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### **George C. Duncan, Captain, USN**

George Chamberlain Duncan was born in Tacoma, Washington, on February 11, 1917, son of George W. and Frances (Chamberlain) Duncan. He attended Stadium High School and the College of Puget Sound, both in Tacoma, before entering the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, on appointment from his native state in 1935. As a Midshipman he participated in wrestling and soccer and was a member of the 150-pound crew, the Choir, Trident Staff, the Masqueraders, the Glee Club (Director his First Class year), and the Reception Committee. Graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 1, 1939, he subsequently advanced in rank to that of Captain, to date from April 1, 1958.

Following graduation in 1939, he joined the USS *West Virginia*, and in August 1941 was detached with orders to return to the United States, for flight training at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. Designated Naval Aviator in February 1942, he reported in April, that year, for duty with the aviation unit of the USS *Louisville*. "For meritorious achievement...as pilot of a VOS Spotting Plane during action against enemy Japanese forces established on the Island of Kiska, Alaska, on August 7, 1942..." he was awarded the Air Medal. The citation further states: "Viciously attacked by a hostile fighter while engaged in a spotting mission under most hazardous conditions, Lieutenant Duncan...successfully fought off and damaged the enemy and completed his mission..."

Detached from the *Louisville* in May 1943, he had duty during June and July at the Naval Air Station, Melbourne, Florida, then was ordered to report to Commander Air Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet. In September 1943 he joined Fighting Squadron FIFTEEN, operating from the USS *Essex*. He was awarded the Silver Star Medal; the Navy Cross; the Distinguished Flying Cross with Gold Stars in lieu of the Second, Third and Fourth Distinguished Flying Crosses, Gold Stars in lieu of the Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Air Medals. The citations follow in order of date of action:

"Distinguished Flying Cross: "For heroism and extraor-

dinary achievement in aerial flight as Pilot of a Fighter Plane in Fighting Squadron FIFTEEN...in action against enemy Japanese forces near the Marianas Islands, June 12, 1944. Participating in a strike against an escorted enemy convoy, (he) braved intense and accurate enemy antiaircraft fire to score a direct bomb hit beneath the counter of an enemy cargo ship which left it dead in the water and to strafe and sink a new type enemy destroyer. Continuing his efforts throughout the engagement, he assisted materially in silencing enemy antiaircraft guns and in inflicting heavy damage on numerous other enemy cargo and escort vessels..."

Gold Star in lieu of the Second Air Medal: "For meritorious achievement...in action against enemy Japanese forces over Iwo Jima on June 15, 1944. When his division encountered four hostile fighters (he) immediately attacked the enemy flight and succeeded in shooting down one of the hostile planes..."

Gold Star in lieu of Second Distinguished Flying Cross.. "For heroism and extraordinary achievement...as pilot of a Fighter plane in Fighting Squadron FIFTEEN...during the First Battle of the Philippine Sea, June 19, 1944. When his squadron was attacked by overwhelming numbers of enemy fighter planes as it proceeded to the target, (he) led his division in a fierce counterattack and shot down three of the hostile craft and damaged many others, thereby contributing materially to the total destruction by his squadron of twenty enemy fighter planes..."

Gold Star in lieu of the Third Distinguished Flying Cross, "Courageously intercepting a superior formation of enemy fighter planes (he) fought his plane gallantly and, despite the tremendous odds, succeeded in shooting down two and probably three of the hostile aircraft and assisted his flight in destroying twenty-one more. Determined to inflict further damage on the enemy, he launched repeated hazardous strafing runs against grounded Japanese planes in the face of withering barrage of antiaircraft fire and...succeeded in setting fire to and destroying four of these grounded planes..."

Silver Star Medal, "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity...in action against enemy Japanese forces in the central Philippines, on September 13, 1944...Lieutenant Commander Duncan courageously intercepted a group of hostile planes and...personally shot down one medium enemy bomber and rendered invaluable assistance to a fellow pilot in destroying another during this engagement. Subsequently attacked by a vastly superior force of Japanese fighters he ...succeeded in blasting two of the hostile craft from the sky and in damaging a third. In addition, although opposed by concentrated antiaircraft fire, (he) launched repeated hazardous strafing runs against grounded enemy aircraft, setting fire to and destroying three grounded planes..."

Gold Star in lieu of the Third Air Medal- "For meritorious achievement...in action against enemy Japanese forces over Formosa on October 12, 1944. Sighting an enemy plane during a fighter sweep, (he) attacked in a head-on-run, and succeeded in shooting the enemy down in flames..."

