



Leroy V. Swanson, Rear Admiral, USN (Ret.)
"Roy"

Date of Designation: December 1938 NA # 5921

Dates of Active Duty: January 1938 - September 1975

Total Flight Hours: 6,000

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed : 600 (150 straight deck)

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 250 Prop: 5,750

Combat Tours:

WW II: USS *Core* (CVE-13), Battle of the Atlantic (anti-submarine warfare) 1942 - 1943 (Flight Deck Officer and Assistant Air Officer).

XO/CO, VT-50, USS *Bataan* (CVL-29), Pacific - Bonin Island strike, 1944

Vietnam: Commander, CARDIV TWO, USS *America*, 1968

Aviation Commands:

CO, VA-45, 1948

Commander, Carrier Air Group 17, 1952 - 1954

CO, USS *Haleakala* (AE-25), 1960 - 1961

CO, USS *Independence* (CVA-62), 1962 - 1963

Commander, CARDIV TWO, 1968

Combat Awards:

2 Legions of Merit

2 Distinguished Service Medals

3 Air Medals

Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V"

Duty Assignment Chronology

Rear Admiral Leroy V. Swanson, a native of Oneida, Illinois, is a graduate of Bradley Polytechnic Institute. After enlisting in the Naval Reserve in June, 1937, he was accepted in the Naval Aviation program and completed his flight training in December, 1938. He was commissioned Ensign in June, 1939.



As his first assignment, he reported to Scouting Squadron TWO followed by a tour of duty with Scouting Squadron SEVENTY-ONE on board USS *Wasp* (CVS-18). He returned to Pensacola as an instrument instructor until 1942, and then reported on board USS *Core* (CVE-13) as Flight Deck and Assistant Air Officer. While aboard this escort carrier, he participated in the early submarine battle of the Atlantic.

In 1943 he was assigned to Torpedo Squadron FIFTY on board USS *Bataan* (CVL-29) and served as Executive Officer and Commanding Officer of the squadron. He received his first Air Medal for meritorious achievement in an attack against a heavily defended enemy seaplane base in the Bonin Islands. Through his leadership and participation, this vital installation was completely destroyed. He received three Gold Stars in lieu of additional Air Medals for combat operations in the Pacific from April to July, 1944.

His next assignments included duty as Maintenance and Operations Officer at the Naval Air Station, Miami, Florida; Officer in Charge of the Carrier Qualification Training Unit at the Naval Air Station, Milton, Florida; and attendance at the General Line School, Newport, Rhode Island.

In June 1948 he assumed command of Attack Squadron FORTY-FIVE on board USS *Midway* (CVA-41) and USS *Franklin D. Roosevelt* (CVA-42). His next assignment was in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations as Assistant Head for Armament in the Military Requirements and New Development Branch, followed by duty as Commander Carrier Air Group SEVENTEEN on board USS *Franklin D. Roosevelt* and USS *Wasp*. In June 1954, he reported to the Chief of Naval Air Advanced Training as the Single Engine Training Officer and then was assigned as Executive Officer of USS *Shangri La* (CVA-38).

He assumed command of the Combat Information Center School at the Naval Air Station, Glynco, Georgia in April 1957 and the next year reported for duty with the Joint

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Staff, Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington, D. C.

In 1960 he assumed command of USS *Haleakala* (AE-25) followed by attendance at the National War College, Washington, D.C. In September 1962, he became Commanding Officer of the USS *Independence* (CVA-62), one of the major U.S. Navy deterrent units in the Cuban Crises of that year.

He then served as Chief of Staff and Aide to Commander Carrier Division ONE before returning to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations as Assistant to the Director, Navy Program Planning Office. After his selection as Rear Admiral, he was assigned as Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Fleet Operations), before assuming command of Carrier Division TWO 23 February 1968. With his Flag aboard USS *America* (CVA- 66), Rear Admiral Swanson deployed on 10 April for operations against North Vietnam from the Tonkin Gulf. He returned 16 December 1968 after circling the globe.

In addition to the Air Medal with three Gold Stars, Rear Admiral Swanson has the American Defense Service Medal with Star; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with three stars; Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal with four stars; World War II Victory Medal; China Service Medal (extended); National Defense Service Medal with one Star; Korean Service Medal; Navy Expeditionary Medal; Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; United Nations Service Medal; Vietnam Service Medal with two stars and the Vietnam Campaign Medal. He was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V" for duty in Vietnam while serving as Chief of Staff, CARDIV ONE, and the Navy Commendation Medal with Bronze Star for acting as Head, Washington Scientific Committee for the Nuclear Weapon Recovery Operation in Palomares, Spain. He was awarded the Legion of Merit for his services as Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Fleet Operations) and recently, the National Order of Vietnam, Fifth Class, and the Gallantry Cross with Bronze Star for his services to the Republic of Vietnam.

Rear Admiral Swanson is married to the former Margaret Fentress of Norfolk, Virginia and they have four children, Virginia A., Carolyn Elizabeth, Mary Margaret and Michael Thomas.

The Swansons are truly a Navy family. Two daughters are married to Navy Lieutenants and Rear Admiral Swanson's son is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland.

Summary of Significant Career Events

- (1) CAG of the first jet Air Group.
- (2) XO, USS *Shangri La*. Won the pacific "Battle E" during my tenure.
- (3) Selected for augmentation of Joint Staff, J-3 Operations.
- (4) Selected for the National War College.
- (5) CO, USS *Independence* during the Cuban Missile Crisis.
- (6) Chief of Staff CARDIV ONE when the first strike was made in Vietnam.
- (7) Selected for Flag Rank while in OPNAV (CNO) Assumed the Operations Directorate, (OP-33) after selection.
- (8) Responsible for initiating underwater group for the recovery of the H-bomb, dropped by USAF off the coast of Palomares, Spain. Recovered same by Task Force with with RR. Adm. at the Conn.
- (9) In charge of Market Time Operations, Vietnam. Direct contact with SECNAV Nitze.
- (10) Served as Task Group 77.0., Vietnam, CARDIV TWO aboard USS *America*.
- (11) Deputy Commander in Chief, U. S. Naval Forces Europe. Also Chief of Staff to Commander.
- (12) Commander field command - Defense Nuclear Agency.
- (13) In 1974 became the Navy "Gray Eagle" relieving Admiral Tom Moorner.