

CAPTAIN JAMES D. ARBES, U. S. NAVY

James Douglas Arbes was born in New Ulm, Minnesota, on May 31, 1916, son of Mrs. Martha Eichmann Arbes and the late Mr. J. M. Arbes. He attended the University of Minnesota, Class of 1938, but left for aviation training with the United States Navy at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, reporting on June 6, 1937. Designated Naval Aviator on August 10, 1938, he was commissioned Ensign, USN, on August 28, that year, and through subsequent advancement he attained the rank of Captain, to date from July 1, 1957.

Serving successively with Bombing Squadrons 3 and 4, based on the USS SARATOGA and the USS RANGER, respectively, he was a pilot of Scouting Squadron 41, operating in the Atlantic at the outbreak of World War II in December 1941. He was then transferred to duty as an instructor at the Naval Air Station, Miami, Florida, and after five months there had similar duty at the Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Hollywood, Florida. During the remaining period of the war he served as Executive Officer of Bombing Squadron ONE (thirteen months) and as Commanding Officer of Bombing Squadron EIGHT (six months), both carrier based in the Pacific.

He was awarded the Navy Cross, "For extraordinary heroism as Squadron Commander and Pilot of a Dive Bomber in Air Group EIGHT, attached to the USS BUNKER HILL, during the attack against the Japanese Fleet in the First Battle of the Philippine Sea on June 20, 1944..." The citation continues:

"Gallantly leading his twelve-plane strike group at extreme combat radius and through intense anti-aircraft fire from guns of all calibers including heavy fire from main batteries of powerful hostile Fleet units, Lieutenant Commander Arbes pressed to within point-blank range of his targets in well coordinated attacks and, by his superb skill and courage, contributed to the scoring of numerous damaging hits on a hostile carrier, a cruiser and a battleship... He dauntlessly continued his run, releasing his bomb load at perilously low altitude to score a direct hit on a hostile aircraft carrier and contributing to its probable destruction..."

He was also awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal and Gold Stars in lieu of four additional Air Medals for meritorious achievement in aerial flight while attached to Air Group EIGHT of the USS BUNKER HILL, operating in the Pacific War Area during the latter period of the war; and is entitled to the Ribbon and Star for the Presidential Unit Citation awarded the USS BUNKER HILL and her Air Groups for heroic service in the Gilberts, Marshalls, Truk and Marianas, and Hollandia, Ryukus, Formosa and the Philippines from November 1943 to May 1945.

After the war, from December 1945 until June 1946, he was assigned to the Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., serving in the research and Development Division. During the next year he was a student at the General Line School, Newport, Rhode Island, and from June 1947 until August 1948 served as Operations Officer at the Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi, Texas. He then joined the USS WRIGHT, airplane tender of the Atlantic Fleet, for duty in command of Scouting Squadron 31 for two years thereafter.

From August 1950 to September 1952 he served on the Staff of the Chief of Naval Air Technical Training, at Headquarters, Naval Air Station, Memphis, Tennessee, and the next four months served on the Staff of Commander Air Force, Atlantic. In February 1953 he joined the USS CORAL SEA (CVA-43) as Operations Officer, and served in that capacity until September 1954. He then returned to the Navy Department for duty in the Office of the Comptroller, and was detached in October 1956 with orders to sea as Assistant Chief of Staff to Commander Carrier Division Sixteen. In July 1958 he reported to the Naval Air Station, Quonset Point, Rhode Island, for duty as Executive Officer, and on October 15, 1959 was ordered to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department.

In addition to the Navy Cross, Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with four Gold Stars, and the Presidential Unit Citation (USS BUNKER HILL), Captain Arbes has the American Defense Service Medal with bronze "A"; the American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three operation stars; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal; National Defense Service Medal; and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon with star.

Captain Arbes is a member of Sigma Chi Fraternity (University of Minnesota).

Navy Office of Information
Biographies Branch
8 January 1960