Gold Star in lieu of the Fourth Air Medal: "For meritorious achievement...in action against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of the Philippine Islands on October 24, 1944. Encountering enemy aircraft taking off from a field in the Philippines, (he) succeeded in destroying one of the enemy as it was taking off..."

Gold Star in lieu of the Fifth Air Medal: "For meritorious achievement...in action against enemy Japanese forces over Luzon, Philippine Islands, on November 5, 1944. When his division was attacked by several hostile planes (he) immediately engaged and shot down one of the attacking aircraft..."

Gold Star in lieu of the Fourth Distinguished Flying Cross: "For heroism and extraordinary achievement...in action against enemy Japanese forces in the Pacific War Area on November 6, 1944. Skillfully fighting his plane, (he) engaged and shot down his fifth enemy aircraft on this date..."

Navy Cross. "For extraordinary heroism...during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Battle for Leyte Gulf, on October 25, 1944. Undaunted by hostile antiaircraft fire, Lieutenant Commander Duncan carried out an attack against major units of the Japanese fleet, scoring a direct bomb hit to assist in sinking an enemy carrier and contributing to the success of the mission..."

He was also awarded Gold Stars in lieu of the Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh Air Medals and Gold Stars in lieu of the Fifth and Sixth Distinguished Flying Crosses for designated missions. In addition he is entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Presidential Unit Citation awarded the USS *Essex* and her Air Groups for heroic service during the period August 31, 1943 to August 15, 1945.

Returning to the United States in March 1945, he reported for instruction at the Postgraduate School, Annapolis, Maryland. He continued the course from September 1946 to June 1947 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology at Cambridge, from which he received the degree of Master of Science in Aeronautical Engineering. During the next two years, he had duty as Engines Officer on the Staff of Commander Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet, after which he was assigned to the Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Maryland, first for Test Pilot Training, later for duty in the Flight Test Division (Carrier Branch).

In May and June 1952 he had temporary duty under instruction while attached to the Air Force, Pacific Fleet, then for a year was Commanding Officer of Fighter Squadron FIFTY-ONE in the Korean Area. "For heroism and extraordinary achievement...as a Jet Fighter Pilot...during operations against enemy aggressor forces in Korea on May 3, 1953..." he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Seventh Distinguished Flying Cross. The citation further states in part: "Leading a four-plane flight of jet planes on a strike against an enemy troop billeting and vehicle staging area, Commander Duncan conducted nine effective low-level

bombing, strafing and incendiary attacks, despite intense hostile machine-gun and small-arms fire. On his initial attack, he obtained accurate coverage of the target with incendiary clusters, starting numerous fires. During his succeeding bombing attacks, he scored four direct hits which caused two secondary explosions, spreading fire throughout the area. Realizing that the target was a gasoline storage center, he concentrated the remaining attacks in the immediate vicinity, obtaining numerous other secondary explosions which completely leveled a large area..."

For further meritorious service in the Korean area, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," Gold Stars in lieu of the Twelfth, Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Air Medals and the Commendation Medal with Combat "V." He is also entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Navy Unit Commendation awarded the USS *Valley Forge*.

Detached from command of Fighter Squadron FIFTY-ONE in July 1953, he commanded Carrier Air Group FIVE until November 1954 and in January 1955 reported as Head of Fighter Design in the Piloted Aircraft Division, Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department. In March 1957 he joined the USS *Forrestal* as Executive Officer and in July 1958 assumed command of Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED ONE.

Returning to the Bureau of Aeronautics in July 1959, he served as Assistant Aircraft Officer in the Aircraft Division. In December of that year he became Assistant Director of the Aircraft Division of the newly created Bureau of Naval Weapons. He remained there until May 1961, then commanded the USS *Jupiter*. In April 1962 he reported as Commanding Officer of the USS *Ranger* and in June 1963 joined the Staff of Commander Naval Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet to serve as Assistant Chief of Staff for Operational Training and later, as Chief of Staff and Aide. In September 1966 he became Assistant Deputy Commander for Plans and Programs and Comptroller, Naval Air Systems Command Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

In addition to the Navy Cross; the Silver Star Medal; the Distinguished Flying Cross; with six Gold Stars, the Bronze Star Medal, with Combat "V"; the Air Medal, with fourteen Gold Stars, the Commendation Medal, with Combat "V"; the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon and the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, Captain Duncan has the American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, with one silver star and two bronze stars (seven operations); World War II Victory Medal; China Service Medal (extended); National Defense Service Medal, with bronze star; Korean Service Medal with two stars; Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, United Nations Service Medal; and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon with two stars. He also has the Korean Presidential Unit Citation Badge and the Philippine Republic Presidential Unit Citation Badge.

Captain Duncan was married to the former Agnes Wirt Tawresy and had four children.