

PATRICK D. FLEMING, DECEASED  
(FORMER LIEUTENANT COMMANDER, USN)

Patrick Dawson Fleming was born in New York, New York, on January 17, 1918, son of Colonel P. C. Fleming, USA, Retired and Mrs. (Winifred Scripture) Fleming. He attended Lanier High School, Montgomery, Alabama, and on July 8, 1935 enlisted in the U. S. Navy. After attending the Naval Academy Preparatory Class, Norfolk, Virginia, he was honorably discharged, July 7, 1932, to accept an appointment, at large, to the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland. Graduated and commissioned Ensign on February 7, 1941 (course of instruction reduced to three years and eight months due to the National Emergency), he subsequently advanced in rank to that of Lieutenant Commander, to date from July 27, 1945. On January 13, 1947 he resigned his commission in the U. S. Navy.

Following graduation from the Naval Academy in 1941, he joined the USS CINCINNATI and in November 1942 was detached from that cruiser for training at the Naval Air Station, New Orleans, Louisiana. In February 1943 he transferred to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, for flight training and in May 1943 was designated Naval Aviator. After three months' further instruction at the Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida, he was assigned in August 1943 to the Naval Air Station, Quonset Point, Rhode Island, and from December 1943 to March 1944 was an Instructor attached to the Fleet Air Detachment, Naval Air Station, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

He next had duty with Fighting Squadron EIGHTY, based on the USS TICONDEROGA and later the USS HANCOCK, and in March 1944 became Executive Officer of ~~Executive~~ Fighting Squadron EIGHTY. A World War II Navy Ace, he was awarded the Air Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Silver Star Medal, a Gold Star in lieu of the Second Distinguished Flying Cross, the Navy Cross and a Gold Star in lieu of the Second Silver Star Medal. The citations follow in part:

Air Medal: "For meritorious achievement...as Pilot of a Fighter Plane in Fighting Squadron EIGHTY, attached to the USS TICONDEROGA, in action against enemy Japanese forces in the Philippine Islands on November 5, 1944. Leading his division, (he) destroyed an enemy plane, thereby enabling his flight to reach the target area unmolested and, braving intense enemy anti-aircraft fire to attack enemy planes and ground installations, seriously damaged another hostile craft..."

Distinguished Flying Cross: "For heroism and extraordinary achievement...during action against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of the Philippine Islands, on November 25, 1944. While leading a two-plane communication relay,

(he) encountered an enemy formation of five planes and, executing a bold attack, succeeded in shooting down two of the Japanese aircraft. An aggressive and determined airman, he contributed materially to the success of his squadron..."

Silver Star Medal: "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity...during action against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of the Philippine Islands, December 14, 1944. Flying as division leader in an eight-plane formation, (he) skillfully fought his plane in an encounter with a hostile formation of twenty-six air planes and, pressing home his attacks against the wildly-maneuvering enemy, shot down four Japanese planes. His airmanship and cool courage in the face of intense aerial opposition by a numerically superior force contributed to the success of his Squadron's operations against the enemy..."

Gold Star in lieu of the Second Distinguished Flying Cross: "For heroism and extraordinary achievement...as Division Leader in Fighting Squadron EIGHTY, attached to the USS HANCOCK, during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Formosa Area, on January 3, 1945. Encountering a superior number of enemy fighters while leading his division over the Formosa Area, (he) unhesitatingly directed his division in an attack, personally shooting down three of the five hostile planes destroyed. Despite the adverse weather conditions and intense enemy antiaircraft fire, he brought his division back to its base, sustaining no loss..."

Navy Cross: "For extraordinary heroism as Pilot of a Fighter Plane and Division Leader in Bomber Fighter Squadron EIGHTY, attached to the USS HANCOCK, during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Pacific War Area, on February 16, 1945. As leader of a division of planes conducting a fighter sweep against the enemy, (he) personally destroyed five enemy aircraft in the air despite heavy antiaircraft fire..."

Gold Star in lieu of the Second Silver Star Medal: "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity as Pilot of a Fighter Plane and Division Leader in Bomber Fighter Squadron EIGHTY... during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Pacific War Area, on February 17, 1945. As leader of a division of planes in a fighter sweep against enemy air installations and air power in the Tokyo Area, (he) personally destroyed four hostile aircraft in the air despite heavy antiaircraft fire..."

He was also awarded Gold Stars in lieu of the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Air Medal and a Gold Star in lieu of the Third Distinguished Flying Cross for completing

twenty-five missions during the period November 5, 1944 to February 21, 1945. He is entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Navy Unit Commendation awarded the USS HANCOCK.

In May 1945 he assumed command of Fighting Squadron EIGHTY and in September 1946 was assigned to the Naval Air Station, Patuxent River, Maryland. He was serving there when he resigned from the Navy, effective January 13, 1947.

In addition to the Navy Cross, the Silver Star Medal with Gold Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross with two Gold Stars, the Air Medal with four Gold Stars and the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, Lieutenant Commander Fleming had the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; American Campaign Medal; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon.

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He transferred to the Air Force in 1947 and commanded a heavy bomber group in Korea. Colonel Fleming was serving as Deputy Wing Commander of the NINETY-THIRD Bomber Wing, based at Castle Air Force Base, California, when he was killed on February 16, 1956, near Tracy, California, in the first B-52 aircraft accident.

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