

James Morley Hendy

Born: September 9, 1918

Hometown: Santa Barbara, CA

Class: 1942 - USMMCC Cadet Officer
1941 - California Maritime Academy

Service: Merchant Marine

Position / Rank: Chief Officer

Date / Place of death: November 19, 1944 /
USS Rixey (APH 3)

Date / Place of burial: November 20, 1944 /
Buried at Sea, 07-07N
131-57E

Age: 26



James M. Hendy was appointed a Cadet Officer, U.S. Merchant Marine Cadet Corps in December 1941 and assigned to the SS Cape Alava. According to Crew Lists on file in New York, by April 1942 he had been promoted to Third Mate aboard the SS Cape Alava and completed a voyage to Bombay, India in that capacity. Other records indicate that he left the Cape Alava for some reason in England in early 1943 and signed on aboard the SS Erin at Bristol, UK on February 18. The Erin arrived at New York on March 15, 1943. He signed on as Chief Mate aboard SS Gilbert Stuart at New York, NY on March 1, 1944. After a voyage to England he signed articles again at New Orleans, LA on July 14, 1944 before the ship sailed for the South Pacific.

By October 1944 the Gilbert Stuart had arrived in Hollandia, New Guinea. On October 29, 1944 the ship sailed for San Pedro Bay, Leyte, Philippine Islands with 500 Army troops and their equipment plus about 6,000 drums of motor gasoline in the lower holds. The ship arrived at San Pedro Bay November 4. In the following days the ship anchored off Dulag and then shifted to an anchorage off of Red Beach, south of Tacloban. During its stay in San Pedro Bay enemy air attacks were frequent, with up to four "red alerts" each day.

On the morning of November 18 the first red alert came at 0515 (local) bringing the crew, Armed Guard and Army longshoremen to their general quarters stations. Roughly two hours later at 0715 another red alert was received. The gun crews began firing as enemy aircraft attacked the ship, shooting down two of them. However, a third

aircraft attacked from dead ahead. Several of the ship's 20mm machine guns began firing at the plane, shooting its tail off. The damaged bomber crashed into the starboard side of the bridge. The aircraft's bombs fell into the midships section of the ship while the burning wreckage of the aircraft spread across the after portion of the ship. The aircraft's engine actually fell into the #4 Lower Hold which contained 2,000 drums of motor gasoline but did not start a fire.

At the time of the attack, most of the Deck Department was on deck working with the Army longshoremen unloading cargo. Fire broke out along the entire length of the deck following the attack. The aft gun crews flooded the aft magazine, released a life raft, and then swam from the stern to the bow to assist in the fire fighting. The rest of the crew immediately manned the fire hoses. Within a few minutes firefighting and rescue craft had joined the effort to save the ship and its cargo. The fire was eventually put out without igniting the remaining cargo of gasoline.



USS Rixey (APH 3)

Of the 38 merchant crew and 29 Naval Armed Guard on board, five crew members and one navy gunner were killed in the attack. In addition, five Army longshoremen working aboard the Gilbert Stuart were also killed. Many more men, including Chief Mate James M. Hendy, were wounded in the attack or burned by the fires.

Several of the Gilbert Stuart's

badly injured men, including James Hendy, were transferred to the Evacuation Transport USS Rixey (APH 3) for transport to hospital facilities in Manus, New Guinea. However, the extent of James Hendy's wounds and third degree burns resulted in his coming aboard the Rixey in severe shock. Despite continuous administration of plasma, two transfusions of whole blood and the best efforts of the Rixey's medical staff, James M. Hendy succumbed to his wounds at 1655 on November 19, 1944. He was buried at sea in a service conducted by Chaplain Lt. L. E. Cook, USNR at 1000 on November 20, 1944.

Based on his Merchant Marine Service, he would have received the Mariners Medal, Combat Bar with star, Atlantic War Zone Bar, Pacific War Zone Bar and the Victory Medal.

James was the only son of Joseph H. Hendy and Grace Miriam Maxfield Hendy. At the time of his death he was married to Dorothy P. Hendy. James and Dorothy were married in 1943. James' father was born in England and was a homebuilder. The 1940 census shows that James was living at home working as carpenter's helper. James was born in Fruitland, ID along with his older sister Miriam Sara Hendy.