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# Their Finest Hour

"[I]f we fail, then the whole world,...all that we have known and cared for...will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that...men will still say, 'This was their finest hour.'"

**NOTICE TO READERS – NEW BLOG LOCATION!!!** *Their Finest Hour* has relocated to its own domain effective March 17, 2014! This page will no longer feature new posts. Just click this banner to be redirected to the new site. All content will remain here at the original location, but also has been migrated to the new site. To all my readers, thank you for all of your support and we'll see you over at the new site!

## WE'VE MOVED!!

Their Finest Hour is now located at <http://theirfinesthour.net>  
Click this banner to go to the new site – Comments closed here

Saturday, July 06, 2013

## TFH 7/6: LCDR Bruce A. Van Voorhis, USN

Bruce Avery Van Voorhis was born on January 29, 1908 in Aberdeen, Washington and spent his childhood years in Nevada. He was appointed to the [United States Naval Academy](#) in 1925, and graduated with the class of 1929. His first assignment was to the [USS Mississippi \(BB-41\)](#), but he only spent about one year with the battleship before reporting to [Naval Air Station Pensacola](#) for training as a Naval Aviator.

After earning his "Wings of Gold" on September 3, 1931, Van Voorhis flew a variety of carrier-based and other aircraft, and served aboard and flew off off the [USS Saratoga \(CV-3\)](#), [USS Ranger \(CV-4\)](#), [USS Yorktown \(CV-5\)](#), and [USS Enterprise \(CV-6\)](#) before the United States entered World War II.

In December 1942, then Lieutenant Commander Van Voorhis took command of [Patrol Squadron 14 \(VP-14\) in the Pacific](#). The squadron was equipped with the [Consolidated PB4 Catalina](#) but switched to the [Consolidated PB4Y-1 Liberator](#) early in 1943 with the squadron's redesignation as Bombing Squadron 102 (VB-102). Van Voorhis and his squadron flew their Naval versions of the Army Air Force's B-24 to [Guadalcanal](#) and began executing scouting and bombing missions against the Japanese.

On July 6, 1943, Van Voorhis and the nine other men on his crew departed Guadalcanal for a 700-mile overwater flight to [Kapingamarangi Atoll](#) (also known as Greenwich Island) to determine what the enemy presence there was and attack what was found in the hopes of staving off Japanese counterattacks against the Allies' northern flank as they advanced through the Solomon Islands. Over their target, the Navy fliers faced intense enemy opposition, but Van Voorhis and crew pressed their attack.

They succeeded in destroying the island's radio station, antiaircraft gun emplacements, and multiple enemy aircraft. Because they had to fly so low to escape enemy fires, the plane couldn't escape the blast of its own dropped bombs and [plunged into the atoll's lagoon, killing her crew](#). All the men aboard the PB4Y-1 received posthumous decorations. Eight of the ten crew members were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. The co-pilot was awarded the [Navy Cross](#). Van Voorhis, for his incredible tenacity in the attack and fighting spirit against insurmountable

## Freedom's Lamp Lifted High



The Statue of Liberty, 1886–Present

## About Me



**Allan Bourdus**

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I'm an anti-Statist; I place the individual before government.

I'm a conservative; America is exceptional because of enduring principles that must be defended. I'm a libertarian; rights come not from man. I'm a Christian; there is a way, and a truth – but you're free to believe as you wish. I'm a capitalist; be free to enrich yourself by the fruits of your labor. I'm a free-marketeer; be free to succeed, and pick yourself up when you fail. I'm a constitutionalist; learn it, love it, live it. I'm an American; I thank God daily for the United States, because without us, I wouldn't want to imagine where the world would be now.

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## Vigilant Liberty Radio Host!

odds, received the [Medal of Honor](#).

