

AVIATION WALL OF HONOR



COM. ROY W. FLETCHER, JR. AS USNR (REV.)

Commander Roy William Fletcher Jr.

Roy William Fletcher Jr. was born on January 22, 1919 in the state of New Jersey. He grew up and attended school in Evanston, Illinois and graduated from the Evanston Township High School in 1936.

He then attended Northwestern University where he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Geology and, in addition, met his future wife, Helen Hackney of Marquette, Michigan. In his senior year,

he also took Civilian Pilot Training and received his pilot's license in June 1940.

In February 1941, Fletcher enlisted in the U.S. Navy Aviation Cadet program at Corpus Christie, Texas. He was trained in single engine Scout Bombers and received his commission as an Ensign, Naval Aviator in November 1941.

After serving as a Flight Instructor, he was ordered in July 1942 to the Naval Air Station at Alameda, California as a member of newly commissioned Inshore Scouting Patrol Squadron VS-56. Deployment to Kodiak Island in Alaska quickly followed in response to the Japanese incursion in the Aleutians on the islands of Attu and Kiska.

After a period of routine scouting the bays and inlets of Kodiak Island and escorting ships in and out of Kodiak Harbor, Fletcher was detached to Amchitka Island to rendezvous and escort

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our naval invasion force headed for Attu and Kiska Islands.

Following the Aleutian campaign, Fletcher reported to Fighting Squadron Twenty at N.A.S. North Island in San Diego, California. After 400 hours of training in fighter gunnery and tactics and "Group Grope" flights with Air Group bombers and torpedo planes in San Diego, he was deployed to Hawaii. On August 3, 1944, he landed aboard USS Enterprise at Pearl Harbor in preparation of joining Adm. Halsey's Fast Carrier Forces in the Western Pacific. It was with this group that Fletcher became a part of the action at Leyte Gulf in October 1944 where the Japanese sent a three-pronged naval attack against Gen. Douglas MacArthur's Leyte landing. The resulting battle has been called the greatest naval engagement in history, where the destruction of the Imperial Japanese Fleet marked its end as an effective fighting force.

On January 22, 1945, on his 26th birthday and after 68 combat missions, three and a third Japanese planes shot down, and after 250 hours of carrier-based flight time, Fletcher flew his last mission. Leading a fighter sweep down the west coast of Okinawa, his flight destroyed a convoy of six transport ships carrying supplies to the Japanese forces in Okinawa.

In addition to the Leyte Gulf operation, Fletcher participated in actions against the Japanese at the Bonin Islands, Palau, Formosa, Philippines, Hong Kong, and Iwo Jima. His citations include a Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with eight stars, and Presidential Unit Citations awarded to the USS Enterprise and USS Lexington.

After separation from the service, Roy, his wife Helen, and daughter Nancy moved permanently to Marquette where he became manager and later president of the Soo-Marquette Hardware Company. Since retirement, he now lives with his wife in San Diego, California.

TJ Mudge, Jan. 2004



CADET R. FLETCHER, IN VO-VS FLOAT PLANE TRAINING SQUADRON,
WITH NAVIGATION PLOTTING BOARD & KNEE PAD, AUG. 1941.

