

COMMANDER G. NORMAN EISENHART  
UNITED STATES NAVY

George Norman Eisenhart was born in Binghamton, New York, on February 28, 1914. He graduated from Binghamton Central High School and in 1937 received his Bachelor of Science degree in aeronautical engineering from the Georgia School of Technology at Atlanta. While in college (1932-1937), he was a member of the Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit. Appointed Aviation Cadet in November 1937, he was commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Naval Reserve in August 1940. He subsequently advanced in rank until his promotion to Commander to date from November 5, 1945. His transfer to the U. S. Navy became effective in April 1946.

Upon receiving his appointment in 1937 he had aviation training at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. Designated Naval Aviator on November 24, 1938, he had duty with Patrol Squadron FOUR and later Patrol Squadron TWENTY TWO, both attached to the Naval Air Station, Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii. Returning to the United States in January 1941, he reported as Assistant Fighter Plane Class Desk Officer in the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, Washington, D. C.

In June 1943 he joined Air Group THIRTY TWO, as Executive Officer and later assumed command of that air group. He was awarded the Air Medal for attacks on hostile installations on Wotje, Taroa and Engebi; and Gold Stars in lieu of the Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Air Medals for "meritorious achievement....." while participating in (2) combat air patrols to furnish cover for landings on Engebi, Eniwetok and Parry; (3) similar operations over Eniwetok, pursuing a hostile plane during raids on Palau and Peleliu; (4) interception of a large hostile air formation attacking our Task Force, and effective attacks on airfields on Truk, Rota and Guam; (5) attacks on airfields on Pagan, Guam and Rota; (6) strikes on airfields on Guam and on hostile installations on Tinian; (7) strikes on hostile installations on Mindanao and Masbate and sweeps against Manila and Panay.

He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for "heroism and extraordinary achievement.....as a Division Leader in an assault on enemy aircraft on June 11, 1944 in the vicinity of the Marianas Groups ...." The citation further stated: He participated in a strafing run on enemy seaplanes setting fire to one, and after recovering, attacked an enemy fighter which plunged into the water in flames. On June 13, 1944, he led a strafing attack in the vicinity of the Marianas causing severe damage to and silencing several emplacements. Again on June 16, 1944, he led a flight of fighter aircraft in the vicinity of the Bonin Islands and strafed and destroyed an enemy plane on the apron of the airfield."

He was also awarded Gold Stars in lieu of the Second, Third, and Fourth Distinguished Flying Cross. The citations follow in part:

Gold Star in lieu of the Second Distinguished Flying Cross: "For heroism and extraordinary achievement....as Flight Leader of a Carrier Group, attached to the USS LANGLEY, in a bombing and a strafing mission against enemy Japanese ground positions in the vicinity of the Marianas

Islands, on July 3, 1944. Operating without adequate information as to the location of his assigned target, (he) dropped several bombs on the approximate area. Sighting a cave in which the ammunition was stored, he made a hazardous strafing assault on the position which ignited the store and caused a tremendous explosion, destroying the installation, a railroad, a road and numerous buildings of an adjoining town and damaging the wings of his own plane...."

Gold Star in lieu of Third Distinguished Flying Cross: "For heroism....during operations against enemy Japanese forces.....from April 1 to 29, 1944. Completing his twentieth mission during this period, (he) covered landings on Humboldt and Hollandia and pressed home attacks on hostile installations on Woleai, Hollandia and Truk....."

Gold Star in lieu of Fourth Distinguished Flying Cross: For "completing his fortieth mission during (the period August 4 to September 9, 1944, he) ...carried out strafing and bombing attacks in support of landings on Guam, participated in a combat air patrol during coordinated strikes on Palau, and lead strikes against hostile airfields on Mindanao....."

He is entitled to the ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Navy Unit Commendation awarded the USS LANGLEY, to which his squadron was attached.

In December 1944, Carrier Air Group THIRTY TWO was ordered to return to the United States to be reformed, and in June 1945, the group was assigned to the USS CABOT, operating in the Pacific. He continued duty with that airgroup until September 1945, and the next month was relieved of active duty.

He was on terminal leave until February 1946, and in March of that year reported for active duty as Test Pilot and Officer in Charge of Development of Target Drones at the Naval Air Development Station, Johnsville, Pennsylvania. Later he assumed the duties of Director, Projects Division, Pilotless Aircraft Development there, and remained in that capacity until August 1949, when he became Head of the Air Launched Branch, Guided Missiles Division, in the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department. He continues duty in the Bureau, but is presently serving as Head of the Programs Branch, Production Division.

In addition to the Distinguished Flying Cross with three Gold Stars, the Air Medal with six Gold Stars; and the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, Commander Eisenhart has the American Defense Service Medal; the American Campaign Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with silver star (five engagements); the World War II Victory Medal; and the Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia Clasp.