

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

LIEUTENANT (jg) JOSEPH WARREN FINCH, JR.
U.S. NAVAL RESERVE, DECEASED

Lieutenant Finch was killed in action in the Battle of the Solomon Islands, November 13, 1942, while serving in the USS LAFFEY. The USS FINCH (DE 328) was named in his memory, commissioned in the U.S. Navy in December, 1943, and is the second of that name in the Navy.

Joseph Warren Finch, Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. (Ida Marion) Finch, was born in Chicago, Illinois, on March 8, 1920. He attended Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, and was a member of the Naval Reserve Officers' Training Corps. Appointed Ensign, U.S. Naval Reserve, on May 28, 1941, he was promoted to Lieutenant, junior grade on June 15, 1942.

Ordered to the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, he had instruction in Communications, and on December 13, 1941 he reported in the Twelfth Naval District, San Francisco, California, for duty with the local defense force. He then had duty in connection with fitting out the USS LAFFEY (DD-459), and when that destroyer was commissioned the following March and joined the Pacific Fleet, he served aboard. He was so serving when he lost his life in line of duty, November 13, 1942. He was entitled to the Presidential Unit Citation awarded the USS LAFFEY. The citation states:

"For outstanding performance during action against enemy Japanese forces in the Southwest Pacific Area, September 15 to November 13, 1942. Braving hostile fire to rescue survivors from submarine-infested waters, the LAFFEY, after fighting effectively in the battle off Cape Esperance, successfully repelled an aerial torpedo attack and, although badly crippled and set afire, inflicted severe damage on Japanese naval units off Savo Island. Eventually succumbing to her wounds after the enemy had fled in defeat, she left behind her an illustrious example of heroic fighting spirit."

In addition to the ribbon for and facsimile of the Presidential Unit Citation, Lieutenant Finch was awarded posthumously the Purple Heart Medal, and was entitled to the American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; and World War II Victory Medal.