

CAPT ALBERT K. EARNEST



Ensign (later Captain) Albert “Bert” Kyle Earnest was awarded three Navy Crosses during World War II, while serving with Torpedo Squadron Eight (VT-8.)

CITATION

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Navy Cross to Ensign Albert Kyle Earnest, United States Naval Reserve, for extraordinary heroism in operations against the enemy while serving as Pilot of a carrier-based Navy Torpedo Plane of Torpedo Squadron EIGHT (VT-8), embarked from Naval Air Station Midway during the "Air Battle of Midway," against enemy Japanese forces on 4 June 1942. In the first attack against an enemy carrier of the Japanese invasion fleet, Ensign Earnest pressed home his attack in the face of withering fire from enemy Japanese fighters and anti-aircraft forces. His loyal devotion to duty and his utter disregard for his own personal safety in attacking a superior enemy force were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

CITATION

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting a Gold Star in lieu of a Second Award of the Navy Cross to Ensign Albert Kyle Earnest, United States Naval Reserve, for extraordinary heroism in operations against the enemy while serving as Pilot of a carrier-based Navy Torpedo Plane of Torpedo Squadron EIGHT (VT-8), embarked from Naval Air Station Midway during the "Air Battle of Midway," against enemy Japanese forces on 4 June 1942. Having completed an unsupported

torpedo attack in the face of tremendous enemy fighter and anti-aircraft opposition, Ensign Earnest, himself wounded and his gunner dead, made his return flight in a plane riddled by machine gun bullets and cannon shell. With his compass and Bombay doors inoperative, one wheel of his landing gear unable to be extended and his elevator-control shot away, he was forced to fly by expert use of his elevator trimming tabs some 200 miles back to Midway where he negotiated a safe one-wheel landing. Fully aware of the inestimable importance of determining the combat efficiency of a heretofore unproven plane, Ensign Earnest doggedly persisted in spite of tremendous hazards and physical difficulties. His great courage and marked skill in handling his crippled plane were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

CITATION

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting a Second Gold Star in lieu of a Third Award of the Navy Cross to Ensign Albert Kyle Earnest, United States Naval Reserve, for extraordinary heroism in operations against the enemy while serving as Pilot of a carrier-based Navy Torpedo Plane in Torpedo Squadron EIGHT (VT-8), attached to the U.S.S. HORNET (CV-8), in action on 16 and 22 September 1942, and 9 to 12 October 1942, while deployed over the Solomon Islands. As part of a composite striking force which launched an attack against hostile surface units about 150 miles northwest of Guadalcanal, Lieutenant (junior grade), Earnest contributed to the scoring of a torpedo hit on a Japanese cruiser. On 22 September, together with two other torpedo bombers, he glide-bombed enemy installations at Cape Esperance. On 9 October, in a striking force operating 140 miles northwest of Guadalcanal, he obtained a direct hit which put a heavy cruiser out of action. On 10 and 12 October he participated in air raids against Japanese naval units which resulted in another hit on an enemy warship about 165 miles off Guadalcanal. His cool courage and conscientious devotion to duty, maintained at great risk in the face of grave danger, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.



Battle of Midway, June 1942:

Description: Rear cockpit and .50 caliber machine gun turret of the only survivor of six Torpedo Squadron Eight (VT-8) Grumman TBF *Avengers* that had attacked the Japanese carrier force in the morning of 4 June 1942. Seaman 1st Class Jay D. Manning, who was operating the .50 caliber machine gun turret, was killed in action with Japanese fighters during the attack. Damage to the turret can be seen in this view. The plane's pilot was Ensign Albert K. Earnest and the other crewman was Radioman 3rd Class Harry H. Ferrier. Both survived the action. Ship in the left background is probably USS [*Ballard*](#) (AVD-10).

Official [U.S. Navy](#) Photograph, now in the collections of the [U.S. National Archives and Records Administration](#), # 80-G-11635.



Battle of Midway, June 1942:

Grumman TBF-1 (Bureau # 00380) *Avenger* of Torpedo Squadron Eight (VT-8), photographed at Midway, 25 June 1942, prior to shipment back to the United States for post-battle evaluation. Badly shot-up, this plane was the only survivor of six Midway-based VT-8 TBFs that had attacked the Japanese carrier force in the morning of 4 June. The plane's pilot was Ensign Albert K. Earnest. Crew were Radioman 3rd Class Harrier H. Ferrier and Seaman 1st Class Jay D. Manning, who was operating the .50 caliber machine gun turret and was killed in action with Japanese fighters during the attack.

Official [U.S. Navy](#) Photograph, now in the collections of the [U.S. National Archives and Records Administration](#), # 80-G-17063.



Battle of Midway, June 1942;

Grumman TBF-1 *Avenger* (BuNo 00380) Coded 8-T-1, from VT-8, soon after returning from the morning strike against the Japanese fleet in the Battle of Midway on 4 June 1942.

Courtesy of Captain A.K. Earnest, USN (Ret) and Robert L. Lawson, 1990.

[Naval History & Heritage Command](#) photo, # NH 102559.