

Donald Joseph Tynan

Born: August 16, 1922
Hometown: Yonkers, NY
Class: 1943
Service: Merchant Marine
Position / Rank: Third Assistant Engineer
Date / Place of death: April 16, 1944 / 40-05N,
69-24W
Date / Place of burial: April 16, 1944 / Lost at Sea --
40-05N, 69-24W
Age: 21



Donald J. Tynan was appointed a Midshipman, USNR on September 18, 1942 and graduated in January 1944 with Section A-144. He signed on as Third Assistant Engineer aboard the *SS John Sergeant* at the Port of New York on January 19, 1944. In late-March 1944 the *SS Pan Pennsylvania* returned to New York from a voyage to the United Kingdom. Donald J. Tynan signed on as Third Assistant Engineer for the next voyage.

On April 15, 1944, the six month old *SS Pan Pennsylvania*, at that time the largest tanker in the U.S. merchant marine, sailed from New York in convoy CU-21 loaded with 140,000 barrels of gasoline bound for Barry, Wales. The following morning the ship was about 200 miles east of the mouth of the New York Harbor while the convoy finished forming for the voyage to England. At approximately 0805, the *Pan Pennsylvania* was torpedoed by U-550. The torpedo struck on the port side at the #8 tank. Survivors later noted a “gusher of red” pouring from the side of the ship.

Some of the crew members, who had been having breakfast at the time of the attack, jumped overboard. Others tried to launch one of the lifeboats. The engines were reversed and secured while the ship settled at the stern. At 0845 the Captain, noting that the engine room was on fire while fumes from the cargo were getting “heavy and sickening” ordered the remaining crew to abandon ship. The survivors of the *Pan Pennsylvania* were picked up by three of the convoy escorts; *USS Peterson (DE 152)*, *USS Gandy (DE 764)*, and *USS Joyce (DE 317)*. Later that morning these ships sank U-550. The hulk of the *SS Pan Pennsylvania* capsized but remained afloat until it was sunk by aircraft on April 18, 1944.



SS Pan Pennsylvania burning while its assailant, U-550, Sinks

Of the *Pan Pennsylvania's* fifty merchant crew and 31 man Armed Guard Detachment, fifteen crew members, including Donald J. Tynan, and ten Navy Sailors died in the attack.

For his merchant marine service, Donald J. Tynan was posthumously awarded the Mariners Medal, Combat bar with Star, Atlantic War Zone Bar, the Victory Medal and the Presidential Testimonial Letter.

Donald J. Tynan was the third of Captain Thomas J. Tynan and Veronica Kelly Tynan's four children. The oldest child was Donald's big sister, also named Veronica. His brothers were Brandon (one year older) and Robert (five years younger). When Donald was a boy he father was already sailing as Master. However, since the 1940 U.S. Census identifies Veronica Tynan as a widow, Thomas J. Tynan died during the 1930's. The 1940 U.S. Census also indicates that Veronica Tynan was employed as a "Cafeteria Operator" in a public high school, while Brandon was employed as a clerk in a public school. Donald's little brother, Robert, graduated from Kings Point in 1950.