



Donald Cook Owen (1916 – 1945)

Born in November 1916, Donald Owen listed his home of record as California. Prior to WWII, he lived with his parents Mr. and Mrs. Ira D. Owen at 736 Third Avenue, Chula Vista, CA. On April 21, 1943, he returned home and talked a little about his fighting in the Solomon Island area. At that time, he had 2 ½ aircraft to his credit as shot down. He returned again for Christmas in 1943

Donald Owen was a Captain in the United States Marine Corps and an aviator. His service number is 0-010251. He was recognized as an “Ace” and credited with 5 enemy aircraft shot down. He was flying the F4U and F4F “Corsair” and assigned to VMF-212 and VMF-112 during these engagements. Of note, only 118 Marine Corps pilots became “Aces” during WWII. His name is attached to the list that died while aboard the USS Bennington (CVS-20).

VMF-212 “Cactus” was commissioned at Ewa Field, Hawaii in Mar 1942 and deployed to the New Hebrides and New Caledonia that spring. By early fall, the squadron was operating from Henderson Field, Guadalcanal and later flew missions at Vella Lavella, Bougainville, Rabaul and the Solomon Islands. Later it flew in support of the Okinawa offensive. VMF-112 “Wolfpack” was also at Henderson Field. Of note, in 1943, the CO was Maj. “Pappy” Boyington. VMF-212 was on the CVS-20 carrier in May 1945.

He died on May 26, 1945. His name appears on the “Tablets of the Missing” in the Honolulu Memorial Cemetery at Honolulu, Hawaii. He is listed as Missing in Action (MIA) or Buried at Sea. A street in Chula Vista honors his name.

He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with two gold stars, the Air Medal with 3 Gold Stars, the Presidential Unit Citation, and the Purple Heart.

