

Restituto Gutay Gimpaya

1910-1995



*1910 - 1995
Merchant Marine*

RUNNING AWAY TO SEA

Born in Curazon, Philippines in 1910, Restituto was the genuine "boy who ran away to sea."

A relative tells that "His mother moved the family inland to Sorsogon, around 40 miles from Bulan. His half-sister offered to take him in so he could move back to the coast. His half-sister's husband, Jorge, was a local postman and Restituto would earn extra money picking up sacks of mail from the ocean vessels to the PO. He was paid 25 cents for two mail sacks. That was how he learned the ins and outs of boats."

He was only in his very early teens when he ran away.

"..he was very young and he was in Cebu, a Visayan island (south of Sorsogon) for a long time before he got accepted to work in an ocean vessel. Only Jorge knew of his whereabouts because he was the postman and Restituto wrote to him and swore him to secrecy until he was already very far away."

Anecdotes from Evelyn Kregear (nee Yap)



It would seem to be in the early to mid 1920's when ... so it is said .. he stowed away and left his old life behind.

COMING TO AMERICA

Restituto moved to the United States in 1930 and appears on the census of that year as a 19 year old seaman, a lodger with the Querido family, living, of all places, at 828 Bourbon Street, New Orleans !!

Although now resident in the U.S., Restituto's chosen life

aboard ship took him all around the world. One of the first manifests I found showed him - still in 1930 - aboard the S.S. Liberator leaving San Pedro in California and arriving in Yokohama, Japan. Restituto was by then a 20 year old messboy.

In later life he was remembered as a sweet kindly family man with a wicked sense of humor and a quick wit. His other life though belonged to a different Restituto - one who was obviously harder, tougher and totally comfortable with the rigors of a life at sea, both in peace and unfortunately, at war.

Swiftly moving up to the position of ship's cook, Restituto worked literally in the belly of the vessel - the heat and pressure of the galley, making sure that like the army, the merchant navy also 'marched' on it's stomach.

Restituto's son Frank caught a glimpse of that alter ego once when he went aboard ship with his father. Known by the nickname 'Brownie' - a term used not as an insult or a racial slur, but as a term of affection by his shipmates, Restituto gave as good as he got. Witnessed by Frank, 'Brownie' and his mates were involved in their usual banter, back and forth, when Restituto topped off the exchange with a wry grin and a laughing threat - he would piss in their soup !!

He worked on different shipping lines around the world. Once, he was on board a ship that was going to the Philippines. This was before WWII. He said that when they were nearing the Philippines, there was a big storm and when they were crossing the San Bernardino Straits, their ship sank. Pay Toto and a few others were swept away and they were thankful when they found the shore. They waited for morning on the beach and when the "natives" came to their rescue, Pay Toto asked where they were. He was told that they landed in Matnog and they were in the lumber concession of Crisanto Gimpaya!

He said he was Crisanto's brother and the two had a tearful reunion! I think that was the last time the two brothers saw each other.

Anecdotes from Evelyn Kregear (nee Yap)

His toughness and resilience would be needed more than ever after the outbreak of WWII.

WWII

Merchant mariners and their ships were vital to the war effort.



The United States Merchant Marine provided the greatest sealift in history between the production army at home and the fighting forces scattered around the globe in World War II. The prewar total of 55,000 experienced mariners was increased to over 215,000 through U.S. Maritime Service training programs.

Merchant ships faced danger from submarines, mines, armed raiders and destroyers, aircraft, "kamikaze," and the elements. About 8,300 mariners were killed at sea, 12,000 wounded of whom at least 1,100 died from their wounds, and 663 men and women were taken prisoner. (Total killed estimated 9,300.) Some were blown to death, some incinerated, some drowned, some froze, and some starved. 66 died in prison camps or aboard Japanese ships while being transported to other camps. 31 ships vanished without a trace to a watery grave.

<http://www.usmm.org>

Restituto came very close to being another statistic in the 'killed in action' column on a number of occasions. Two in particular are well documented as they involved the ships he was on being torpedoed and sunk.

S.S. BARBARA

He was aboard the S.S. Barbara when she was torpedoed on March 7 1942. Restituto was on the raft with Able Seaman Maximo Murphy.



