

CAPTAIN GERALD F. COLLERAN, UNITED STATES NAVY

Gerald Francis Collieran was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on October 11, 1921, son of Patrick Michael and Eileen (Rogers) Collieran. He attended Public Latin School, Boston, prior to entering the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, on appointment from his native state in 1939. Graduated on June 19, 1942, with the Class of 1943 (accelerated course due to World War II), he was commissioned Ensign and subsequently advanced in rank to that of Captain, to date from July 1, 1962.

Following graduation from the Naval Academy in 1942, he joined the USS ATLANTA (CL-51) and while attached to that cruiser participated in the Guadalcanal-Tulagi landings, operations at Midway, Eastern Solomons and the capture and defense of Guadalcanal. The ATLANTA was sunk at Guadalcanal on November 13, 1942. "For heroic service as Officer-in-Charge of the After Engine Room of the USS ATLANTA in action against enemy Japanese forces during the Battle of Guadalcanal, November 13, 1942..." he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V." The citation continues in part:

"When hostile shellfire had seriously damaged his ship and communications between his engine room and all other parts of the vessel had been destroyed, Lieutenant (then Ensign) Collieran directed his crew to open up the engine room hatches when no power could be obtained for driving the port shaft and, organizing a party, worked with them in jettisoning all the ready service ammunition from upper handling rooms of mounts four and five..."

He is also entitled to the Ribbon for and a facsimile of the Presidential Unit Citation awarded the USS ATLANTA.

After the sinking of the ATLANTA, he was attached to Survivor Camps at Guadalcanal and New Calédonia until January 1943, then joined the USS BUNKER HILL (CV-17). He is entitled to the Ribbon for and a facsimile of the Presidential Unit Citation awarded that aircraft carrier. Detached from the BUNKER HILL in May 1944, he continued duty afloat until July 1945 in the USS SPRINGFIELD (CL-66). He next had flight training and in November 1946 was designated Naval Aviator. In June 1947 he joined Fighting Squadron EIGHT-A to serve as Operations Officer, Executive Officer and Acting Commanding Officer. He reported in July 1949 as Fighter-Type Training Officer on the Staff of Commander Fleet Air, Quonset, with headquarters at the Naval Air Station, Quonset Point, Rhode Island. In that capacity, he also served as Liaison Officer with the U. S. Air Force Air Defense Command.

He was Guided Missiles Project Officer (Petrel, Grebe and Dove Weapons Systems) in the Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., from January 1951 to May 1953, after which he served as Executive Officer of Fighter Squadron SEVENTY-TWO and Utility Squadron TWO until July 1955. Following instruction (Command and Staff Course) at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, he reported in July 1956 as Head of the Combat and Special Weapons Section, Plans Branch, Avionics Division, Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department. He remained there until December 1958 and after Prospective Commanding Officers instruction with Carrier Air Group TWELVE, assumed command in July 1959 of Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED NINETY-ONE. In June 1960 he reported as Operations Officer on board the USS MIDWAY.

In February 1962 he was assigned to the Plans Section, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., where he remained until ordered detached in February 1964 to command the USS TALUGA (AO-62). In December 1965 he became Commanding Officer of the USS BON HOMME RICHARD (CVA-31) and "for meritorious service while serving (in that capacity)...and (as) Commander Task Group SEVENTY-SEVEN POINT FOUR from December 9 to 17, 1965..." he was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal.

In March 1967 he was ordered to return to duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations.

In addition to the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," the Navy Commendation Medal and the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon with two stars, Captain Collieran has the American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with two silver stars and four bronze stars (fourteen operations); World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Europe Clasp; National Defense Service Medal with bronze star; Vietnam Service Medal; and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon.