

# NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

REAR ADMIRAL BENJAMIN HARRISON ADAMS,  
MEDICAL CORPS, U.S. NAVY, RETIRED

Benjamin Harrison Adams was born in Armour, South Dakota, on November 5, 1888. In 1912 he attended Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois; 1913, Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa; and 1914-1918, University of Iowa at Iowa City, from which he received the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1915, and Doctor of Medicine degree in 1918. After serving briefly in the U.S. Army, he entered the Naval Service on June 15, 1918 as Assistant Surgeon with the accompanying rank of Lieutenant, junior grade, and subsequently was promoted in rank to that of Captain dating from June 16, 1942. His transfer to the Retired List of the Navy became effective on December 1, 1950 when he was advanced to Rear Admiral on the basis of combat awards.

Upon obtaining his commission in the Navy Medical Corps Reserve in June, 1918, he was assigned duty at the Naval Hospital, Great Lakes, Illinois, where he served throughout the remainder of World War I, completing 15 months internship. He had inactive duty from September, 1919 to August, 1921 and returned to general practice in Sioux City, Iowa. He was commissioned Lieutenant on August 31, 1921 and transferred from the U.S. Naval Reserve to the Regular Navy, Medical Corps, to date from June 2, 1920. Upon entering the service, he was assigned as Ward Medical Officer at the Naval Hospital, Great Lakes, and served two years there. The next eleven months he served at sea in the USS IDAHO as Junior Medical Officer, followed by ten months aboard the USS VEGA as Medical Officer. In July, 1925 he reported for duty at the Naval Hospital, Puget Sound, Washington, and in March, 1927 he transferred to the Navy Recruiting Station, Seattle, Washington, as Medical Examiner.

He was among the first group of Navy doctors to receive the designation of Submarine Medical Officer. In September, 1928 he reported for duty at the Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor, T.H., where he served as Submarine Personnel Examiner until June, 1930. After a year at Naval Medical School, Washington, D.C., he had a postgraduate course in Physiology at the School of Public Health, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. On April 25, 1932 while there, he was named a Research Fellow in Physiology. Thereafter, from September, 1932 until October, 1934, he was Medical Examiner, Submarine Base, New London, Connecticut.

He served consecutively in the USS RALEIGH and the USS OGLALA, at Pearl Harbor, for a two year tour of duty ending September 16, 1936. He returned to shore duty, assigned to the Medical Research Unit, Edgewood Arsenal, Edgewood, Maryland, having duty in research into the medical aspects of chemical warfare. The following year he attended the staff officers' course in chemical warfare. In July, 1940 he was ordered to duty in Submarines, Asiatic Fleet, as Staff Medical Officer attached to the flagship, USS CANOPUS. He was so serving at the outbreak of the war with Japan. The Secretary of the Navy cited him in a Letter of Commendation with Ribbon and combat distinguishing device, V, as follows:

"For outstanding services while attached to the USS CANOPUS as Senior Medical Officer, Submarine Squadron FIVE, Asiatic Fleet, during

" - the siege of Manila, Philippine Islands, by enemy Japanese forces, December 11 to 25, 1941. While the CANOPUS was moored in the port area, Captain Adams established first aid stations ashore and, with exceptional foresight, laid plans for removal of the most valuable medical stores and supplies stored in the Bodegas in that area. As a result of his initiative, these stores were removed from the Port area and, on the evening of December 24, were reloaded on the CANOPUS and taken to Bataan following a bombing by Japanese in which several Bodegas and their contents were destroyed. . . "

From December 25, 1941 until February 5, 1942, he served as Senior Naval Medical Officer in the Bataan-Corregidor Area when he was ordered out to Java in the USS SEA DRAGON, and in the USS HOLLAND to Southwest Australia. In July, 1942 he was transferred to the USS OTUS as Senior Medical Officer, and returned to the United States.

In November, 1942 he had duty as Executive Officer of the Naval Hospital, St. Albans, New York. He received a Letter of Commendation from the Secretary of the Navy, stating in part: "For outstanding service to the Government of the United States as Executive Officer of the Naval Hospital, St. Albans, New York, from November, 1942 until February, 1944, and as Officer in Charge of the Division of Physical Requirements and Medical Records of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery during the latter part of the World War . . . "

From March, 1944 until January, 1947, he served in the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Department, Washington, D.C. He was Chief of the Division of Physical Requirements and Medical Records, and in February, 1947 he assumed duty as Medical Officer in Command, Naval Hospital, Annapolis, Maryland. He had orders in August, 1949 returning him to the Navy Department, and upon reporting he served as Member of the Naval Retiring Review Board. He had further orders in November, 1949 to duty as Senior Medical Member, Physical Evaluation Board, Potomac River Naval Command, Washington, D.C. He was so serving when relieved of active duty pending his retirement from the Naval Service on December 1, 1950, having reached the statutory age.

In addition to the Commendation Ribbon and bronze star in lieu of a second similar award with Combat V, Rear Admiral Adams has the Army Distinguished Unit Badge, the World War I Victory Medal; the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; Philippine Defense Ribbon; and World War II Victory Medal.

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December 22, 1950