S.S. Barbara

The SS Barbara, Master: Walter G Hudgins, a crew of 60 and an 'unknown' number of passengers was en route from Baltimore, Maryland to San Juan, Puerto Rico with 4,015 tons of general cargo on March 7 , 1942. She was unescorted and unarmed, but she was sailing an approved zigzagging course on a beautiful moonlight night.

The U-126, commanded by Kptlt. Ernst Bauer, spotted the freighter on the above stated evening. At about 0230 EWT the U-126 maneuvered into position and fired off one torpedo toward the port side of the SS Barbara. The torpedo did in fact strike the Barbara....completely penetrated the port hull, went through the ship, and actually exploded on the starboard side, which started a huge fire that was mast high amidships. The fire and explosion damaged the engines of which they were shut down immediately, but the crew that was on watch below were killed. This fire prevented the survivors from launching any life boats, so they mostly jumped or climbed into the water to the

life rafts. The SS Barbara burned for two and a half hours and sank stern first about nine miles north-northeast of Tortuga Island Dominican Republic. Two rafts containing 27 crew members and 10 passengers, made shore safely. Another raft, which contained the Master and 16 others were rescued by a U.S. Navy PBY plane several miles off Porta l'Ecu, Haiti on March 9 , but the fourth raft (*with Restituto*) with 21 survivors landed on Tortue Island after 3 days at sea.

An Able Seaman named Maximo Murphy, who was one of the survivors that was in the fourth raft that landed on Tortue Island walked 18 hours across the island to get help from the natives, who sent a Haitian coast guard vessel to the survivors.

<http://home.comcast.net/~cshortridge/site/>

It's not mentioned in the reports but it is certainly worth noting the part that Restituto played in everyone's well-being.

After all those days .. when they made land .. he tasted the water the birds were drinking and then he watched which berries the birds were eating too. That's how .. as the cook .. he fed and watered the survivors.

Tracy Leung

S.S. THOMAS SCOTT

The S.S. Thomas Scott was a Liberty ship - part of the fleet of 33 merchant ships and 24 escorts involved with Arctic Allied Convoy RA 64 which departed from Kola Inlet on the 17th of February 1945 and arrived at Loch Ewe on the 28th of February 1945

ARCTIC ALLIED CONVOYS (1941-1945)

Between August 1941 and the end of the war, a total of 78 convoys made the perilous journey to and from north Russia, carrying four million tons of supplies for use by Soviet forces fighting against the German Army on the Eastern Front. A convoy set off each month, except in the summer when the lack of darkness made them very vulnerable to attack. On the other hand, in the darkness of the Arctic winter, when the sun never rose, keeping

station was difficult for the poorly equipped merchant ships, so there was always a danger of ship-to-ship collision. Sailing around the northern tip of Norway, the convoys would be exposed to one of the largest concentrations of German U-boats, surface raiders and aircraft anywhere in the world. Strict orders forbade the halting of any ship for even a moment for fear of being attacked by prowling German U-boats, and individuals who fell overboard or survivors seen adrift on the waters had to be ruthlessly ignored. Each delivery of arms was an epic achievement, described as undertaking the impossible.

<http://rusemb.org.uk/arcticalliedconvoys/>

Restituto was on board the S.S. Thomas Scott when the ship was attacked



Since for the Germans the Bear Island Passage had by this time proved to be dangerous and unproductive, U-boats now awaited convoys near the Russian terminus. Two were on hand to attack RA 64 as it sortied from Kola Inlet. During the midwatch 17 February, *U-425* was sunk by H.M.S. *Lark* and *Alnwick Castle*, which made an offensive sweep before the convoy sailed. Later in the morning *Lark*'s stern was blasted by a torpedo from *U-968*, which then proceeded to torpedo American S.S. *Thomas Scott*.

