

# NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

## FRANCIS CARPENTER, SEAMAN, FIRST CLASS UNITED STATES NAVAL RESERVE

Francis Carpenter was born in Denver, Colorado, on July 18, 1902. Prior to his World War II service he was a stage director in New York City. He enlisted as Seaman, first class, in the United States Naval Reserve at the Naval Recruiting Station, New York, on May 12, 1942, and after a period of instruction at the Naval Training Station, Newport, Rhode Island, and Naval Training School (Signals), Butler University, Indianapolis, Indiana, he was assigned briefly to the Receiving Stations, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Norfolk, Virginia. From the latter he was ordered, on November 21, 1942, to the Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia, for duty with Landing Craft Unit # 2, and in February and March 1943, was attached to the Amphibious Training Base, Fort Pierce, Florida.

On March 11, 1943 he reported to Commander, Transport Division ONE, of Amphibious Force, Atlantic Fleet, and the next day was assigned to the USS CALVERT (APA-32). In that attack transport, he participated in operation "HUSKY," a successful amphibious assault on the Island of Sicily, July 10, 1943. He is entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Navy Unit Commendation awarded the USS CALVERT for participation in the North African occupation, Sicilian occupation, Gilbert Islands operation, Marshall Islands operation, capture and occupation of Saipan and Tinian, Leyte landings and Lingayen Gulf landing.

He was personally awarded the Purple Heart Medal for wounds received in action, and the Silver Star Medal "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action during the amphibious assault on the Island of Sicily July 10-13, 1943..." The citation further states: "Familiar with the island through previous visits, Carpenter volunteered to land with the first assault wave and, by making skillful use of this knowledge and by his interrogation of residents, obtained much valuable information concerning the terrain in the vicinity of the beach. Braving intermittent enemy fire during his reconnaissance, he ascertained the location of a mine field and, although unarmed himself, captured a prisoner. Performing his hazardous mission with the utmost ingenuity and courage, Carpenter contributed materially to the success of the operations and to the saving of numerous lives."

Reporting to the Naval Hospital in Norfolk, Virginia when detached from the CALVERT in August 1943, he was transferred later that month to the Receiving Station, Naval Operating Base, Norfolk, and from November 26, that year, had instruction preparatory to service on board the new destroyer, USS WALKE (DD-723) from her commissioning, January 21, 1944, until October 19, 1944. At a "Meritorious Mast" he was commended by the Commanding Officer of the WALKE for "outstanding performance of duty as General Quarters helmsman in USS WALKE during sustained amphibious operations against the enemy including one instance where the ship was taken under heavy accurate gunfire by coastal guns of large caliber..."

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His responses to the Commanding Officer's orders to the helm were prompt and accurate; his calm under fire tended to quiet the fears of those around him.."

After his return to the United States in October 1944 he was transferred to the Naval Reserve Base, Shoemaker, California, from which he was honorably discharged on November 24, 1944.

In addition to the Silver Star Medal and the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, he has the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal.

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