



United States Navy

USS Liscome Bay (CVE-56)

Task Force 52

Seaman Second Class Jay James Lythgoe

Jay James Lythgoe, a son of Neils Peterson Lythgoe and Ruth Mary Stephens Lythgoe, was born at Devils Slide, Morgan, Utah on May 30, 1920. He attended North Summit High School and graduated in 1939. He enlisted in the Navy on October 2, 1942 and received his training at the Naval Training Center in Farragut, Idaho and at the Bremerton Navy Yard in Washington.

Jay was assigned to one of the new light carriers, the USS Liscome Bay. It was named after Liscome Bay in Alaska. After arriving in San Diego, California; it underwent intensive shakedown drills and exercises off San Diego and San Pedro, California. She then set course for Pearl Harbor where additional drills and operational exercises were conducted around Hawaii. The ship then set sail to become part of Task Force 52 that was formed to carry out Operation Galvanic, the invasion of the Tarawa Atolls and Makin Island in the Gilbert Islands.

Once the islands were considered under control, the fleet began to retire. On the morning of November 24, 1943, the sailors on the Liscome Bay were fueling and arming the planes for the dawn patrol. There had been no warning that Japanese submarines were in the area and as dawn was breaking, the Japanese submarine, I-175, fired one torpedo that hit the ship and caused the bomb magazine to explode and the ship sunk within a few minutes. The blast was so great that men on ships a half-mile away were knocked off their feet. The explosion of the ship killed 646 sailors and only 272 survived. Jay's body was not recovered but there is a memorial headstone in the Henefer, Utah cemetery paying homage to him for giving his life in the defense of his country. He is also memorialized at the Honolulu Memorial in Hawaii.

At the time of his death, he was survived by his mother and father, one brother, Lynn; and three sisters, Wilma, Grace and Imogene. His brother would complete 35 missions as a ball turret gunner of a bomber in the European Theatre of operations.