

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION
LIEUTENANT COMMANDER EDMUND W. BIROS
U. S. NAVAL RESERVE, DECEASED

Edmund William Biros was born in Salem, Massachusetts, on November 1, 1915, son of John and Anna Jelin Biros. He attended Phillips School and Salem High School in Salem, and State Teachers College in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, and on September 8, 1936, he enlisted in the U. S. Naval Reserve for four years. His enlistment was terminated on November 19, that year, so that he could accept appointment as Aviation Cadet, USNR, to rank from November 3, 1936. He completed flight training, was designated a Naval Aviator and commissioned Ensign in the Naval Reserve, to date from December 1, 1937. By subsequent advancement, he attained the rank of Lieutenant Commander, to date from July 1, 1943.

Executing the oath of office as Aviation Cadet, USNR, he reported on November 28, 1936, to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, for flight training. He was designated Naval Aviator November 6, left that Station on December 21, 1937, and reported on February 1, 1938, to the Fleet Air Detachment, Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia, where he had duty in connection with fitting out the the USS HONOLULU, preparatory to serving on board that light cruiser when commissioned. Attached to the Aviation Unit of the HONOLULU until September 14, 1939, he was then transferred to the USS PHOENIX, to serve with the Cruiser Scouting Squadron assigned to that vessel.

On January 5, 1941, he was ordered detached from the PHOENIX and to report to Headquarters, First Naval District, Boston, Massachusetts, for duty involving flying in a Scouting Squadron of the Naval Reserve Aviation Base, Boston. On April 14, that year, he was transferred to the Naval Reserve Aviation Base, Washington, D. C., where he was stationed at the outbreak of World War II in December 1941. On June 1, 1942, he reported to the Naval Air Station, Seattle, Washington, to assist in fitting out an Escort Scouting Squadron, and for duty with that squadron when commissioned. While there he was ordered to a Composite Squadron for duty involving flying, and remained on duty with that squadron, which operated in the Atlantic Area, until September 4, 1943.

He received a Letter of Commendation from the Commander in Chief, U. S. Atlantic Fleet, as follows: "The Commander in Chief, U. S. Atlantic Fleet, notes with pleasure and gratification the report of your actions on 4 June 1943 when you attacked an enemy submarine. You, in company with a companion plane, were investigating a high frequency direction finder bearing of a suspected enemy submarine when the fully surfaced U-boat was sighted. The most favorably situated plane attacked immediately while you maneuvered so that you were in the most advantageous position for a coordinated attack. Following the first bomber closely, you made a determined attack from an altitude of fifty feet. Your depth bombs all fell close to the submarine, the spray and disturbance of the explosions completely enveloping the submarine. After your attack the submarine proceeded out of the disturbed explosion area at a steadily decreasing speed until it finally lost all way and then disappeared beneath the surface on an even keel. The Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet, commends you upon your aggressive, determined attack, made as part of the very skillful, coordinated action, by which planes of your section damaged an enemy submarine."

On September 4, 1943, he was detached from his Squadron with orders to a Fighting Squadron in the Pacific War Area. He was reported missing, and later determined to have died in enemy action on July 8, 1944. He was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart Medal (for wounds received in action) and the Silver Star Medal, with citation as follows:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity while serving as Flight Leader of a Fighter Squadron in action against enemy Japanese Forces in the Volcanic Islands on July 4, 1944. Leading his flight in a vigorous pre-dawn fighter sweep against strongly defended enemy air installations on Iwo Jima, Lieutenant Commander Biros launched an immediate attack when intercepted by a large number of hostile aircraft over the target. Fighting his plane with forceful determination, he blasted an enemy fighter from the sky and, by skillful disposal of the aircraft under his command, enabled his group to destroy fourteen Japanese planes and to damage five others. With control of the air assured, (he) then led a bitter strike against hostile antiaircraft gun positions which resulted in the destruction of two batteries and three grounded aircraft. His expert air-anship and courageous devotion to duty in the face of grave peril were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

In addition to the Silver Star Medal, the Commendation Ribbon and the Purple Heart Medal, Lieutenant Commander Biros was entitled to the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal.

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