

R. B. Short (1926 – 1945)

R B Short was born in Roseboro, Pike County, Arkansas on February 18, 1926, and moved to Chula Vista, CA in 1941.

He listed his home state as California and is listed among the names in the California List of Casualties for WWII. Interestingly, he had no known first or middle name, and was only known as “R B” (No periods as the letters are not initials). He lived with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Burton Short, of 553 I Avenue, Chula Vista, CA. He attended Sweetwater Union High School and graduated in June 1944, enlisting in the U.S. Navy soon after graduation.

R.B. Short was a Seaman First Class (S1C) in the United States Naval Reserve (E3) and assigned to gunnery on the aircraft carrier USS Bataan (CVL-29). His military service number was 06806410.

A brief history of the USS Bataan during WWII follows: The USS Buffalo (CL-99) was reclassified and renamed the USS Bataan (CVL-29) on 2 June 1942 and launched on 1 August 1943. The USS Bataan’s initial engagement was during the period 21 -24 April 1944 during supported attacks on Hollandia, New Guinea, where she also came under Japanese Air attacks. The carrier then followed this with air attacks against Truk, Satawan and Ponape (29 April – 1 May 1944)

Further attacks that summer were conducted on Saipan, Marianas (11 June – 10 August), the Bonin Islands (15-16 June) and the Battle of the Philippine Sea (19 – 20 June)

The ship then returned to the West Coast of the United States for repairs, refittings and replacements (including R B Short). Joining Task Force 58, CVL- 29 was then used for air strikes on Okinawa (17 March – 30 May 1945), and assisted in the sinking of Japanese Submarine I-56 on 18 April when the carrier was located at 26-42N/130-38E. In June, the carrier returned to the Philippines for further repairs following several kamikaze attacks. From 10 July – 15 August, 1945, the carrier joined in the air attacks of mainland Japan. USS Bataan received six Battle Stars for operations in WWII.

He died on April 17, 1945 due to a kamikaze attack on the carrier while conducting offensive air operations on the island of Okinawa, and was buried at sea. His name is listed on the “Tablets of the Missing” at the Manila American Cemetery in Manila, Republic of the Philippines. He is listed as Missing in Action (MIA) or Buried at Sea. He was awarded the Purple Heart

