

# NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

REAR ADMIRAL DONALD D. ENGEN, UNITED STATES NAVY

Donald Davenport Engen was born in Pomona, California, on May 28, 1924, son of Sydney M. and Dorothy (Davenport) Engen. He attended Pasadena (California) Junior College, prior to enlisting on June 9, 1942 in the U. S. Naval Reserve. Appointed Aviation Cadet, USNR, he completed flight training and on June 9, 1943 was designated Naval Aviator. Commissioned Ensign USNR on the same date, he subsequently advanced in rank, attaining that of Rear Admiral, to date from July 1, 1970, having transferred to the Regular Navy on September 5, 1946.

After receiving his commission in 1943, he had operational training until August of that year, then joined Bombing Squadron NINETEEN, which was based on the carrier LEXINGTON during the period June to December 1944. While attached to that squadron he took part in the first aerial strikes on the Philippines, Okinawa and Formosa and participated in the Battle of Leyte Gulf. He was awarded the Air Medal, the Navy Cross and the Distinguished Flying Cross and was cited as follows:

**Air Medal:** "For meritorious achievement...during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Marianas, Palau, Kazan, Bonin and Philippine Islands, from July 18 to September 24, 1944. While participating in numerous strikes against enemy installations and shipping during this period, (he) pressed home his attacks in the face of antiaircraft fire and enemy air opposition, thereby contributing to the heavy damage inflicted on the Japanese..."

**Navy Cross:** "For extraordinary heroism...in operations against enemy Japanese forces during the Battle for Leyte Gulf, October 25, 1944. Courageous and skillful in the face of enemy air opposition and extremely intense and continuous fire from hostile antiaircraft batteries, (he) boldly pressed home a hazardous dive-bombing attack on a Japanese aircraft carrier, and, accurately placing his bomb scored a direct hit upon his target, despite its desperate evasive tactics. A superb and intrepid airman, he contributed directly to the sinking of the enemy aircraft carrier and played a gallant part in strenuous aerial operations during this critical period of the Pacific War..."

**Distinguished Flying Cross:** "For heroism and extraordinary achievement...in action against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of the Philippines Islands on November 5, 1944. Defying antiaircraft fire and aerial opposition during a daring strike against enemy shipping, (he) flew in over his target at a perilously low altitude and, pressing home his attack, succeeded in inflicting severe damage on an enemy heavy cruiser, thereby contributing materially to its subsequent sinking..."

He had instruction at the General Line School, Monterey, California, between January and December 1951, when he became Flight Test Officer in the Office of the Bureau of Aeronautics Representative, Dallas, Texas. As an Exchange Officer, he attended the Empire Test Pilots School, Farnborough, England, for a year, December 1952-December 1953, and in January joined Experimental Squadron THREE as Project Pilot and Type Leader and was engaged in air refueling and new fighter aircraft projects. In July 1955 he was assigned to Fighter Squadron TWENTY-ONE as Executive Officer and from August 1957 to October 1959 was attached to the Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Maryland.

He next joined Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE, and from October 1959 to March 1960 commanded Fighter Squadron TWENTY ONE. Detached from the latter in October 1961, he assumed command of Carrier Air Group ELEVEN in January 1962. A year later he was assigned to the USS CORAL SEA (CVA-43), as Operations Officer, and in April 1964 assumed command of the USS MT. KATMAI (AE-16), which under his command, participated in operations in the Vietnam area. In August 1965 he reported for instruction at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, and in July 1966 became Commanding Officer of the USS AMERICA (CVA-66), which operated in far eastern Mediterranean waters during the Middle East Crisis.

In September 1967 he reported for instruction at George Washington University, Washington, D. C., from which he received the degree of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. Assigned in September 1968 to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, he headed the Aviation Plans Branch until February 1970, then served as Assistant Director of the Strategic Plans Branch and from August of that year as Director. He was awarded the Legion of Merit "for exceptionally meritorious service from March 1970 to May 1971..." The citation further states in part: "...During this period, (he) made major contributions to the formulation of plans and policies affecting the security of the United States. His understanding of the role of naval forces as a component of the national strength enabled him to make significant contributions to revision of the Joint Strategic Objectives Plans..."

In July 1971 he assumed command of Carrier Division FOUR and "for exceptionally meritorious conduct...from March 9 to July 23, 1972 as Commander Task Force SIXTY/Commander Task Force FIVE HUNDRED TWO and as Commander Carrier Division FOUR..." he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Second Legion of Merit. The citation continues in part: "With innovative planning, imaginative execution and brilliant leadership, Rear Admiral Engen contributed substantially and significantly to the development of advanced warfare tactics, improved fleet readiness and strengthened United States and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ties..."

In June 1973 he became Deputy Commander in Chief, U. S. Naval Forces, Europe and Chief of Staff and Aide to the Commander in Chief, U. S. Naval Forces, Europe.

In addition to the Navy Cross, the Legion of Merit with Gold Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with two Gold Stars, the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon and the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, Rear Admiral Engen has the American Campaign Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with four engagement stars; the World War II Victory Medal; the China Service Medal; the Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia Clasp; the National Defense Service Medal with bronze star; the Korean Service Medal; the United Nations Service Medal; the Vietnam Service Medal with one star; and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon with one star. He also has the Korean Presidential Unit Citation Badge, the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation Badge and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with Device.

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