

LIEUTENANT ROBERT H. ANDERSON
UNITED STATES NAVAL RESERVE, DECEASED

Robert Harold Anderson was born in Eau Clair, Wisconsin, on September 17, 1918, son of Harold C. and Margaret A. (Morrison) Anderson. He attended Eau Claire State Teachers College and Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana, prior to enlisting in the U. S. Naval Reserve on February 25, 1941. He was appointed Aviation Cadet, USNR, on May 30, 1941 and had flight training at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, and Miami, Florida. He was commissioned Ensign, USNR, to rank from October 14, 1941 and was designated Naval Aviator on December 26, that year. He was advanced to Lieutenant (junior grade), to date from October 1, 1942 and to Lieutenant, to rank from October 1, 1943.

After receiving his "Wings" in 1941, he was assigned in February 1942 to the Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida, where he had duty until July of that year. He then transferred to the Naval Reserve Aviation Base, Minneapolis, Minnesota and remained there until June 1943. Following successive instruction at the Naval Air Stations, Jacksonville and Melbourne, Florida and the Carrier Qualification Training Unit, Glenview, Illinois, he served from September to December 1943 with Fighting Squadron FIFTY.

He had brief training with Carrier Aircraft Service Unit TWENTY-THREE and in January 1944 was assigned to the Fleet Air Detachment, Naval Air Station, Atlantic City, New Jersey, for duty in connection with fitting out Fighting Squadron EIGHT. He joined that squadron upon its commissioning, February 1, that year. For outstanding services while attached to that squadron, he was awarded the Air Medal, the Navy Cross, the Distinguished Flying Cross and a Gold Star in lieu of a Second Air Medal. The citations follow in part:

Air Medal: "For meritorious achievement...in Fighting Squadron EIGHTY, attached to the USS TICONDEROGA, in action against enemy Japanese forces in the Philippine Islands on November 14, 1944. Flying escort during a photographic mission, Lieutenant Anderson attacked two enemy planes and succeeded in destroying one of them, thereby contributing materially to the success of the mission..."

Navy Cross: "For extraordinary heroism...in operations against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of the Philippine Islands, December 14, 1944. A daring and intrepid airman, (he) led an eight-plane division against a hostile formation of twenty-six airplanes and, undeterred by the enemy's heavy numerical advantage, closed with the enemy to shoot down five of the Japanese aircraft and probably down a sixth. When his wingman was attacked by an enemy plane and his own ammunition was almost exhausted, Lieutenant Anderson resourcefully dived his plane on the hostile ship, forcing it to abandon the attack..."

Distinguished Flying Cross: "For heroism and extraordinary achievement...as Division Leader in Fighting Squadron EIGHTY, attached to the USS HANCOCK, during operations against enemy Japanese forces off the Coast of Indo China on January 10, 1945. Leading his division against an enemy convoy, (he) personally scored a direct hit with a 1000-pound bomb on a large tanker, causing it to explode and later sink..."

Gold Star in lieu of the Second Air Medal: "For meritorious achievement...during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Tokyo Area on February 17, 1945. Leading a division of fighters in a sweep against hostile air and ground installations, (he) participated in an aerial engagement against a numerically superior force of enemy planes, personally shooting down one and assisting his wingmen in destroying another during the furious action..."

He is also entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Navy Unit Commendation awarded the USS HANCOCK.

In April 1945 he joined Fighting Squadron SEVENTY-FIVE and was serving in that assignment at the time of his death on January 5, 1945, as a result of a plane crash three and one-half miles south of Stockton, Maryland.

In addition to the Navy Cross, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with Gold Star and the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, Lieutenant Anderson has the American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; the World War II Victory Medal, and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon.