



**George
Norton**

Navy

George Norton

Jul 7, 1925 -

BIRTHPLACE: Smith Center, KS

SOLDIER DETAILS

HIGHEST RANK: Seaman 1st Class

DIVISION: Navy, Naval Reserve Armed Guard

THEATER OF OPERATION: Pacific

SERVED: Feb 16, 1943 -

BATTLE: Okinawa

MILITARY HONORS: Purple Heart Medal, Achievement Medal Good Conduct Medal, World War II Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, with 1 bronze star, Navy Occupation Service Medal with Europe clasp, national Defense Service Medal with 1 bronze star,

HONORED BY: The Eisenhower Foundation

BIOGRAPHY

George Norton grew up in Smith Center, KS. The end of the fall semester of his senior year in 1942, North left Smith Center for Kansas City to join the Navy at 17 years old. The Navy sent him back and called him up on Feb. 16, 1943. North went to boot camp in Farragut ID, then gunnery school in San Diego. After a 30 day leave, he transferred to Treasure island, CA. and assigned his first ship the SS Ben Holladay. On Dec. 1943 Norton transferred to the SS Joseph Snelling for the duration of World War II as Seaman 1st Class. Aboard the SS Joseph Snelling we were under constant attack by the Japanese suicide planes. We got credit for shooting down 3 1/2 Kamikazes before we were hit by a Kamikaze off the coast of Okinawa. The plan hit in the NO. 1 cargo hold. The plan had a 40 lb and 500lb aboard. About 10 seconds before the plan hit us, North was hit in the eye by a piece of Shrapnel. As the pointer on a 50 Cal. gun the gunnery office r was giving me treatment (we had no corpsman doctor) when the Kamikaze hit the cargo boom on the starboard side of the ship and sent it into the cargo hold. The 40lb bomb exploded and fire went up mast high. when Norton had his first aid done, he was told to return to duty. The stevedores eventually had the fire put out and were down clearing out the cargo hold. What they did not know was a 500lb bomb buried in a load of timber, had not exploded. That morning, two other nearby ships in the anchorage had been hit by Kamikaze planes also.