From [Medal of Honor Citations from World War II \(T-Z\)](#):



**\*VAN VOORHIS, BRUCE AVERY**

*Rank and organization: Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy. Born: 29 January 1908, Aberdeen, Wash. Appointed from: Nevada. Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as Squadron Commander of Bombing Squadron 102 and as Plane Commander of a PB4Y-1 Patrol Bomber operating against the enemy on Japanese-held Greenwich Island during the battle of the Solomon Islands, 6 July 1943. Fully aware of the limited chance of surviving an urgent mission, voluntarily undertaken to prevent a surprise Japanese attack against our forces, Lt. Comdr. Van Voorhis took off in total darkness on a perilous 700-mile flight without escort or support. Successful in reaching his objective despite treacherous and varying winds, low visibility and difficult terrain, he fought a lone but relentless battle under fierce antiaircraft fire and overwhelming aerial opposition. Forced lower and lower by pursuing planes, he coolly persisted in his mission of destruction. Abandoning all chance of a safe return he executed 6 bold ground-level attacks to demolish the enemy's vital radio station, installations, antiaircraft guns and crews with bombs and machinegun fire, and to destroy 1 fighter plane in the air and 3 on the water. Caught in his own bomb blast, Lt. Comdr. Van Voorhis crashed into the lagoon off the beach, sacrificing himself in a single-handed fight against almost insuperable odds, to make a distinctive contribution to our continued offensive in driving the Japanese from the Solomons and, by his superb daring, courage and resoluteness of purpose, enhanced the finest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.*

Van Voorhis and his crew received the decorations they deserved because of witness reports from natives on the island and Australian coast watchers in the vicinity. Without that information, the heroic crew's actions would have been lost with the men and their plane. In addition to the Medal of Honor, Van Voorhis was also posthumously promoted to Commander.

After the war, the remains of the plane and the brave men who flew it were recovered and repatriated. AOM2 Donald B. Clogston rests at [Golden Gate National Cemetery](#), ARM3 Richard W. Roscoe was buried at [Fort Snelling National Cemetery](#), AMM1 George C. Stephens lies in the [National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific](#), and LTJG Jack O. Traub was laid to rest in [Arlington National Cemetery](#).

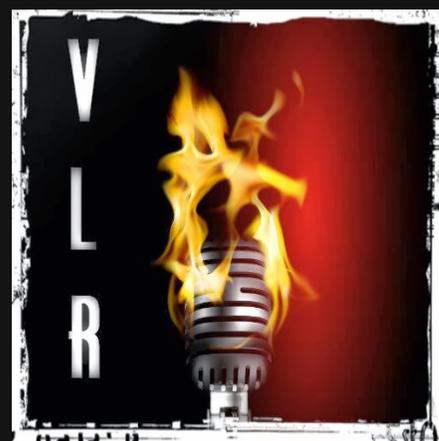
The remains of [the five other crew](#) - AMM3 Frederick C. Barker, ACOM Charles D. Linzmeyer, AMM2 Charles A. Martinelli, LTJG Herschel A. Oelhart, ACRM John Renner - [lie with that of their commanding officer and aircraft commander](#), CDR Bruce A. Van Voorhis, at the [Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery](#) in St. Louis, Missouri.

A cenotaph for Commander Van Voorhis also can be found at Arlington. On April 22, 1957, the [United States Navy](#) accepted into commission the [Dealey-class](#) destroyer escort [USS Van Voorhis \(DE-1028\)](#) at Philadelphia. Bruce Van Voorhis' widow Kathryn was the ship's sponsor. The [Van Voorhis](#) served our Navy until decommissioning on July 1, 1972. She was scrapped the following year.

**CORRECTION/ADDITION, 9:00AM EDT 7/6/2013:** [I just found another source on this story](#) that shows [eleven](#) crew members aboard the plane, not ten. The eleventh man was AOM2 Donald B. Clogston. His name doesn't appear in burial records, so I can only assume his remains were never recovered or identified.

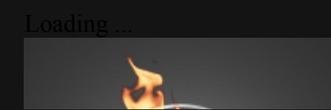
Posted by [Allan Bourdus](#) at [7:00 AM](#)

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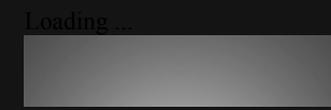


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