

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

REAR ADMIRAL WILLIAM H. ELLIS, UNITED STATES NAVY

William Harold Ellis was born in Rossmoyne, Ohio, on January 2, 1925, son of William H. and Norma Belle (Rose) Ellis. He enlisted in the U. S. Naval Reserve December 16, 1942 and under the V-1 Program (Accredited College Program) attended the University of Cincinnati until July 1942. He next had training at the Naval Air Station, Grosse Ile, Michigan and from November 1943 to September 1945, under the V-5 (Aviation Cadet Program), had flight training at the Naval Air Training Command, Pensacola, Florida. He was commissioned Ensign to date from August 16, 1945 and was designated Naval Aviator on September 5, that year. He subsequently advanced in rank to that of Rear Admiral, to date from January 1, 1974, having transferred from the U. S. Naval Reserve to the U. S. Navy on October 17, 1946.

After receiving his commission in 1945, he had operational flight training at the Naval Air Stations, Miami and Fort Lauderdale, Florida. In April 1946 he joined Attack Squadron ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-FOUR (later redesignated Bombing Squadron EIGHTY-TWO) as Assistant Operations Officer and while attached to that squadron deployed to Europe and the Mediterranean in 1946. Detached in August 1948, he attended Ohio State University at Columbus, under the Five-Term Program and from April 1950 to December 1952 was All Weather Flight Instructor, Jet Instrument Instructor and Assistant Operations Officer with the Fleet All Weather Training Unit, Atlantic at the Naval Air Station, Key West, Florida. While there he qualified in night attack and night fighter tactics.

From January to June 1953 he attended the General Line School at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, after which he was an Instrument Instructor and Statistics Officer at the Navy All Weather Flight School, Naval Air Advanced Training Command, Corpus Christi, Texas. In July 1954 he reported as Flight Officer and Flight Instructor with Advanced Training Unit TWO HUNDRED ONE and during the period July to December 1955 attended Combat Information Officer School. He next served as Assistant Combat Information Center Officer on board the USS YORKTOWN (CVA-10), which participated in three Western Pacific deployments.

In February 1958 he reported for instruction at the Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Virginia and during the period July to September 1958 had flight refresher training with Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-FOUR. He then joined Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-FOUR as Operations Officer and as such participated in one Western Pacific deployment. In March 1960 he became Head of the Officer Data Section in the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., where he remained until July 1962. While there he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in General Studies from George Washington University in 1961. He again had refresher training with Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY FOUR and in December 1962 rejoined Fighter Squadron ONE

HUNDRED FIFTY FOUR to serve as Commanding Officer during two Western Pacific deployments.

In January 1965 he reported for refresher flight training with Carrier Readiness Air Wing TWELVE and in June 1965 assumed command of Attack Carrier Air Wing TWENTY-ONE. He was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Sixth Air Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross and the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V". The citations follow in part:

Gold Star in lieu of the Sixth Air Medal: "...In action against hostile forces in North Vietnam on April 9, 1966, Commander Ellis was engaged as leader of a flight of four attack and two fighter aircraft on a strike against the Vinh Ferry and supporting facilities in North Vietnam. In the target area he sought out and located the ferry and, in the face of intense antiaircraft fire, led his flight in an effective low altitude bombing attack which resulted in numerous direct hits which sank the ferry and inflicted severe damage to the ferry slip..."

Bronze Star Medal: "For meritorious achievement...during the period December 17, 1965 to July 3, 1966...Commander Ellis made a significant contribution directly enhancing the results of strike operations conducted by SEVENTH Fleet Attack Carriers against communist forces...His thorough pre-strike planning, professional briefing and proper selection of forces not only attained maximum destruction of enemy targets but also minimized losses to our own forces..."

Distinguished Flying Cross: "...In action against hostile forces in North Vietnam on May 5, 1966, (he) was engaged as the leader of a flight of four A4E and two fighter aircraft against the Bai Thuong Petroleum storage area west of Than Hoa, North Vietnam...(He) executed a low altitude bombing attack with such skill and accuracy that he scored direct hits on this important military target which destroyed a large volume of vital enemy POL..."

Navy Commendation Medal: "...On May 27, 1966, Commander Ellis was engaged as flight leader of a flight of four A4E aircraft on a strike against twenty railroad box cars and support buildings near Vihn, North Vietnam. In spite of intensive enemy small arms he directed and personally executed repeated low-level bombing attacks with such precision and accuracy that eight of the box cars were totally destroyed and five damaged, two support buildings were destroyed and the railway interdicted in three places..."

He was also awarded the Air Medal with Gold Stars in lieu of six additional awards "for meritorious service..." during a specified number of combat missions in southeast Asia from December 17, 1965 to May 14, 1966. In addition, he is entitled to the Ribbon for and a facsimile of the Navy Unit Commendation awarded the USS HORNET (CVA-19) and

Attack Carrier Air Wing TWENTY-ONE.

In August 1966 he reported for instruction at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Washington, D. C. and while there received the degree of Master of Science in Business Administration in 1967. After completing the course there in August 1967, he was assigned to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, where he served as Head of the Program Information Section until June 1968, then as Executive Assistant and Senior Aide to the Director of Navy Program Planning. In June 1970 he assumed command of the USS RALEIGH (LPD-1) and "for meritorious achievement..." while in command of that amphibious transport dock was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Second Navy Commendation Medal. The citation further states in part:

"...The superior performance of his command while participating in Airborne Mine Countermeasures Requirements Test and Evaluation and during the major Joint Exercise EXOTIC DANCER IV reflect the high degree of professionalism that prevailed throughout his tour of duty..."

In December 1971 he assumed command of Amphibious Squadron THREE and in June 1973 was transferred to command of Amphibious Group TWO.

In addition to the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star Medal, the Air Medal with one Silver Star and two Gold Stars (six additional Air Medals); the Navy Commendation Medal with Gold Star and Combat "V" and the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, Rear Admiral Ellis has the American Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Europe Clasp; National Defense Service Medal with bronze star; Korean Service Medal; Vietnam Service Medal with two bronze stars; and the United Nations Service Medal. He also has the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with Device.

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