

RICHARD BEATTY ANDERSON
PRIVATE FIRST CLASS, U. S. MARINE CORPS, DECEASED

Richard Beatty Anderson was born on June 26, 1921, in Tacoma, Washington, son of Mr. and Mrs. Oscar A. Anderson. Before his enlistment in the U. S. Marine Corps on July 6, 1942, he had been employed for eleven months at the Richmond Shipyards, Richmond, California. Enlisting at San Francisco, he completed Basic Training at the Marine Corps Base, San Diego, and later served at Camp Elliott, also located there. He was promoted to PFC on April 12, 1943, and subsequently ordered to duty in the field.

Roi Island, lying in the Kwajalein Atoll, was the first pre-war Japanese territory to fall to the Marines. Anderson, a member of the invasion force, was hunting enemy snipers when he chose the shell hole in the center of Roi airfield, for a point of vantage from which to attack Japanese positions. There, on February 1, 1944, he hurled himself on a live grenade, and took the full impact of the explosion to save the lives of three comrades. The 22-year old Leatherneck, who had had tattooed on his arm the inscription, "Death Before Dishonor," was evacuated to a ship, where he died of his wounds. He was buried at sea with full military honors.

Anderson was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, with citation as follows: "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving with the Fourth Marine Division during against enemy Japanese forces on Roi Island, Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands, February 1, 1944. Entering a shell crater occupied by three other Marines, Private First Class Anderson was preparing to throw a grenade at an enemy position when it slipped from his hands and rolled toward the men at the bottom of the hole. With insufficient time to retrieve the armed weapon and throw it, Private First Class Anderson fearlessly chose to sacrifice himself and save his companions by hurling his body upon the grenade and taking the full impact of the explosion. His personal valor and exceptional spirit of loyalty in the face of almost certain death was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country."

In addition to the Medal of Honor, PFC Anderson was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart Medal and was entitled to the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal and the World War II Victory Medal.