

COMMANDER ERNEST M. BEAUCHAMP, U. S. NAVY

Ernest Mortimer Beauchamp was born on a ranch near the city of Santo, Texas, on November 13, 1919, son of Mrs. Pearl Mary (Scarborough) Torolian (formerly Beauchamp) of Los Angeles, California, and the late Ernest Mortimer Beauchamp, Sr. He received his early education in Pomona, California, attending Pomona High School from 1934 to 1937, and Pomona Junior College for two years thereafter. In 1939-1940 he attended LaVerne College, LaVerne, California. While at Pomona Junior College, he became a civilian pilot, and on January 17, 1941, was designated Naval Aviator, having been appointed Aviation Cadet on July 15, 1940, and having completed flight training at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida.

He was commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Naval Reserve on February 14, 1941, and was promoted to Lieutenant (jg) on June 15, 1942, and Lieutenant in October 1944, to date from December 1, 1942. Transferred from the Naval Reserve to the U. S. Navy on September 20, 1944, he subsequently attained the rank of Commander, to date from July 1, 1951.

After completing flight training and accepting a commission in the U. S. Naval Reserve, he remained on duty at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, as a flight instructor, for three months. He had similar duty at the Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi, Texas, reporting on April 19, 1941, and serving there, after the outbreak of World War II, until July 1, 1942. Transferring to the Naval Reserve Aviation Base (later called Naval Air Station), Dallas, Texas, he had ten months' duty as Chief Flight Instructor. He was detached on May 2, 1943, with orders to report to the Chief, Naval Air Operational Training, Jacksonville, Florida, thence to the Naval Air Stations, Daytona Beach and Melbourne, Florida, for instruction in the VSB Operational Training Unit.

On June 9, 1943, he reported to Commander Aircraft, Atlantic, at Norfolk, Virginia, to assist in fitting out Fighting Squadron 8. He subsequently served with that Squadron, attached first to the USS INTREPID, later the USS BUNKER HILL, and participated in action at Palau, Hollandia, Saipan, Tinian, Guam, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, Luzon, Leyte, Formosa; and in the First Battle of the Philippine Sea.

He is entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of, the Presidential Unit Citation awarded the USS BUNKER HILL "For extraordinary heroism in action against enemy Japanese forces in the air, ashore and afloat in the South, Central, Southwest and Western Pacific, from November 11, 1943 to May 11, 1945..." The citation states that "the USS BUNKER HILL and her air groups struck crushing blows toward annihilating Japanese fighting power...(and) with her gallant officers and men rendered loyal service in achieving the ultimate defeat of the Japanese Empire."

He was personally awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross "For heroism and extraordinary achievement in aerial flight as Pilot of a Fighter Plane with Air Group EIGHT, attached to the USS BUNKER HILL

in action against the Japanese Fleet in the First Battle of the Philippine Sea on 20 June 1944..." Gold Stars in lieu of the second, third and fourth Distinguished Flying Cross, were awarded him for action in the vicinity of Formosa on October 12, 1944; for completing his twentieth mission in action against enemy Japanese forces during the period July 18 to 25, 1944; and for completing his fortieth mission on Clark Field, Lingayen Gulf, Cebu Area, Omami, Tokum, and Okinawa from September 18 to October 17, 1944, respectively.

He was also awarded the Air Medal and Gold Stars in lieu of eight additional awards for "meritorious achievement in aerial flight as Pilot of a Fighter Plane in Fighting Squadron 8, attached to the USS BUNKER HILL, in action against enemy Japanese forces..." at the following places and on dates indicated:

Air Medal: "...in the vicinity of Formosa, October 13, 1944" when he scored a direct hit and effected the destruction of one enemy reconnaissance airplane.

Gold Star in lieu of Second Air Medal: "...in the vicinity of Palau and Woleai Islands, March 20 to April 1, 1944..." when in five strikes he made eight strafing attacks on hostile shipping, gun emplacements and an airfield...and silenced a 40-mm battery.

Gold Star in lieu of Third Air Medal: "...from April 19 to 29, 1944...in fighter sweeps, escort patrols and strafing and bombing attacks south of Truk, on Wake Island and Hollandia...."

Gold Star in lieu of Fourth Air Medal: "...from April 29 to June 12, 1944...escort flights and bombing runs and fighter sweeps on Truk and Tinian..."

