

Henry Duke McNabb

Born: November 19, 1917

Hometown: Stockton, CA

Class: 1939 - USMMCC Cadet Officer
1939 - California Maritime Academy

Service: U. S. Naval Reserve

Rank: Ensign

Date / Place of death: September 9, 1943 / Salerno, Italy

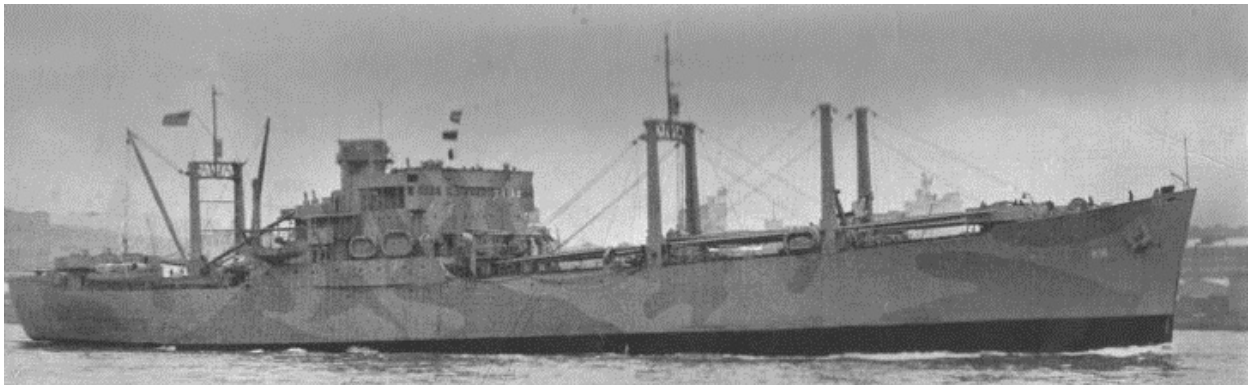
Date / Place of Burial: Unknown / Casa Bonita Mausoleum, Stockton, CA

Age: 25



Ensign Henry Duke McNabb graduated from California Maritime Academy in 1939. Shortly after graduation he was appointed a Cadet Officer in the U.S. Merchant Marine Cadet Corps and served aboard the Coast and Geodetic Survey Ship Pioneer from June to October 1939. By January 24, 1940 Henry McNabb had secured employment with Standard Oil Company of California (Chevron) as an Able Bodied Seaman aboard the tanker SS J. C. Fitzsimmons. Crew lists on file in Seattle, WA indicate that he was still employed in that capacity in August 1940.

Henry D. McNabb was commissioned into the Navy on September 15, 1942 at San Francisco, CA. He reported to the Navy's Amphibious Training Base, Little Creek, VA on October 29, 1942. On December 2, he was transferred to the Attack Cargo Ship USS Arcturus (AKA 1) (formerly the SS Mormachawk), and reported aboard the following day. After a voyage to the South Pacific the Arcturus returned to the U.S. East Coast for repairs and training for the Invasion of Sicily. On July 8, 1943 the USS Arcturus was one of the many amphibious ships supporting the landings on Sicily.



USS Arcturus (AKA 1)

After the completion of operations at Sicily the USS Arcturus was assigned Operation Avalanche, the Invasion of Salerno, Italy. This was the first allied assault on the continent of Europe. Assigned to Task Force 81, the Southern Attack Force, the USS Arcturus sailed from Oran and arrived off the beaches of Salerno on September 8, 1943. The landings began at 0335 on September 9.

Ensign McNabb was assigned to duty as the Arcturus' Salvage Boat Officer, in charge of LCM 15 (Landing Craft, Mechanized) with its four man crew and five enlisted men of the Boat Salvage and Repair Party. On September 9, between 0900 and 1000, while Ensign McNabb and his men were assisting a British Landing Craft at Blue Beach, LCM 15 came under fire from a German 88mm shore battery. The gunfire killed Ensign McNabb and five of his men, wounded three of the other four men and sank LCM 15.

Ensign Henry D. McNabb, USNR was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, the Navy's third highest award for valor, and the Purple Heart for his actions during the landings at Salerno. In addition, he also earned the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal. For his merchant marine service Henry D. McNabb also earned the Merchant Marine Defense Bar and Pacific War Zone Bar.

Henry Duke McNabb was the only son of A. Jack McNabb, a Stockton, CA Police Officer, and Wilmoth McNabb. The 1920 U.S. Census shows the family living in Dallas, TX where Jack's occupation was listed as carpenter. However, the 1930 Census shows Jack and Duke McNabb living in Stockton, CA, but there is no mention of Wilmoth in the household. City Directories for Stockton, CA from 1940 - 42 indicate that Jack McNabb had remarried a woman named Eva.

Sometime after August 1940 Henry Duke McNabb was employed a fire fighter with the Stockton, CA Fire Department. A memorial page on the Stockton Fire Department's web site indicates he was the only one of twenty-five Stockton fire fighters that did not return safely home at the end of the war. The street in front of Stockton Fire Station #14 was renamed McNabb street in his honor on September 9, 1994, the forty-first anniversary of his death.

