

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

REAR ADMIRAL CARL KENNETH FINK,
UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED

Carl Kenneth Fink was born on September 3, 1898, in Washington, D. C., the son of James Texter Fink and the late Mrs. Mary Louise Stephan Fink. He was graduated from McKinley High School, in Washington, D. C., before entering the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, on appointment from the state of Idaho in 1915. While a Midshipman, he was a member of the Plebe football and track teams. Graduated with the Class of 1919 on June 6, 1918, he was commissioned Ensign to rank from June 7, 1918; received temporary promotion to Lieutenant (junior grade) during World War I, and was commissioned in that rank in June, 1921; and subsequently advanced to the rank of Captain to date from June 17, 1942. He was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy on June 30, 1949, and advanced to the grade of Rear Admiral.

He had World War I service first aboard the USS NEW HAMPSHIRE, operating in American waters and during the latter months of the war served in the USS AYLWIN, operating on submarine patrol and escort duty. Following the Armistice, the AYLWIN cruised in the Baltic Sea and protected food ships supplying food to Poland.

From June 1919 until June 1922, he had consecutive service aboard the destroyers--USS TINGEY, USS RIZAL, USS LONG, and USS JOHN D. EDWARDS--operating in the Atlantic, Pacific, and on Asiatic Station. He was serving in the RIZAL on Asiatic Station when she was engaged in protecting American interest on the upper Yangtze River during uprisings between the Chinese of the North and South. He then joined the cruiser, USS WILMINGTON, and returned to the United States. In February 1923 he reported to the USS SHAWMUT for two years' service, most of which was in the capacity of Navigator, while she operated as flagship of Mine Squadron, Control Force, on both East and West Coasts of the United States

His first shore duty was in Cleveland, Ohio, where he had charge of the Branch Hydrographic Office of the Navy Department from April 1926 to January 1928. He served in the USS TEXAS as Secondary Battery Control Officer from February 1928 to June 1929, and as her Senior Assistant Engineer until January 1931. He again had duty ashore in 1931-1933 in the Bureau of Navigation (later redesignated the Bureau of Naval Personnel), Navy Department, Washington, D. C. In May 1933 he was ordered to the USS SARATOGA for duty as Communication Officer, and served in that assignment until June 1935, when he assumed command of the USS BABBITT. He was relieved of that command a year later.

Following a tour of duty as Professor of Naval Science and Tactics in connection with the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, he was ordered to sea in June 1938. He had successive duty as Navigator of the USS ARIZONA and from May 1939 until May 1941 as Fleet Personnel Officer on the staff of Commander, Base Force, during which period the Fleet was greatly expanded. For services in the latter assignment he received a Special Letter of Commendation from the Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet.

He was serving as Executive Officer of the USS ST. LOUIS on duty at Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, when the Japanese attacked the United States Fleet there on December 7, 1941. That cruiser was probably the first large combatant vessel to clear the harbor that morning. She subsequently was engaged in convoying the three large Matson Steamships; participating in the first raids on the Marshall-Gilbert Island; on duty as part of the Scouting Line, north of Midway; and later, patrolling Alaskan waters, participating in the bombardment of Kiska.

Returning to the United States in the spring of 1943, he served first as Assistant Director of Training and from July of that year as Director of Naval Officer Procurement in the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Department, until September 1944, when he assumed command of the USS BALTIMORE. During the period of his command the BALTIMORE was engaged in operations with the Third and Fifth Fleets against Luzon and other Philippine Islands; entered the China Sea under Admiral Halsey's command for raids against Indo-China and Hong Kong; and participated in the raids against Formosa and the raid and occupation of Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

"For exceptionally meritorious conduct.....as Commanding Officer of the USS BALTIMORE....." he was awarded a Legion of Merit for services from March 17, 1945 to the close of Fast Carrier Task Force operations in the Kyushu-Okinawa Area, and a Gold Star in lieu of a Second Legion of Merit for action ".....during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Forward Areas of the Pacific from December 1944, to May 1945....." Both Legion of Merits were awarded for combat action, and entitles him to wear the Combat Distinguishing Device "V".

Ordered relieved of command of the BALTIMORE and to duty in the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., he reported, in October 1945 as President of the Secretary of the Navy's Board for selection of U. S. Naval Reserve and U. S. Navy (T) Officers for transfer to the Regular Navy. He remained in that assignment until transferred to the Retired List on June 30, 1949.

In addition to the Legion of Merit with Gold Star (with Combat "V") Rear Admiral Fink has the World War I Victory Medal, Patrol Clasp (USS AYLWIN); the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with one silver star and one bronze star (six engagements); the American Campaign Medal; the World War II Victory Medal and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon with one bronze star.

7 March 1950.