Gold Star in lieu of Fifth Air Medal: "...from June 13 to July 18, 1944...escort flights and bombing patrols on Tinian, Saipan and Guam..."

Gold Star in lieu of Sixth Air Medal: "...from July 26 to August 5, 1944...fighter sweeps and escort and bombing patrols in the Palau and Iwo Jima Areas, on one occasion scoring a direct hit on an enemy ship...and rescuing another pilot shot down off Chichi Jima..."

Gold Star in lieu of Seventh Air Medal: "...from August 8 to September 9, 1944. Completing his thirtieth mission...escort and bombing runs in the Iwo Jima Area...(and) during a fighter sweep at Davao, he assisted in shooting down an enemy plane..."

Gold Star in lieu of Eighth Air Medal: "...on Leyte, Tacloban, Cebu, Peleliu and Negros Islands from September 11 to 17, 1944...escort flights bombing patrols and strafing attacks...During a low-altitude bombing attack near Cebu...(sank) an enemy ship..."

Gold Star in lieu of Ninth Air Medal: "...from October 12 to 26, 1944. Completing his forty-fifth mission, (he) carried out combat air patrols, escort and bombing runs and fighter sweeps against Formosa and off the coast of Luzon..."

Detached from Fighting Squadron 8 on the West Coast on December 2, 1944, he returned to Norfolk, Virginia, and on January 10, 1945 was assigned duty as Executive Officer of Fighting Squadron 95 of the Fleet Air Detachment, Naval Air Station, Wildwood, New Jersey,

He was detached on May 9, 1945 and two days later assumed command of Bombing-Fighting Squadron 74-B. That squadron was decommissioned on August 1, 1945, and he reported to Commander Fleet Air, Quonset Point, Rhode Island, for a carrier squadron command. On September 5, 1945 he assumed command of Fighting Squadron 74, based on the USS MIDWAY, assigned duty in connection with the ferrying of aircraft to avoid the path of a hurricane. He remained in command of Fighting Squadron 74 until November 15, 1946.

He next commanded Carrier Air Group ONE-B, and was simultaneously Commanding Officer of Fighting Squadron ONE-B at Oceana, Virginia, until May 1947. On July 8 of that year he reported as a student at the Naval School of General Line, Newport, Rhode Island, and, completing the course in May 1948, was ordered to the Navy Department, Washington, D. C. There he served for two years in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (Aviation Personnel Division), with additional duty as a member of the Medical Survey Board, until detached on June 28, 1950.

He had staff duty for three months with Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet, and after brief instruction at the Naval Support School, Amphibious Base, Coronado, California, he assumed command on December 12, 1950, of Fighter Squadron 51. That squadron, based on the USS ESSEX, participated in action in the Korean area, and he was subsequently awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Fifth Distinguished Flying Cross, and Gold Stars in lieu of the Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Air Medal awards. The Gold Star in lieu of the Fifth Distinguished Flying Cross cites him "...as Leader of a Division of Jet Fighters in Fighter Squadron 51, based on board the USS ESSEX during operations against enemy aggressor forces in Korea on 11 September 1951..."

The additional Air Medal awards were for "meritorious achievement as Leader of a Division of Jet Fighters while attached to, and serving as Commanding Officer of Fighter Squadron 51...in attacks against the enemy..." during the period 21 August to 5 October 1951, 6 October to 3 December 1951, and 6 December 1951 to 27 February 1952, respectively, while participating in strikes on transportation and lines of communication, and over hostile territory.

Detached from command of Fighter Squadron 51 on July 3, 1952, he attended the Command and Staff Course at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, during the next ten months, graduating on June 10, 1953. On July 14, that year, he reported to the Chief, Naval Air Advanced Training, at the Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi, Texas, for duty on the staff involving operational and training flights. Under orders of March 24, 1955, he reported to Commander Fleet Air, Alameda, for duty as Commander Air Group 21, commissioned at the Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, California, on June 22, 1955, and currently based on board the USS BON HOMME RICHARD (CVA 31).

In addition to the Distinguished Flying Cross with four Gold Stars, the Air Medal with eleven Gold Stars, and the Navy Unit Commendation to the USS BUNKER HILL, Commander Beauchamp has the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; National Defense Service Medal; Korean Service Medal; and the United Nations Service Medal.

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