

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN RICHARD E. ANDERSON, CIVIL ENGINEER CORPS, UNITED STATES NAVY

Richard Ernest Anderson was born in North Little Rock, Arkansas, on March 8, 1926, son of V. E. Anderson and Lillian (Griffin) Anderson. He attended the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering. Following previous Army service he was commissioned Ensign in the Civil Engineer Corps of the U. S. Naval Reserve on September 10, 1949. He subsequently advanced in rank to that of Captain, to date from July 1, 1969, having transferred from the Naval Reserve to the U. S. Navy on August 12, 1953.

Ordered to active naval service, he reported in March 1951 as Assistant Public Works Officer at the Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, California. From September 1952 to January 1955 he had duty in the Comptroller Division of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., after which he served as Assistant Public Works Officer at the Naval Station, San Juan, Puerto Rico. In April 1956 he was assigned Executive Officer of a special Mobile Construction Battalion.

Following treatment at the Naval Hospital, Bethesda, Maryland, October 1957 to April 1958, he had four months' temporary duty at the Bureau of Yards and Docks, Navy Department. In August 1958 he reported for instruction at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, from which he received a Master of Science degree in Engineering in August 1959. He then returned to the Bureau of Yards and Docks, to serve as Assistant Manager of the Plans and Policies Branch. Transferred in July 1961 to the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Department, he served in the Lieutenant Command/Lieutenant Detail Office until July 1962. He then became Resident Officer in Charge of Construction at the Naval Ammunition Depot, Bangor, Bremerton, Washington. While in that assignment, he received the Navy and Marines Corps Medal "for heroism on afternoon of May 25, 1964..." The citation continues in part:

"Witnessing an automobile accident in which a gravel truck hit the rear of an automobile which landed in a ditch and burst into flames, Lieutenant Commander Anderson, along with a companion, immediately went to the assistance of the woman driver of the burning vehicle who was trapped in the flaming wreckage. Breaking the window on the driver's side with an expended fire extinguisher, he entered the vehicle through the window and partially effected the rescue of the unconscious victim by moving her closer to the open window before he, himself, was almost overcome by dense smoke. Assisted from the automobile by his companion, who completed the rescue, Lieutenant Commander Anderson, by his prompt and courageous actions in the face of great personal risk, was directly instrumental in saving the life of the woman..."

In September 1964 he assumed command of Mobile Construction Battalion NINE, Republic of Vietnam. In that capacity he was awarded the Silver Star Medal, Legion of Merit with Combat "V"; and the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V". The citations follow in part:

Silver Star Medal: "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action on October 27 and 28, 1965. When his Battalion's camp was suddenly struck by intense enemy mortar and automatic weapons fire, Commander Anderson courageously moved from his covered position at his living area to the Battalion command post, and in so doing, was wounded in the leg by fragments from a mortar explosion. Ignoring his painful wounds and the incessant fire, he continued on to the command post and took direct control of the execution of his effective defensive plan. As the battle progressed he boldly moved about the camp, directing the care and evacuation of the wounded, and encouraging his men. He resolutely rejected treatment of his wounds until all other known wounded had been treated..."

Legion of Merit: "For exceptionally meritorious service...from June 1965 to February 1966...Commander Anderson planned and directed the deployment of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion NINE to Vietnam. Assigned a camp site in an unsecured area, he skillfully planned and directed the camp construction which has subsequently withstood two heavy attacks from the insurgent Viet Cong and has become a model camp site for future NMCB camps in Vietnam. Under his sound and inspiring leadership, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion NINE constructed a complex 400-bed station hospital, replaced a damaged 310-foot section of the Danang River Bridge, constructed an extremely torturous road on top of Monkey Mountain to a vitally needed LAAM site, erected massive covered storage for protection of critical supply items, and built many other smaller, but urgently required objects..."

Bronze Star Medal: "For meritorious achievement in connection with operations against the enemy...from July to December 1966...Commander Anderson's outstanding qualities of leadership, devotion to duty, fine judgment and sound engineering abilities resulted in the solution of many complex problems incident to the construction of roads, bridges, U. S. Army Special Forces Camps and related facilities. He made a major contribution to the solution of the critical shortage of crushed rock by locating a new quarry site..."

In November 1966 he was assigned to the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Headquarters, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., where he served during the latter part of that assignment as Director of the Navy Facilities Systems Group. In November 1970 he was detached for duty in the Office of the Officer-in-Charge of Construction, Naval Facilities Engineering Command Contracts, Republic of Vietnam, Saigon.

In addition to the Silver Star Medal, Legion of Merit, Navy and Marine Corps Medal, and Bronze Star Medal, Captain Anderson has the Purple Heart Medal; Army Good Conduct Medal; American Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; National Defense Service Medal with bronze star; Korean Service Medal; Antarctica Service Medal with Winter Over Clasp; and Vietnam Service Medal. He also has the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with Device.