

# NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

REAR ADMIRAL VERNON L. ANDERSON, DENTAL CORPS,  
UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED

Vernon Leroy Anderson was born in St. Cloud, Minnesota, on September 27, 1913, son of John and Nellie (Anderson) Anderson. He attended St. Cloud Technical High School; received his teaching diploma from State Teachers College, St. Cloud, in 1933 and during the period 1933 to 1936 taught schools in Granite Falls, Minnesota. In 1940 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery from the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry at Minneapolis. He was commissioned Lieutenant (junior grade) in the Dental Corps of the U. S. Naval Reserve on March 3, 1941 and subsequently advanced in rank to that of Rear Admiral, to date from November 6, 1970, having transferred from the Naval Reserve to the U. S. Navy on October 25, 1941.

Ordered into active naval service, he reported in May 1941 as Assistant Dental Officer at the Navy Yard, Brooklyn, New York, and from July 1941 to March 1942 was Dental Officer at the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland. He next joined the USS WASP as Dental Officer and while on board that aircraft carrier, she twice delivered planes to Malta in the spring of 1942 and later that year participated in the landing operations on Guadalcanal. The WASP was severely damaged by an enemy submarine torpedo near Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides, on September 15, 1942 and was sunk by United States forces. He was rescued from that water after the sinking and was subsequently awarded the Purple Heart Medal.

From December 1942 to September 1945 he was Dental Officer at the Naval Dispensary, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. While in that assignment, he had maxille facial instruction at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota. He next had duty as Dental Officer at the Marine Corps Air Station, Ewa, Oahu, Territory of Hawaii. In May 1947 he reported as Dental Officer at the Marine Corps Air Station, Quantico, Virginia, and after instruction, January to December 1951, at the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland, joined the USS JASON (ARH 1) as Dental Officer. While on board that repair ship, he participated in operations in the Korean area of hostilities. He became Senior Dental Officer at the Marine Corps Air Facility, Santa Ana, California, in January 1954 and in May 1959 assumed command of the THIRD Dental Company, Headquarters, THIRD Marine Division, Reinforced, Fleet Marine Force.

In July 1960 he reported as Senior Dental Officer at the Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Whiting Field, Milton, Florida, and in June 1963 joined Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, as Force Dental Officer. He transferred in June 1966, in a similar capacity, to Headquarters, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific. He was awarded the Legion of Merit with Combat "V" and cited, in part, as follows:

"...Captain Anderson directed and coordinated the Force's dental program; strived constantly to provide facilities to meet the demands of expanded operational commitments; developed plans, obtained equipment and coordinated the establishment of modern, efficient dental clinics at Marine bases in the Western Pacific area; and ensured that each dental office supporting Marines in the Republic of Vietnam was supplied with a high-powered portable operating unit..."

He became Staff Dental Officer at Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, Washington, D. C., in June 1969. "For outstanding meritorious service ..." in that assignment, he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal. The citation further states in part: "... (He) devoted his interests and efforts almost totally to the logistical problems involved in the gradual drawdown of forces and the concomitant reduction in dental personnel, equipment and facilities without a diminution of dental support to the Marine Corps..." In February 1971 he joined the Staff of the Commander in Chief, U. S. Atlantic Fleet as Fleet Dental Officer and Assistant Chiefs of Staff for Dentistry. Upon the establishment of the Naval Regional Dental Center, Norfolk, Virginia on July 1, 1973, he became Director/Commanding Officer and continued to serve additionally on the staff of the Commander in Chief, U. S. Atlantic Fleet. "For exceptionally meritorious conduct... from March 1971 to June 1974..." he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of a Second Legion of Merit. The citation further states in part:

"...The combination of Rear Admiral Anderson's foresight, imagination and expertise were instrumental in formulating a comprehensive plan for the establishment of the first Naval Regional Dental Center in the Navy. Upon assuming command of the Center, he skillfully blended and coordinated the professional skills, administrative talents and physical resources of the Naval Regional Dental Center into an effective and efficient system for the delivery of complete oral health care services..."

On July 1, 1974 he was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy.

In addition to the Legion of Merit with Gold Star and Combat "V", the Meritorious Service Medal and the Purple Heart Medal, Rear Admiral Anderson has the American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with star; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three stars; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia Clasp; National Defense Service Medal with bronze star; Korean Service Medal; United Nations Service Medal; Vietnam Service Medal with one bronze star; and the Korean Presidential Unit Citation Badge.

Dr. Anderson is a member of Delta Sigma Delta Fraternity, the American Dental Association and the International College of Dentists.

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