

COMMANDER STANDISH BACKUS, JR.
UNITED STATES NAVAL RESERVE

Commander Backus was born in Detroit, Michigan, on April 5, 1910, son of Standish and Lotta (Boyer) Backus. He attended Salisbury School, in Connecticut, and Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, where he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Art and Architecture in 1933. After studying painting and art background for a year in Europe, he moved to California, where he has maintained residence since 1935.

While still a student at Princeton University, he sailed across the Atlantic and through the Mediterranean in a 54-foot small ketch. Late in the year 1940, he was commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Naval Reserve, and on March 6, 1941, reported for active duty as a Specialist in Net and Boom Defenses. Thereafter he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant, December 1, 1942, and to Lieutenant Commander, to date from July 20, 1945.

With the exception of four months' service as Commanding Officer of a 110-foot schooner in the Pacific Offshore Patrol, Commander Backus served during four years of the war in Net and Boom Defenses. In August 1942 he was sent to the South Pacific, and was successively stationed at Noumea, New Caledonia, and Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides. Returning to Washington in September of 1943, he was assigned to the Nets and Booms Section of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, where he remained until February 1945. He was then transferred to the Bureau of Naval Personnel to assist in establishing a special Graphic Presentation Unit to work in connection with the presentation of Navy Department reports to Congress and the President.

In May 1945 Commander Backus was assigned as a Combat Artist to the Navy's Office of Public Information. Shortly thereafter he left for duty in the Pacific, to cover Naval operations in that war area. The sudden end of hostilities in the Pacific in August 1945 found him in Guam where he was preparing to take part in the next operation against Kyushu. Accompanying the Fourth Marine Regiment to Japan, he was among those making the final landings at Tokyo Bay, on August 30, and was aboard the USS MISSOURI for the surrender ceremonies on September 2, 1945.

He returned to the United States in December 1945 via Guam and a "Magic Carpet" run of the aircraft carrier, USS YORKTOWN, and following further duty in the Office of Public Information, was released from active duty in April 1946. In 1955-1956 he returned to duty at his own request to go with Admiral Byrd to the Antarctic.

For World War II Service, Commander Backus has the American Defense Service Medal, the American Campaign Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal.

He is now engaged in illustrating, painting and teaching at his home

He is a member of the California Watercolor Society and other art organizations on the Pacific Coast, and has exhibited widely in the western part of the United States and occasionally in Detroit, New York, and Chicago. His work has also been used as illustration matter in books and articles, and he has had some commercial presentations. In addition to his work as an artist and designer, he is engaged in citrus growing at home at Hope Ranch, Santa Barbara.