

# Bosun John Garvey

## Merchant Navy

### Family Life:

John Walter Garvey was born to Frank and Mary Elizabeth (nee Towers) on February 15, 1924. Being raised in Windsor, Ontario, John attended Prince of Wales Public School and W. D. Lowe High School.

John was wed to Marygrace Iannicello in 1948 and the couple were blessed with two children, Michael John in 1955 and John Samuel in 1958. He worked at the Detroit River Docks before his service during the Second World War.

After the war, John had employment in Windsor and Detroit, Michigan until he moved to Owen Sound with his family in 1967, where he helped build the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Plant. He returned to Michigan in 1980, where he lived for the next twelve years. After working as a bricklayer for 43 years, John retired in 1992 and moved back to Owen Sound. Presently, he resides at Kelso Villa.



### Service History:

Since he was too young to join the Royal Canadian Navy, Bosun Garvey enlisted for service with the Merchant Navy in Halifax in 1940. He boarded a ship headed to the Caribbean. It was not hard to find a spot on a Merchant vessel as they were always looking for crew members. "There were 40 guys on a ship with many different nationalities. If the Captain and food were good then everything was pretty swell. If not, find another ship."

Bosun Garvey also served as an Ordinary Seaman and Fireman. He sailed to North Africa in the Mediterranean Sea and the United Kingdom. He was wounded in the leg when the ship he was aboard was struck by a German bomb. The cargo aboard these ships ranged from "rubbers to bombs," anything required for the war effort.

His favourite ship was the *Dufferin Park*. It was the "newest, handled rough weather well and could go like hell!"

**Interesting Stories:** John tells a story of being on a street car during the war and people looking at him because he was not in uniform. One individual asked him why he was not in the army. John flippantly answered, "Because my dad is rich." On another occasion John had been called up to the draft and reported to Wolseley Barracks in London. The recruiting sergeant abruptly asked why a man at age 21, like him was not already in the army. His response, "I don't need too!" The furious sergeant and the individual on the street car failed to notice the Merchant Navy pin John was wearing on his lapel. As the doctor at Wolseley Barracks noted, "You've already done your bit."