

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

ENSIGN RUSSELL FRANKLYN CHAMBERS  
U.S. NAVAL RESERVE, DECEASED

Ensign Chambers, reported missing in action on December 27, 1941, and under Public Law 490, was presumed Dead as of December 28, 1942. A destroyer escort vessel (DE-391) was named USS CHAMBERS in his honor.

A native of LaHabra, California, born June 10, 1914, Russell Franklyn Chambers was the son of Mr. and Mrs. R. L. (Nora Clark) Chambers. He attended Fullerton (California) High School and Junior College, and graduated from the University of Chicago in 1938 with the Bachelor of Arts degree.

He enlisted in the United States Naval Reserve on September 6, 1938, and after completing preliminary flight training, he was appointed Aviation Cadet on December 20. He had flight training at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, was designated Naval Aviator on September 30, 1939, and was commissioned Ensign on November 1, 1939. Ordered to active duty in Patrol Squadron 21 based at Manila, Philippine Islands, he reported on January 10, 1940. On December 12 of that year he became a patrol plane commander. Thereafter attached to Patrol Squadron 101, he continued service in that area after the United States entered World War II.

Ensign Chambers was reported missing in action December 27, 1941 in an aerial engagement with the enemy Japanese over Jolo, Sulu, P.I. under conditions which presuppose death, and he was posthumously awarded the Air Medal, the citation in part stating: "For meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight as bombardier of a patrol plane in action against enemy Japanese forces. . . By his skill and fearlessness under fire, (he) contributed materially to the severe damage inflicted on a battleship . . . and the successful attacks on Japanese naval forces and shore installations on the island of Jolo, Sulu, Philippine Islands, December 27, 1941. . . He gallantly gave up his life for his country."

In addition to the Air Medal, Ensign Chambers was also eligible for the Purple Heart Medal, the American Defense Service Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; and World War II Victory Medal.

- - - -