

Eugene B. Fluckey

Eugene Bennett Fluckey

born [October 5, 1913](#)



Rear Admiral Eugene B. Fluckey, 12
March 1963

Place of birth	Washington, D.C.
Allegiance	USN
Years of service	1935-1972
Rank	Rear Admiral
Battles/wars	World War II
Awards	Medal of Honor Navy Cross (4)
Other work	Eagle Scout

Rear Admiral **Eugene Bennett Fluckey** (born October 5, 1913), is a former United States Navy submarine commander who received the Medal of Honor during World War II.

Fluckey was born in Washington, DC in 1913 and graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1935.

Fluckey's initial assignments were aboard the battleship *Nevada* (BB-36) and the destroyer *McCormick* (DD-223). Following

those assignments, he entered the submarine service in 1938 and served on *S-42* and later completed five war patrols on *Bonita* (SS-165). On 27 April 1943, Commander Fluckey assumed command of *Barb* (SS-220).

As commanding officer of *Barb*, he established himself as one of the greatest submarine skippers, credited with the most tonnage sunk by a U.S. skipper during World War II: 17 ships including a carrier, cruiser, and frigate. In one of the stranger incidents in the war, Fluckey sent a landing party ashore to set demolition charges on a coastal railway line, which destroyed a 16-car train. This was the sole landing by U.S. military forces on the Japanese Home Islands during World War II. Fluckey ordered that this landing party be comprised of crewmen from every division on his submarine and asked for as many ex-Boy Scouts as possible because Fluckey knew they would know how to find their way in unfamiliar territory.

Fluckey received four Navy Cross Medals for extraordinary heroism during the eighth, ninth, tenth, and twelfth war patrols of *Barb*. During his famous eleventh patrol, he continued to revolutionize submarine warfare, inventing the night convoy attack from astern by joining the flank escort line. Two convoys at anchor 26 miles inside the 20 fathom (37 m) curve on the China coast, totaling more than thirty ships, were attacked. With two frigates pursuing, *Barb* set a world speed record for a submarine of 23.5 knots (44 km/h) using 150% overload. For his conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity, Fluckey received the Medal of Honor. *Barb* received the Presidential Unit Citation for the eighth–eleventh patrols and the Navy Unit Commendation for the twelfth patrol.

Fluckey later served as Commander, Submarine Flotilla SEVEN (now Submarine Group 7) from 14 October 1955 to 14 January 1956. He was selected for flag rank in 1960 and reported as Commander, Amphibious Group 4. He served as Commander, Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet (COMSUBPAC) from June 1964 to June 1966. He also had tours as the head of the Electrical Engineering Department at the U.S. Naval Academy and as the U.S. Naval Attache in Lisbon, Portugal.

Of what is he most proud? "Though the tally shows more shells, bombs, and depth charges fired at BARB, no one received the Purple Heart and *Barb* came back alive, eager, and ready to fight again." His book, *Thunder Below!* (1992), depicts the exploits of his beloved *Barb*.

Fluckey retired in 1972 and resides in Annapolis, Maryland.

He is the most decorated living American.

He is an Eagle Scout — one of only five, along with Aquilla J. Dyess, Robert Edward Femoyer, Mitchell Paige, and Leo K. Thorsness, known to have received the Medal of Honor.^[1]

Medal of Honor citation

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as commanding officer of the U.S.S. *Barb* during her 11th war patrol along the east coast of China from 19 December 1944 to 15 February 1945. After sinking a large enemy ammunition ship and damaging additional tonnage during a running 2-hour night battle on 8 January, Comdr. Fluckey, in an exceptional

feat of brilliant deduction and bold tracking on 25 January, located a concentration of more than 30 enemy ships in the lower reaches of Nankuan Chiang (Mamkwan Harbor). Fully aware that a safe retirement would necessitate an hour's run at full speed through the uncharted, mined, and rock-obstructed waters, he bravely ordered, "Battle station—torpedoes!" In a daring penetration of the heavy enemy screen, and riding in 5 fathoms [9 m] of water, he launched the *Barb's* last forward torpedoes at 3,000 yard [2.7 km] range. Quickly bringing the ship's stern tubes to bear, he turned loose 4 more torpedoes into the enemy, obtaining 8 direct hits on 6 of the main targets to explode a large ammunition ship and cause inestimable damage by the resultant flying shells and other pyrotechnics. Clearing the treacherous area at high speed, he brought the *Barb* through to safety and 4 days later sank a large Japanese freighter to complete a record of heroic combat achievement, reflecting the highest credit upon Comdr. Fluckey, his gallant officers and men, and the U.S. Naval Service."

Admiral Fluckey passed away on June 28th 2007 to join the fleet on eternal patrol. Half his ashes are interned at the Naval Academy and the other buried at Sea off the Coast of Japan by an American Submarine.