

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN FRANK M. ADAMSON, UNITED STATES NAVY

Frank Marshall Adamson, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Marshall (Lucy Heard) Adamson, was born in Dorking, Surrey, England, on February 25, 1907. He graduated from Lead (South Dakota) High School in 1924 as Salutatorian and for the next year attended South Dakota State College at Brookings. There he was a member of the Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit in 1924 and 1925. He entered the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, in June 1925 and as a Midshipman was Captain of the Gymnasium Team in 1928 and 1929, won the "N with star" athletic award in gymnastics and was Eastern Intercollegiate Champion on "Side-horse" in 1929. Graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 6, 1929, he subsequently advanced in rank, attaining that of Captain, to date from March 30, 1945.

After graduation from the Naval Academy in 1929, he reported in July of that year on board the battleship USS TEXAS and had gunner duties in that battleship until August 1930. In December of 1929, while on duty in the TEXAS, he competed for and won a Rhodes Scholarship from the State of South Dakota and in September 1930 commenced a three years' residence at the University of Oxford, England. He obtained the degree of Bachelor of Arts from the Honour School of Philosophy, Politics and Economics in 1933 and later after return to the Fleet (in 1937) received the degree of Master of Arts.

In September 1933 he joined the battleship USS NEW MEXICO to serve until June 1934 at which time he transferred to the light cruiser USS MEMPHIS. He was Assistant Communications Officer on the staff of the Commander in Chief, United States Fleet, USS PENNSYLVANIA, flagship, from July 1937 until July 1938, after which he served as Gunnery Officer and First Lieutenant on board the destroyer USS PERRY.

Returning to the Naval Academy, he was an Instructor in the Department of Mathematics until January 1941, followed by duty as Executive Officer and Navigator of the destroyer USS GRAYSON. He was on board that destroyer, operating in the waters around Iceland when the United States entered World War II, and in January 1942 was detached to command the destroyer DUPONT, which was escorting convoys in the North Atlantic and along the East Coast when enemy submarines presented their greatest menace. He was frequently Escort Commander of up to ten escorts and fifty merchant vessels, escorting forty-five convoys without loss of a ship. The DUPONT rescued survivors of the SS ARIO which was torpedoed and sunk off Cape Lookout, North Carolina. "For outstanding service as a Convoy Escort Commander in the Atlantic Ocean from May 1942 to February 1943..." he received a Letter of Commendation (with Ribbon and "V") from the Secretary of the Navy. The citation continues in part: "(He) displayed the highest qualities of leadership, courage and professional skill; and through his sound judgment and initiative, all convoys under his command successfully completed their voyages..."

He assumed command of the destroyer USS BACHE, operating in the Atlantic Area, in January 1943. Under his command that vessel proceeded to the North Pacific area and took part in the seizure of Attu and Kiska in the Aleutians. From there she sailed to the South Pacific to assist in the New Guinea campaign. He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," and cited in part as follows:

"For meritorious service as Commanding Officer of the USS BACHE in action against Japanese forces in Aleutian waters and the South Pacific Area from May 10, 1943 to February 15, 1944. Undaunted by the heavy and continuous fogs and the enemy's hostile fire, (he) boldly penetrated the hazardous waters of the Aleutians to execute his daring attacks, and to provide effective fire support for our landing forces on Attu and Kiska, continuing the bitter fighting until the occupations were completed. Following this highly successful campaign, (he) proceeded to the South Pacific War Theater and furnished fire support for the Cape Gloucester and Saidor landings, in addition to serving as escort for numerous supply echelons. By his leadership, professional skill and valiant fighting spirit, (he) contributed materially to the success of his ship's operations in these vital campaigns..."

Due to his experience and interest in the use of radar and his early work in setting up a Combat Information Center (CIC) in the destroyer BACHE, he was assigned in April 1944, to the staff of Commander Fleet Operational Training Command, Pacific Fleet. Having cognizance over CIC and electronics training, he organized and supervised the training of CIC teams for some 55 "Jeep" CVE's and 150 APA's, and numerous other combatant vessels. These teams maneuvered our ships and directed our fighters in battle after battle with the Japanese. Much of the success of these maneuvers and the air defense of our task forces was due to the capabilities and effectiveness of these teams.

Between March and December 1947 he commanded the oiler KANKAKEE, on the run between the Persian Gulf and Japan and along the West Coast. Detached from the KANKAKEE, he reported in January 1948 as a member of the Joint Strategic Plans Group of the Joint Staff, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, D. C. From August 1950 to June 1951 he was a student in the strategy and tactics course at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, after which he served as Force Operations and Training Officer on the staff of the Commander Service Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet. In this capacity, he handled the movements of some 150 ships and craft in support of the Korean War.

He became Commanding Officer of attack transport USS OKANOGAN in September 1953. While in command of this ship, he participated in several amphibious exercises in the Western Pacific and on the West Coast.

In June 1954 he transferred to command of the heavy cruiser USS HELENA which served as flagship of Vice Admiral Pride, Commander Seventh Fleet, during the evacuation of the Chinese Nationalists from the Tachen Islands off the coast of Communist China.

Detached from command of the HELENA in July 1955, he next had duty as Assistant Chief of Staff for Logistics on the staff of the Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic. While in this assignment he had cognizance over the large SACLANT NATO infrastructure program which involved the construction of airfields, war headquarters, POL and ammunition depots, fleet facilities and communication installations.

Since December 1957 he has been Chief of Staff and Aide to the Commandant of the Potomac River Naval Command with headquarters at the Naval Gun Factory.

In addition to the Bronze Star Medal and the Commendation Ribbon, both with Combat "V," Captain Adamson has the American Defense Service Medal with bronze "A," the American Campaign Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three stars, the World War II Victory Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, China Service Medal, Korean Service Medal and the United Nations Service Medal.