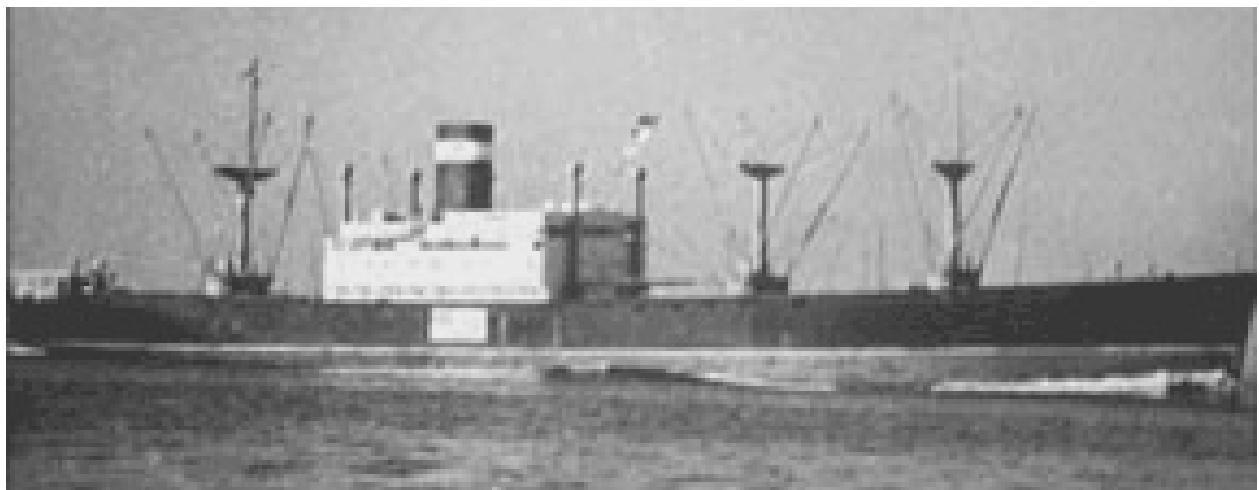


## Gordon Ambrose Tyne

Born: October 6, 1922  
Hometown: Gloucester, MA  
Class: 1943  
Service: Merchant Marine  
Position / Rank: Deck Cadet  
Date / Place of death: September 10, 1942 / South Atlantic  
Date / Place of burial: September 10, 1942 / Lost at Sea -- South Atlantic  
Age: 19



Gordon A. Tyne signed on as Deck Cadet aboard the *MS American Leader* on April 13, 1942 at the port of New York. Joining him on the same day was Cadet-Midshipman Joseph DiCicco, the Engine Cadet. Already aboard was Walter H. Lee, a 1940 U.S. Merchant Marine Cadet Corps Cadet Officer. According to the account of Captain George Duffy, then the ship's Third Mate, the ship was carrying a general cargo of war supplies including boots, barbed wire and vehicles along with a deck cargo of nine twin engine bombers from New York to the Persian Gulf for Russia. The ship was also loaded with several thousand tons of steel ingots for India. The *American Leader* was armed with what a survivor characterized as an "ancient 4-inch cannon on our stern plus four machine guns - two of which never fired one round without jamming."



**MV American Leader**

The ship arrived safely in the Persian Gulf, and loaded a partial cargo of rugs and chemicals here before sailing for Columbo, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) to load a cargo of rubber and latex. The American Leader headed alone down the coast of Africa to Cape Town, South Africa. Upon arrival at Cape Town on September 7, 1942 the ship was ordered to continue westward, without escort, toward the Straits of Magellan and the Pacific Ocean.

At about 1930 on September 10<sup>th</sup>, the *American Leader* ran afoul of the German Navy commerce raider, *Michel*, a converted merchant ship that had been operating in the South Atlantic. The *Michel*, disguised as a neutral merchant ship, fired on the American Leader, with deck guns and then launched two torpedoes. The *Michel's* crew managed to destroy two of the lifeboats as the crew attempted to launch them, forcing the crew to abandon in life rafts. The *American Leader* sank in about 25 minutes. Ten crew members, including Cadet-Midshipmen Gordon Tyne and Joseph C. DiCicco, were killed in the attack. The 39 crew members and nine Naval Armed Guard who survived the sinking were taken prisoner by the *Michel*.

The survivors, now prisoners of war, including the *American Leader's* were handed over to the Japanese in Batavia, Java (present day Djakarta, Indonesia) in November 1942. In September 1944 several *American Leader* survivors, including Second Mate Walter H. Lee, were killed in the sinking of the prisoner transport *Junyo Maru* when it was torpedoed by *HMS Tradewind*. Other *American Leader* survivors were killed in the sinking of the Japanese prisoner transport *Tomahaku Maru*. Of the 58 merchant seamen and Naval Armed Guard on the *American Leader*, only 28 (including Captain Duffy) eventually made it home. All of these had survived more than two years as prisoners of war.

Cadet-Midshipman Gordon A. Tyne 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.



Gordon A. Tyne was the youngest son of Everett E. Tyne and Mary Ambrose Tyne's two sons. According to the 1940 U.S. Census, Gordon's father and older brother, both named Everett, worked as printers. Gordon's name is inscribed on the family grave marker in the Wesleyan Cemetery, Gloucester, MA.

**Gordon Tyne Memorial, Gloucester, MA**