

Ensign Howard A. Holding

January 15, 1922 ~ September 6, 1944

Howard Allen Holding was born January 15, 1922, to Joseph Terrence and Ida Openshaw Holding. He was a graduate of East High School in Salt Lake City, and at the time of his enlistment in the Naval Reserves, was a junior at the University of Utah. He was a well-known musician in the Salt Lake area.

Howard achieved the rank of Ensign in the Naval Reserves, and when he was called up for active duty, was stationed aboard the USS Enterprise in the Pacific theater. He and two others were performing a routine fly-over of Yap Island on September 6, 1944, when unexpected anti-aircraft fire erupted from the ground, hitting the planes and causing a mid-air collision between two of them. Howard's remains were not identified at that time. He was declared Missing In Action. Several years later, he was declared Killed In Action, but his remains still were not identified.

Eighty-one years later, the Defense POW / MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) identified Howard's remains through DNA matches sent by four of Howard's family, and he is finally able to return home to Salt Lake City to be laid to rest.

The family of Ensign Howard Holding would like to thank Patrick Ranfranz, of the Missing Air Crew Project, who has inexhaustibly dedicated his own time and money to search for and locate the missing airmen of Yap; the Defense POW / MIA Accounting Agency for identifying Howard; and the US Navy for bringing Howard home after all these years, and for being so kind and helpful to our family. There are many others who deserve our thanks also. You all have our eternal gratitude and respect for what you have done.

Graveside services with Military Funeral Honors will be held at 11:00 AM on Friday, October 17, 2025, at the Salt Lake City Cemetery in Salt Lake City, Utah.

To view the recorded services please click the "Watch Services" button above.