

CAPTAIN JAMES R. ALLEN
UNITED STATES NAVY, DECEASED

James Ross Allen was born on August 24, 1896, in Davenport, Iowa, son of Charles Henry and Anne Ross Allen. He attended grammar and high schools in Davenport, before entering the U. S. Naval Academy Annapolis, Maryland, from his native state in 1915. As a Midshipman he played football and basketball (Captain his First Class year), participated in track (Academy record in discus throw) and was a member of the "Lucky Bag" staff for three years. He was graduated with distinction, sixth in a class of one hundred and ninety-nine and commissioned Ensign on June 6, 1918, with the Class of 1919.

Appointed Assistant Naval Constructor on December 13, 1919, he was transferred in March 1936, to the Line of the Navy and was designed for Aeronautical Engineering Duty Only. Advancing progressively in rank he attained that of Captain, to date from June 16, 1942, before he was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy on July 1, 1948.

Following graduation from the Naval Academy in 1918, he joined the USS KENTUCKY and the next month transferred to the USS WAINWRIGHT, operating on convoy duty in the Atlantic out of Brest, France. Detached from that destroyer in August 1919 he was ordered to the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation, Squantum, Massachusetts, where the USS SWASEY was building. He reported aboard that destroyer upon her commissioning on August 2, 1919.

Returning to Annapolis, Maryland, in September 1919, he had instruction in marine engineering and naval construction at the Postgraduate School there. He continued the course at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, where he received the degree of Master of Science. Completing his instruction he had short assignments at the Naval Aircraft Factory, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and at Edgewood (Maryland) Arsenal, prior to reporting for lighter-than-air duty at the Naval Air Station, Lakehurst, New Jersey.

In September 1922 he was assigned to the Naval Academy where his primary duty was Head Basketball Coach, with secondary duties instructing in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Physics and as a Lecturer in the principals of aviation and chemical warfare at the Postgraduate School. After three years at the Academy, which ended in June 1925, he resumed his work at the Naval Aircraft Factory, Philadelphia. In August 1926 he was ordered to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, for flight training.

Designated Naval Aviator in April 1927, he returned to the Naval Aircraft Factory, Philadelphia, for duty. From September 1927 to October 1931, he served as Officer in Charge of the Ground School at the Pensacola Air Station, and it was during this time that the first ground school course for students taking Naval aviation was evolved.

Completing duty on the staff of Commander Aircraft, Battle Force, he reported, in April 1932, as Project Officer of Fighter Design in the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. While there the initial Grumman and Northrop fighters were designed. He was

subsequently assigned to the Ships Installation Section in the Bureau of Aeronautics, where the preliminary designs were made of the aeronautical facilities for the carriers YORKTOWN, ENTERPRISE and WASP. It was also during this time that the preliminary designs for the hydraulic catapult, deck edge elevators, and specifications for the seaplane tenders CURTISS and BARNEGAT were developed.

In May 1936 he joined the staff of Commander Aircraft, Battle Force, as Structures Officer and in January 1938 transferred to the staff of Commander Aircraft, Scouting Force, to serve as Materiel Officer until June 1939. In that capacity he had cognizance of the material condition of all patrol planes in the Atlantic, Caribbean and Pacific.

Returning to shore duty, he was assigned to the Fleet Air Base, Coco Solo, Canal Zone, as Assembly and Repair Officer, working on the overhaul of planes and engines of all patrol squadrons assigned to the Caribbean. In May 1941 he became Chief Engineer at the Naval Aircraft Factory, Philadelphia, and for "outstanding performance of duty..." in that capacity received a Letter of Commendation, with authorization to wear the Commendation Ribbon, from the Secretary of Navy. The citation further states:

"Responsible for all research, development, experimental and test work, Captain Allen enabled the Naval Aircraft Factory to contribute indispensable services and materials to the operating forces during a critical period of the war...."

Ordered in August 1943, to Dayton, Ohio, he supervised the establishment of the Office of the Bureau of Aeronautics General Representative, Wright Field, which was the first step toward close coordination Naval aviation had with the Material Division of the Army Air Force. He remained there until September 1944, when he reported as Aviation Logistics Officer on the staff of Commander Shore Based Air Forces, Forward Area, Central Pacific. Three months later (December 1944) he joined the staff of Commander Service Squadron SIX for similar duty.

"For meritorious achievement as Aviation Logistics Officer on the staff of Commander Logistic Support Group during operations against enemy Japanese forces at Iwo Jima, Okinawa, Nansei Shoto and the Japanese Mainland from February 15 to July 24, 1945..." he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V." The citation continues in part: "...Captain Allen arranged for the provision and supply of adequate numbers of combat ready replacement aircraft and aircrews in replenishment areas at sea to meet the needs of the Fast Carrier Striking Forces. In addition, during replenishment operations, he actively coordinated the distribution of all aviation materials and replacement aircraft to the fast carriers...(thereby contributing) to the successful accomplishment of the mission of the Logistic Support Group..."

He reported, in July 1945, as Deputy Chief of Staff to the Commander Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet, Subordinate Command, Forward Area, and continued to serve in that capacity until November 1945.


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During the first eight months of 1946 he had duty on the staff of the Chief of Naval Air Technical Training, Pensacola Florida, and in August 1946 became Director of the Naval Aviation Experimental Station, Philadelphia. He was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy on July 1, 1948.

He died at the Naval Hospital, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on April 20, 1950.

In addition to the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," and the Commendation Ribbon, Captain Allen had the World War I Victory Medal, Destroyer Clasp; the American Defense Service Medal, Base Clasp; the American Campaign Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal.



Naval biography
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