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PEOPLE--UNITED STATES

Commander Bruce A. Van Voorhis, USN, (1908-1943)

Bruce Avery Van Voorhis was born on 29 January 1908 in Aberdeen, Washington. He was appointed from Nevada to the U.S. Naval Academy and graduated an Ensign in June 1929. Reporting to USS [Mississippi](#), he served on board that battleship until departing in November 1930 for aviation training at Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. Designated a Naval Aviator in the Fall of 1931, he was then ordered to Observation Squadron 4B (VO-4B) on board USS [Maryland](#). In June 1932, Van Voorhis was promoted to Lieutenant Junior Grade. Two years later, he was assigned to Bombing Squadron 5B (VB-5B) on board USS [Ranger](#), later transferring to Bombing Squadron 2B (VB-2B) on board USS [Saratoga](#).

In July 1935, Van Voorhis arrived at the Panama Canal Zone for duty with Patrol Squadron 2F (VP-2F). Two years later, he began service with Scouting Squadron Six (VS-6) on board USS [Enterprise](#) and, in July 1937, was promoted to Lieutenant. While assigned to [Enterprise](#), he also had temporary duty on board USS [Yorktown](#). In the Summer of 1940, Lt. Van Voorhis was ordered to the aviation unit on board the light cruiser [Honolulu](#). The following summer, he received orders to the Naval Air Station at Anacostia, Washington, D.C., remaining there as the U.S. entered World War II in late 1941. Promoted to Lieutenant Commander in January 1942, in December of that year, he briefly assumed command of Patrol Squadron Fourteen (VP-14) then commanded Bombing Squadron One Hundred Two (VB-102) in the Pacific.

On 6 July 1943, while serving as VB-102's Squadron Commander and as Plane Commander of a PB4Y-1 Patrol Bomber during the Central Solomons campaign, LCDr. Van Voorhis courageously undertook a lone long-range mission to disrupt potential Japanese attacks. While striking enemy facilities and aircraft at Greenwich Island in the face of overwhelming aerial opposition, Van Voorhis' plane was caught in the blast of its own bombs and crashed into a nearby lagoon, killing those on board. For his "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity" on this occasion, he was posthumously awarded the [Medal of Honor](#) and promoted to Commander. Bruce A. Van Voorhis is buried at the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, St. Louis, Missouri. He also has an "In Memory Of" headstone marker at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

USS *Van Voorhis* (DE-1028), 1957-1973, was named in honor of Commander Bruce A. Van Voorhis.

This page features the only images we have concerning Bruce A. Van Voorhis.

Photo #: 80-G-457603

Ensign Bruce A. Van Voorhis, USN

Photographed circa the late 1920s or early 1930s. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity" while serving as Squadron Commander of Bombing Squadron One Hundred Two (VB-102) and as Plane Commander of a PB4Y-1 Patrol Bomber operating against the Japanese held Greenwich Island during the Solomon Islands campaign, 6 July 1943. During this action, Van Voorhis was a Lieutenant Commander.

Official U.S. Navy Photograph, in the National Archives collection.

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Photo #: NH 106473

Ensign Bruce A. Van Voorhis, USN

Halftone reproduction of a photograph taken circa the later 1920s or early 1930s, copied from the official publication "Medal of Honor, 1861-1949, The Navy", page 273.

Bruce A. Van Voorhis was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity" while serving as Squadron Commander of Bombing Squadron One Hundred Two (VB-102) and as Plane Commander of a PB4Y-1 Patrol Bomber operating against the Japanese held Greenwich Island during the Solomon Islands campaign, 6 July 1943. During this action, Van Voorhis was a Lieutenant Commander.

U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.

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