



No picture available

Richard E. Harmer, Captain, USN

An outstanding Naval Aviator, Richard Emerson Harmer received his "Wings" in 1939 and subsequently served with Scouting and Fighting Squadrons FIVE on board the USS *Yorktown*. In that assignment when the United States entered World War II he saw action during the occupation of Guadalcanal, the Battle of Stewart Island and the first Marshall raid.

Early in 1943 he was selected for project AFFIRM, the night fighter development unit at the Naval Air Station, Quonset Point, Rhode Island. He spent five months there, then as Executive Officer of Night Fighter Squadron SEVENTY-FIVE, helped form the famous landbased night fighter squadron, which caused the Japanese so many headaches. From December 1943 until July 1944 he commanded Night Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED-ONE and lead a detachment of night fighters operating with Air Group TEN, embarked on the USS *Enterprise*. During this tour of sea duty he participated in operations in the Marshall Islands occupation, first Truk and Palau strikes; the Hollandia landings, the second Truk strike and finally the Marianas landings. During these operations his detachment shot down the first five enemy aircraft destroyed by carrier based night fighters, two of these kills were made by him.

In September 1944 he reported as Training Officer at the Naval Air Station, Vero Beach, Florida, where as an expert in airborne radar, he supervised the Navy's most extensive night fighter training program. He remained there following the cessation of hostilities, and until May 1946 after which he commanded Air Group ONE attached to the USS *Midway*.

After a postgraduate course in personnel administration at Stanford University, he reported in the fall of 1948 as Assistant Operations Officer on the staff of Commander Fleet Air, West Coast. In May 1949 he transferred to the staff of Commander Air Force, Pacific and served as Force Operations Officer until November of that year, when returning to night fighters again, he assumed command of Composite Squadron

THREE at the Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, California.

In September 1951 he became Executive Officer of the Naval Air Station, Patuxent River, Maryland, and from December 1952 until July 1954 was Executive Officer of the aircraft carrier *Princeton*, operating in the Korean area of hostilities. After instruction at the Naval War College, he had duty as Head of the Aviation Liaison Division in the Bureau of Naval Personnel until July 1957.

He commanded the seaplane tender *Floyds Bay* until June 1958, when he joined the staff of Commander Fleet Air, Western Pacific as Chief of Staff and Aide. In January 1960 he assumed command of the USS *Randolph*, and in October of that year was ordered as Chief of Staff and Aide to Commander Carrier Division 2. On November 17, 1961, he was ordered detached for duty at Headquarters, Eleventh Naval District, San Diego.

For his outstanding service in World War II and also during the Korean hostilities, he has been awarded two Distinguished Flying Crosses, the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," two Air Medals and a Letter of Commendation with Ribbon. He also wears the Purple Heart Medal for wounds received in enemy action.

CITATIONS.

Distinguished Flying Cross: "For heroism and extraordinary achievement as pilot of a Fighter Plane during action against enemy Japanese forces in the Solomon Islands Campaign on August 24, 1942. Intercepting a division of enemy bombers as they peeled off in a determined dive for our surface units, Lieutenant Harmer, grimly trailing them down to a point within range of his own anti-aircraft fire, shot one into the sea before he could release his bomb, then relentlessly engaged another until he himself was wounded. His courageous devotion to duty contributed greatly toward demoralization of the entire enemy offensive..."

Gold Star in lieu of the Second Distinguished Flying Cross: "For heroism and extraordinary achievement in aerial flight as leader of Fighter Squadron TEN, attached to the USS *Enterprise*, during action against enemy Japanese aerial forces at Truk, Caroline Islands, January 19, 1944; and off Hollandia, New Guinea, April 25, 1944. Boldly and aggressively leading his Squadron against the enemy's night torpedo and bombing attacks which threatened our retiring forces after successful operations at Truk and Hollandia, (he) was instrumental in putting the Japanese aerial forces to rout and in safeguarding our retirement to safety. On the night of January 19, he fought off an enemy attack by starting a fire in one engine of a twin-engined bomber and forcing it beyond striking range. On the night of April 25, he boldly engaged and shot down one twin-engined bomber and, despite heavy fire from enemy gunners and improper functioning of guns on his own plane, daringly attacked a formation of six twin-engined bombers and inflicted severe damage on the hostile aerial craft..."

