**LOSS OF ENSIGN RUTLEDGE AND GM3C ROBERT OLIVER ROTSEL**

**4 Aug 1942 attached to USS Saratoga CV-3**

Aircraft: Douglas (SBD) Dauntless Dive Bomber VB-3 attached to USS Saratoga CV-3, Bombing Squadron Three. Task Force 61 was en route to the Battle of Guadalcanal (7 Aug 1942). SBD - BUNO #4580 with pilot Ensign James A Rutledge & Robert Rotsel were launched for combat air patrol. On 4 Aug 1942 at 1750, USS Saratoga received message reporting a forced water landing at Lat. 16.49 S, Long. 163.01 E with both men sited in rubber boat. USS McDonough (destroyer) was directed to pick them up - but there is no record in the Mc Donough's logs that the message was received or that a search was conducted. On 5 Aug 1942 at 1010, USS Wasp launched 10 planes to search for personnel lost the day before - distance 200 miles. At 1440, search groups landed with negative results. After the war, all nearby islands were searched as well as prisoners of war lists, and neither the pilot- James Allen Rutledge nor Robert was found.

Killed in Action/lost at sea - Memorialized at Manila American Cemetery at Taguig City, Philippines. [Memorial lists date of death as 5 Aug 1943; however, the plane crash occurred on 4 Aug 1942 and both were never recovered.]

Posthumously awarded the American Defense Service Medal and the World War II Victory Medal.

**Description of the SBD-3 Aircraft**

Dive bombing requires precise maneuverability and accuracy to fly at steep trajectory and hit a moving target. The Douglas SBD Dauntless was sturdy enough for pilots to dive at a near-vertical 80 degrees. The US Navy’s primary dive-bomber at the war’s start, the bomber earned its reputation—and helped earn victory—at the 1942 Battle of Midway, sinking four Japanese carriers. By some accounts, the Dauntless sank more Japanese ships than any other plane.

SBD-3 DAUNTLESS DIVE BOMBER

Built by Douglas Aircraft Company at El Segundo, California, and is a combat veteran of the Guadalcanal Campaign.

**STATISTICS**

Type: Scout Bomber

**PRODUCTION**

Date Introduced: 1941   
Manufacturer: Douglas Aircraft Company  
Number Produced: 580+

**SPECIFICATIONS (SBD-3/A-24)**

Crew: 2 (Pilot, Radioman/Gunner)  
Wingspan: 42 feet  
Length: 33 feet  
Maximum Speed: 250 miles per hour  
Cruising Speed: 173 miles per hour  
Maximum Range: 950 miles  
Engine: Wright R-1820-52 (1,000 hp)  
Maximum Bomb Load: 1,000 pounds  
Armament: Two .50 caliber and two .30 caliber machine guns