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**Bernard
Edwards
Rittgers**
Navy

Bernard Edwards Rittgers

Jan 12, 1921 - Feb 5, 2009

SOLDIER DETAILS

HIGHEST RANK: Y2C

DIVISION: Navy

THEATER OF OPERATION: Pacific

SERVED: Jul 23, 1942 - Nov 6, 1945

**HONORED BY: Jolene Reynolds and Lynette Jean
Weil, daughters**

BIOGRAPHY

After graduating from Salina, KS, Bernard e. Rittgers enlisted in the Navy in 1942 and went directly to the Navy's Great Lakes Training School. From there, he was assigned to the USS Cleveland at San Diego. The Cleveland was the lead ship and one of the 28 U.S. Navy Cleveland-class Light Cruisers in WWII. The Cleveland was awarded 13 Bronze Stars and 2 Silver Stars. It was credited with repelling a Japanese night torpedo attack off Rennell Island, during which the USS Chicago was torpedoed. The Cleveland also received the Navy Unit Citation, participated in 19 Bombardments and was credited with shoot-downs of 7 Japanese planes and 7 assists, as well as sinking two Japanese Destroyers and a Cruiser. The Cleveland and her crew participated in battles to capture numerous islands, including Saipan, Palau, Philippines, Guam, and Iwo Jima. Bernard entered the Navy as an AS and worked his way up to his discharge rank of Y2C. (E-5 equivalent in other services.) During his service, he earned the Good Conduct Medal, along with the American Area Ribbon and the European-Middle East-African Area Ribbons. He married Dorothy Andrews in 1943. They had two daughters, Jolene Reynolds and Lynette Jean Weil, both of Salina, KS, and one son, Jerry, of Shawnee, KS.