Bronze Star Medal: "For meritorious service as Executive Officer of the USS *Princeton* during combat operations against North Korean and Chinese Communist forces in the Korean Theater from March 12 to July 27, 1953. Commander Harmer organized and administered the resources of the ship to expeditiously accomplish the combat mission and supervised the various functions of the organization to obtain the ultimate in safety and morale. He planned the efforts of the ship's company and attached air groups so that the *Princeton* maintained peak performance throughout the period. By his diligent application of forethought, ability and sound judgment, he greatly assisted in planning combat operations..."

Air Medal: "For meritorious achievement...while serving with a Fighter Plane in Fighting Squadron TEN, operating from the USS *Enterprise* during special rescue missions on April 21, 29, 30 and on June 19, 20, 25, 1944. Participating in frequent night and day missions, (he) rendered invaluable service in locating many carrier pilots who had been forced down at sea and in directing their rescue..."

Gold Star in lieu of the Second Air Medal: "For meritorious achievement...as a Pilot in Night Fighting Squadron ONE HUNDRED ONE, attached to the USS *Enterprise*, in action against enemy Japanese forces, June 28, 1944. Participating in a mission to prevent an attack on his Task Force by enemy torpedo planes, Commander Harmer located an enemy twin-engined bomber despite rain squalls and generally hazardous flying conditions and, pressing home his daring attacks, shot the hostile craft down in flames..."

Letter of Commendation: "For meritorious service... while serving as an officer in the Night Fighter Training Unit and in Night Fighting SEVENTY-FIVE during training operations from March to October 1943. Lieutenant Commander Harmer contributed greatly to the development of night fighting radar equipment and night fighting procedure and tactics for night fighter squadrons. He accomplished this through his technical skill and while participating in many experimental and hazardous flights..."

TRANSCRIPT OF NAVAL SERVICE:

- 5/30-7/30 Boot Camp.
- 7/30-9/30 USS *Saratoga* (Seaman).
- 6/31-6/35 U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD. (Midshipman).
- 7/35-6/38 USS *Mississippi* (Junior Officer).
- 2/38-3/39 Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Fla. (flight training).
- 5/39-6/40 USS *Yorktown* (Scouting Squadron FIVE)
- 6/40-9/42 USS *Yorktown* (Fighting Squadron FIVE)
- 10/42-3/43 Naval Air Station Quonset Point, R. I. (Project Affirm).
- 3/47-12/43 Night Fighter Squadron 75 (Executive Officer).
- 12/43-7/44 USS *Enterprise* (CO, Night Fighter Squadron 101 operating detachment with VF-10).
- 9/44-5/46 Naval Air Station, Vero Beach Fla. (Training Officer--Night Fighter training program).
- 5/46-7/46 Naval Air Station, Hutchinson, Kan. (instruc

- tion, PB4Y-ATU).
- 8/46 -5/47 USS *Midway* (CO, Carrier Air Group ONE)
- 6/47-8/48 Stanford University (P.G. course in personnel administration).
- 9/48 -5/49 Staff, Commander Fleet Air, West Coast (Assistant Operations Officer).
- 5/49-9/49 Commander Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet (Force Operations Officer).
- 9/49-11/49 All Weather Flight School, Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi, TX. (student)
- 11/49-8/51 Commanding Officer, Composite Squadron 3, Naval Air Station Moffett Field California
- 9/51-12/52 NAS Patuxent River, MD (Executive Officer).
- 12/52-7/54 USS *Princeton* (Executive Officer).
- 8/54-6/55 Naval War College, Newport, RI. (student).
- 7/55-7/57 Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Dept. (Head Aviation Liaison Division).
- 7/57-6/58 USS *Floyds Bay* (CO).
- 7/58-11/59 Chief of Staff & Aide, Commander Fleet Air, Western Pacific.
- 1/60-10/60 USS *Randolph* (CO)
- 10/60-11/61 Chief of Staff and Aide, Commander Cruiser Division 2.
- 11/61 Headquarters, Eleventh Naval District, San Diego, California.