, Combat Bar with star, Atlantic War Zone Bar, the Mediterranean-Middle East War Zone Bar, the Victory Medal, and the Presidential Testimonial Letter.

Joseph "Joe" Giovinco was the eldest of Italian immigrants Saverio Giovinco and Mary Giovinco's four children (Joseph, Frank, Anthony and Frances). The 1940 U.S. Census identifies Saverio's occupation as shoemaker and Mary's as a seamstress in a clothing factory. Anthony Giovinco remembers that his brother Joe was very intelligent. He said that Joe was always exempt from final exams at Grover Cleveland High School because of his high grades. By the time Joe was five he spoke fluent Italian which he learned from his parents. However, after being laughed at in Kindergarten because he spoke Italian, his parents spoke only English at the home. Anthony said that Joe was an excellent swimmer and played football for the Ridgewood Crusaders. Joe was also a good dancer. In fact, he was so good that while dancing at an event at the 1939-40 World's Fair actress Joan Crawford asked him to dance with her.

According to Anthony,

"Joe had many friends and as his younger brother I was an admirer of his!"