

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER HARLAN ROCKEY DICKSON,
UNITED STATES NAVY, DECEASED

Lieutenant Commander Dickson was born in Columbus, Ohio, on September 16, 1914. He attended Western High School, Washington, D. C., prior to his appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland, from the Fourth District of Ohio in 1932. He was graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 4, 1936, and was ordered on June 28, 1936, to the USS QUINCY and served in her until January 28, 1939.

On February 25, 1939, Lieutenant Commander Dickson reported at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, for instruction, and while in this assignment was promoted to Lieutenant, Junior Grade. From September 25, 1939, to February 13, 1941, he served in the seaplane tender TEAL. He returned to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, for advanced instruction. From the latter part of July 1941 until September 19, 1941, he was under instruction at the Naval Air Station, Miami, Florida. From October to December 1941, he was under instruction at the Fleet Air Detachment, Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia. He served in Bombing Squadron FIVE, until June 22, 1942, and while in this duty was promoted to Lieutenant. On August 1, 1942 he reported for duty in connection with fitting out Scouting Squadron TWELVE, and was attached to this squadron upon its commissioning.

He was appointed a Lieutenant Commander on May 1, 1943, and in July of that year was assigned to Bombing Squadron NINETY-NINE. Thereafter he served consecutively with Bombing Squadrons TWENTY and EIGHTEEN until November 1943, at which time he assumed command of the latter.

Lieutenant Commander Dickson was awarded the Navy Cross and a Gold Star in lieu of a Second Navy Cross and cited as follows:

NAVY CROSS:

"For extraordinary heroism and courageous perseverance as pilot of an airplane of a Bombing Squadron in dive bombing attacks against enemy Japanese forces in Tulagi Harbor on May 4, and in an attack on an enemy aircraft carrier in the Coral Sea on May 8, 1942. Pressing home these attacks in the face of tremendous antiaircraft fire, and on May 8, also harassed by heavy aircraft opposition, Lieutenant Dickson assisted greatly in the sinking or damaging of the carrier and other enemy vessels. His conscientious devotion to duty and gallant self command against formidable odds contributed materially to the success of our forces in the Battle of the Coral Sea."

GOLD STAR in lieu of a Second NAVY CROSS:

"For extraordinary heroism and distinguished service as pilot of an airplane of a Scouting Squadron in action against enemy Japanese forces in the Battle of Midway during the period June 4-6, 1942. Defying extreme danger from concentrated antiaircraft fire and fierce fighter opposition, Lieutenant Dickson, with utter disregard for his own personal safety, participated in persistent and vigorous attacks against the Japanese invasion fleet. His gallant intrepidity and loyal devotion to the accomplishment of a vastly important objective contributed in large measure to the success achieved by our forces and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Lieutenant Commander Dickson was killed when the Navy dive bomber of which he was pilot crashed north of San Luis Obispo, California, on February 5, 1944.

In addition to the Navy Cross and the Gold Star, Lieutenant Commander Dickson is entitled to the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal.

A destroyer, the USS HARLAN R. DICKSON, has been named in his honor.

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