History of United States Naval Operations in World War II By Samuel Eliot Morison

At 11.48 hours on 17 Feb, 1945, the Thomas Scott was hit on the starboard side by one torpedo from *U-968* about 13 miles southwest of Kilden Island as the ship tried to get into her assigned station #34 when the convoy RA-64 was formed off Kola Inlet. The torpedo struck at the #3 hatch and caused an immediate 25° list to starboard. The ship went out of control, broke in two and was only held together by deck plates on the well deck. 10 minutes after the hit the eight officers, 34 crewmen, 27 armed guards (the ship was

Photo of Convoy RA64

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armed with one 4in, one 3in and eight 20mm guns) and 40 Norwegian refugees abandoned ship in four lifeboats and one raft. They were picked up after about 40 minutes by HMS Fencer, which transferred the Americans (eight of them injured) after two hours to Zhestkij and the Soviet tug M-12 and took the Norwegians to Britain.

The Soviet ships took the badly damaged Thomas Scott in tow stern first, but she broke in two completely at 19.37 hours. The stern sank immediately and the bow followed at 21.00 hours despite of a salvage attempt by the destroyer.

The survivors were landed at Vianga at 16.00 hours on 18 February.

<http://www.uboat.net>

ALL ALIENS arriving at a port of continental United States from a foreign port or a port of the insular possessions of the United States, and all aliens arriving

VS
S. S. *Cornelius Ford* . Passengers sailing from *Grimsby, E.*

2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
HEAD-TAX STATUS <small>(See columns 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7)</small>	NAME IN FULL		Age	Sex	Married or single	Calling or occupation	Able to—		Place of birth	Immigration Passport & Reentry <small>Passport num., date issued, place of issue, and name of holder</small>
	Family name	Given name					Yrs. Mo.	Read		
RES. SEAMAN <small>to U.S.A. (U.S.A.)</small>	GIMPAYA	RESTITUTO	35	M	M	SEAMAN YES ENGLISH YES PHIL. IS.	PHL. IS.	PHL. IS.	MANICA	175.4
<i>Repatriated ex SS Thomas Scott</i> <i>Restituto Gimpaya July 27 1945</i>										

This is a passenger manifest dated July 12 1945 for a passage from Grimsby, England to New York on the S.S. Cornelius Ford.

This page shows just one person - Restituto Gimpaya, aged 35, a seaman from the Philippines.

The most important detail though is the handwritten notation at an angle across the sheet which says ..

"Repatriated ex SS Thomas Scott"

Restituto suffered injuries to his knee and back. It's likely that after the rescue in February he remained in England, either recuperating in hospital or waiting for repatriation home to the U.S.A. As seen on the above manifest he arrived back in New York on 27 July 1945.

Restituto served as a Merchant Marine throughout the second world war and was awarded the following ribbons and bars ..

	Combat Bar - The Combat Bar is issued to seamen who serve in a ship which, at the time of such service, is directly attacked or damaged by an instrumentality of war. There is further prescribed for issuance a star (to be attached to such bar) to seamen who are forced to abandon ship when so attacked or damaged. For each additional abandonment, an additional star is attached.
	Mariner's Bar - The Mariner's Medal is awarded to any seaman who while serving in a ship during the war period is wounded, suffers physical injury, or suffers through dangerous exposure as a result of an act of enemy of the United States. In the event any

	<p>such seaman dies from the wounds or injuries before the award can be made to him, the medal may be presented to the person named in the War Risk Policy as his beneficiary.</p>
	<p>Atlantic War Zone - for mariners who served in the Atlantic War Zone including the North Atlantic, South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean, Barents Sea, and the Greenland Sea, between December 7, 1941, and November 8, 1945.</p>
	<p>Mediterranean War Zone - for seafarers who served in the zone including the Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, Arabian Sea, and Indian Ocean west of 80 degrees east longitude, between December 7, 1941, and November 8, 1945.</p>
	<p>Merchant Marine Defense Medal - honoring civilian seafarers who served on merchant vessels between September 8, 1939 and December 7, 1941.</p>



This medal was instituted on April 12, 1985 to commemorate the coming 40th anniversary of the victory over Germany in World War II or as it is known in Russia, The Great Patriotic War. The anniversary is celebrated in the Russian Federation on May 9th. The certificate to the medal bears the name of the recipient in Russian and the date of issuance, is stamped with the Seal of the President of the Russian Federation and is signed by President Boris Yeltsin.



Restituto at Battery Park, New York in 1991 for the dedication of the American Merchant Mariners' Memorial



Restituto passed away in 1995 at the age of 84 years.
He is interred along with his wife Hortensia at
Calverton National Cemetery