



Picture Not Available

Thomas, Henry Murphy, LCDR, USN

(Naval Aviator #51)

Thomas Henry Murphy was born February 4, 1886 in Lynn, Massachusetts. On March 5, 1905 he enlisted in the Navy. Following boot training he was given the rating of Electrician 2/c. By 1909 he had qualified as a torpedo man with experience in mines and diving and was assigned to submarine duty from 1909 until 1915. He reported to NAS Pensacola in November 1915 and on January 6, 1916 he began flight training at Pensacola as a member of the first group of 10 enlisted men authorized to fly heavier-than-air aircraft. On completion of the training program he served as an instructor. On October 2, 1917 he was designated Naval Aviator No. 51 and appointed Boatswain (T) USN continuing duties as instructor. On March 4, 1918 he was commissioned Ensign (T) USN and ordered overseas. He reported to USNAS Killingholme, England, a former British seaplane patrol station turned over to the U. S. and commissioned a NAS in July 1918. (Kenneth Whiting was the CO). At Killingholme, he served as squadron commander and engaged in anti-submarine patrols in the North Sea area. While in this assignment he received a Letter of Commendation from the Secretary of the Navy for service during WW I as Squadron Commander at USNAS Killingholme in operations against enemy submarines.

In January 1919, he was assigned to duty at NAS Norfolk where he continued experiments begun in England aimed at adapting torpedoes to seaplanes. The R-6 aircraft with V200 engine was insufficiently powered. When redesigned to accommodate the Liberty engine, the R-6 was used successfully until Naval Aircraft Factory PT became available. Tom Murphy's work in this field led to the creation of torpedo squadrons. He was subsequently assigned to Aircraft Squadrons, Battle Fleet in USS *Langley*, to Newport, RI, where he specialized in torpedo launching and recovery, and then to the Mare Island Navy Yard.

In May 1940 he was released from active duty as a LTJG. He was recalled to active duty August 1940, serving tours at

Great Lakes, the USS *Wright* and at NAS Ft. Lauderdale, FL where he became Commanding Officer.

On December 31, 1945 he retired from active duty with the rank of LCDR and a designator of 1103. He was within a month of his 60th birthday and could look back on 40 years of service in the Navy. If it were possible to live life over he said, "I wouldn't change a thing!"

He was married to Mary Murphy and they had two daughters, Ruth and Ruby.