

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN CHARLES W. ALDRICH  
UNITED STATES NAVY

Charles Warren Aldrich was born in Santa Cruz, California, on August 24, 1908, son of Cassel and Susan Hunter Aldrich. He attended Riverside Polytechnic High School, graduating in 1926, and entered the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, on appointment from his native state on June 28, 1927. He was graduated with the Class of 1931 and commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Navy to date from June 4, 1931, and subsequently advanced to the rank of Captain with date of rank December 1, 1950.

After graduation from the Naval Academy in June 1931, he was assigned to the USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB 48), and served as a junior officer on board that battleship for more than two years. In 1934 he reported to the USS McFARLAND (DD 237) for duty as Communication Officer, and in 1935-1937 served as First Lieutenant and Gunnery Officer of the USS RAMSAY (DM 24). From 1938 to 1940 he had duty as Bomb and Mine Officer, in connection with War Plans, at the Naval Mine Depot, Yorktown, Virginia.

In 1940 he joined the USS MAYO (DD 422), and was on duty as Gunnery Officer of that destroyer when the United States entered World War II in December 1941. Detached in 1942, he served for a year as Executive Officer of the USS BAILEY (DD 492), participating in operations in the Aleutian Islands. Later that year he assumed command of the USS DALE (DD 353), and served as her Commanding Officer until transferred in 1944 to command of the USS MASSEY (DD 778), assigned to Radar Picket duty during the Okinawa operation in the Pacific.

"For extraordinary heroism as Commanding Officer of the USS MASSEY, attached to Destroyer Division ONE THIRTY TWO, operating as Radar Picket Support Ship and later as Fighter Director Ship, during action against enemy Japanese forces at Okinawa in the Ryukyu Chain, from May 2 to June 24, 1945..." he was awarded the Navy Cross. The citation continues in part:

"Maintaining his ship in constant battle readiness twenty four hours a day while operating in an advanced and isolated station, Commander Aldrich consistently provided early air warning and fighter direction during continuous day and night air raid alerts and repeated day and night attacks by Japanese suicide planes and dive bombers...he expertly maneuvered and fought his ship as overwhelming forces of enemy aircraft launched devastating raids against the Expeditionary Force and...contributed to the success of the MASSEY in shooting down nine Japanese planes, assisting in the destruction of others and thwarting each attempt by the enemy to inflict damage on his vessel...(He) was in large measure responsible for the effective protection afforded our Naval forces operating off the beach-head..."

He was also awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," and cited as follows: "For meritorious service as Commander of a Destroyer in the Western Pacific War Area from January 1 to August 15,

1944. Demonstrating outstanding seamanship, Commander Aldrich ably directed his vessel in bombarding enemy installations during the invasion of Eniwetok, Saipan and Guam, and in providing anti-submarine and anti-aircraft protection for fast carriers during raids on enemy-held Palau, Yap, Woleai, Truk and Ponape. His courage under fire and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Detached from command of the MASSEY late in 1945, he served as Assistant Fleet Personnel Officer on the Staff of Commander Service Force, Atlantic, until August 1947. For the next nine months he was a student at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, being detached in June 1948 to the Staff of Commander Transport Division TWENTY ONE, as Chief Staff Officer and Operations Officer. He returned to the Naval War College, where he was a graduate in courses in Logistics and Strategy and Tactics, to serve on the staff from September 1949 until June 1952. He then assumed command of the USS NOBLE (APA 218), and continued as her Commanding Officer for a year.

Under orders of April 24, 1953, he reported as Fleet and Force Personnel Officer on the staff of Commander Service Force, Pacific Fleet. On October 19, 1955 he was ordered detached and to duty as Chief of Staff and Aide to Commander Amphibious Group FOUR.

In addition to the Navy Cross and the Bronze Star Medal, Captain Aldrich has the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with ten battle stars; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal; American Campaign Medal; the World War II Victory Medal; the Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia Clasp; and the National Defense Service Medal.

