

AVIATION WALL OF HONOR



First Lieutenant Carl Hallen Dive Bomber Pilot US Navy Killed in Action

Carl Hallen, son of Mrs. Sirie Hallen, 413 South Third Street in Ishpeming, was born on February 9, 1916 in Waukegan, Illinois. He graduated from Waukegan Township High School where he starred in prep athletics. Later, he was prominent in baseball and basketball at Compton, California Junior College and Santa Barbara State College.

He enlisted in the U.S. Navy on April 15, 1941 at Long Beach, California and began his aviation training there. He was commissioned at Corpus Christi, Texas in 1942. The following October he made Lieutenant junior grade and full Lieutenant a year later in 1943.

After being stationed for a short period in Long Beach, he was transferred to Jacksonville, Florida. Considered one of the best dive bomber pilots in the squadron, he was assigned as an instructor for eleven months in Pasco, Washington flying the SB-2C.

His next duty station was United States Naval Air Station, Punnene, Maui, Territory of Hawaii. On a simulated bombing attack on an aircraft carrier in a pre-dawn exercise, the flight encountered a heavy rain squall. Hallen's plane became separated from the rest of the squadron and it was believed to have crashed into the sea. A thorough air and surface search of the area was carried out. An oil slick was found on the water, but no trace of Hallen or his plane was found.

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He was warmly commended by his squadron commander, R.E. Riera, in a letter to the flier's wife in Pensacola, Florida and then forwarded to his mother in Ishpeming.

"You have the deepest sympathy of every man and officer in the squadron," Cmdr. Riera wrote. "We all feel that this is almost as great a personal loss to us as it is to you. 'Slick' (nickname given to him in the service) was loved by all who knew him. His pleasant personality and his keen sense of humor were a great asset to the morale of the squadron. He can never be replaced."

The commanding officer gives hope that Lt. Hallen will be found. He said "We patrolled every foot of the area for two days. Every plane in the outfit took part in the search. We could not abandon hope for 'Slick's safety as long as there was any chance that he might be alive."

On July 31, 1945, official word was received from the Secretary of the Navy to his mother that her son was now officially reported as dead.

He left his wife in Pensacola, Florida, his mother Mrs. Sirie Hallen, Ishpeming, father Walter Hallen, Waukegan, Illinois, and grandfather Charles P. Johnson, Ishpeming.

TJ Mudge, July 2004