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Eddie R. Sanders, Captain, USN

Eddie Reuel Sanders was born in Marion, Illinois, on September 10, 1907, son of Thomas J. and Bertha (Wiggs) Sanders. He attended Marion Township High School, the University of Illinois at Champagne and on June 23, 1925 enlisted in the U. S. Navy. He was honorably discharged a year later to accept an appointment, from his native state, to the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland. Graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 5 1930 he advanced to the rank of Captain, to date from March 1, 1949, having served in that rank (temporary) from February 23, 1946 to January 1, 1948.

Following graduation in 1930, he had elimination flight training at the Naval Air Station, San Diego, California, and in August of that year joined the USS *California*. Detached from that battleship in April 1931, he was ordered to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, for flight training. Designated Naval Aviator on March 17, 1932, he remained at the Pensacola Air Station until May of that year, when he joined Observation Squadron ONE-B, attached to the USS *Texas*. In June 1934 he transferred to Fighting Squadron THREE-B, based on the USS *Langley* and continued in that duty for a year.

Between June 1935 and June 1937 he was an Instructor in primary land planes for the first nine months, and fighters thereafter, at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola. He next had duty with Patrol Squadron NINE-F, aboard the USS *Wright*, and from June 1933 to April 1940 continued service in the *Wright* with Patrol Squadron SEVEN (redesignated Patrol Squadron ELEVEN on July 1, 1939). Returning to the United States, he was assigned to the Flight Test Section at the Naval Air Station, Anacostia, D. C., until January 1943, and following a month's duty with Fleet Air, West Coast, reported for fitting out duty with Bombing Squadron ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SEVEN. When that squadron was put into commission, he assumed command. For outstanding services in that capacity he was awarded the Air Medal, the Gold Star in lieu of the Second Distinguished

Flying Cross and the Distinguished Flying Cross. The citations follow in part:

Air Medal--"For meritorious achievement...during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of Tarawa and other islands in the Gilbert and Marshall Groups from July 1, 1943 to January 15, 1944...Captain Sanders carried out search and photographic missions and anti-shipping and mining strikes against the Japanese and inflicted damage on the enemy, thereby contributing materially to the success of his squadron..."

Gold Star in lieu of the Second Distinguished Flying Cross--"For heroism and extraordinary achievement...as Squadron Commander, Bombing Squadron ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SEVEN during operations against the Gilbert and Marshall Islands on December 18, 1943. Flying unescorted to the extreme range of his craft on a hazardous daylight mission, Commander Sanders went in low over the target and most heavily defended of the Japanese bases in the Marshalls to conduct a thorough reconnaissance of Kwajalein Atoll. As a result of valuable information obtained..., our forces were able to launch a successful night attack on enemy shipping in the area..."

Distinguished Flying Cross-- "For...extraordinary achievement...during operations against the Gilbert and Marshall Islands on December 23) 1943. Courageously commanding his squadron in a fierce attack on Nauru at dusk he flew in low through intense gunfire and vigorously bombed his target. Although a severely damaged plane of his force collided with his own during the engagement, he skillfully maneuvered his stricken craft and led the squadron back to base, making a successful landing..."

Detached from command of that squadron in January 1944, he again had brief duty at Fleet Air, West Coast, before reporting, in February for duty in the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. He remained there until June 1945, when he transferred to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department. In September 1945 he reported as Executive Officer aboard the USS *Hancock* and in April of the next year joined the staff of Commander Battleships-Cruisers, U. S. Atlantic Fleet.

In January 1947 he became Chief of Staff on the staff of Commander Fleet Air Wing FIVE, based at Norfolk, Virginia, and in July 1948 was assigned to the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island. He continued duty there until June 1951, assuming command, the next month of the USS *Cape Esperance*. Detached from that carrier escort, he reported in July 1952 as Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Station, Grosse Ile, Michigan. He remained in that command until August 1953, after which he had duty in the Air Warfare Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department. In November 1954 he was ordered to command the USS *Hancock*.

In addition to the Distinguished Flying Cross with

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Gold Star and the Air Medal, Captain Sanders has the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; the American Campaign Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three engagement stars; the World War II Victory Medal; and the Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia Clasp and National Defense Service Medal.

He was married to Margaret Routten Sanders and they had three children, Thomas, Suzanne and Eddie R. Sanders