Early Life

Donald Melvin Allen was born in Portland, Oregon, on February 25, 1925. He was baptized in the Lutheran Church on June 21, 1925.[1] His mother Ruby Mae Steele and his father George Leroy Allen met in Shelby, Montana, in 1910, where George worked as a telegrapher at the train station.[2] Allen had two older siblings, George Jr. who was born in 1912 and Dorothy, who was born in 1924.[3] George's parents also had three other children, Lyle and Russell, both who died as children due to the flu in 1918. A third boy was born in 1919, but was still born.[4] By the time Allen was five years old, the Allen family had moved to Spokane, Washington.[5] He graduated from Lewis and Clark High School in 1942, with intentions to go to the University of Washington.[6]

WSC Experience

Allen attended Washington State College from 1941 to 1942. While attending WSC, Allen went on a field trip to the Okanogan valley, facilitated by Dr. Leonard Wing, assistant professor of wildlife management. Allen and other students "outran and pulled down a mountain goat and photographed it wearing a W.S.C rooter's cap, then turning it loose." Many of Allen's classmates from this trip also enlisted.[7]

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[1] Donald Melum Allen, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Archives; Elk Grove Village, Illinois; *Chaplains Pastoral Acts*; Roll: *NLC-26.* https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/60722/records/12055393 (accessed May 2025). Note: There is a misspelling of Donald's middle name "Melvin," but all other information matches.

[2] Ruby Mae Allen, Find a Grave Memorial, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/168231103/ruby_mae-allen (accessed May 2025).

[3] Donald Melvin Allen, United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1930. T626, 2,667 rolls. https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/6224/records/112668307?client=findagrave&o_xid=121023&o_lid=121023&o_sch=FindAGrave (accessed May 2025)

[4] Ruby Mae Allen, Find a Grave Memorial.

[5] Donald Melvin Allen, United States of America, Bureau of the Census.

[6] *The Lewis and Clark Tiger, First Annual Edition*, Lewis and Clark High School (Spokane: 1942), 36.

[7] "Goat Catchers Get Axis Goat," *Evergreen*, January 14, 1944, https://content.libraries.wsu.edu/digital/collection/evergreens/id/16414/rec/16 (accessed May 2025)

Military Service

Allen enlisted in the United States Navy Reserves while still attending WSC, at the age of seventeen. When he turned eighteen, he was able to transfer to the Air Corps. He took his examination in Seattle, in April of 1943. According to his family, instead of returning to WSC, Allen entered the Navy Air Corps and was sent to train in Pasco, Washington. He was then sent to Monmouth College, in Monmouth, Illinois, for more training and pre-flight duty. He suffered an injury to his eye while in Pasco, which disqualified him for pre-flight training. He then reclassified as a gunner and radio-man. He was sent to Memphis, Tennessee, for radio training, and after, gunnery school in Purcell, Oklahoma. The next place he was sent was Jacksonville, Florida, where he joined a Navy Bombing Squadron and received additional training. He also received training in San Diego and Almeda, California.[8] Newspapers surrounding his death also stated that he trained in Central and South America.[9] He spent some time in the South Pacific as well, writing to Washington State College in January of 1945 to say that "he wouldn't trade all the beauty of the South Pacific for that of Pullman."[10]

The final place that Allen was sent for training was in Klamath Falls, Oregon, where he trained to become a member of the Dive Bombing Squadron 5. During a routine target practice, in August of 1945, at about 9:30 in the morning, Donald's plane, the "Navy Hell Driver," crashed into the ground, killing Allen. His body was escorted to Spokane, Washington, by a

[8] Letter to Frank Bernard from Geo L. Allen, September 9, 1945. Washington State University Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections, War Records, 16.
[9] "Killed in Crash," *The Spokesman-Review,* August 6, 1945 (accessed May 2025).
[10] Allen, Donald E., Washington State University Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections, War Records: Donald Melvin Allen, 16.

friend.[11] The plane crashed just outside of Dorris, California and burst into flames when it hit the ground.[12]

Postwar Legacy

Donald Melvin Allen is buried in Greenwood Memorial Terrace, in Spokane Washington, the same cemetery as his parents and siblings.[13]

[11] Letter to Frank Bernard from Geo L. Allen. "Navy Tells Names of Crash Victims," *Herald and News,* August 3, 1945.
[12]"Navy Tells Names of Crash Victims,"
[13] Donald Melvin Allen, Find a Grave Memorial, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/168363727/donald-melvin-allen (accessed May 2025).

Photos (3 total):



Citation: Donald Melvin Allen, Find a Grave Memorial,

https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/168363727/donald-melvin-allen



Citation: *The Lewis and Clark Tiger, First Annual Edition*, Lewis and Clark High School (Spokane: 1942), 36.

Link: https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1265/records/350624570



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