

REAR ADMIRAL DONALD SIDLEY EVANS,
UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED

Donald Sidley Evans was born in Saugus, Massachusetts, on August 31, 1901, son of Mrs. Richard (Maude M. Murphy) Evans, and the late Rev. Richard Evans. He attended Wausau (Wisconsin) High School, and one year at the Laurence College, Appleton, Wisconsin, before entering the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, in 1918. He graduated and was commissioned Ensign on June 3, 1922, and by subsequent promotions attained the rank of Captain to date from June 21, 1942. Upon his transfer to the Retired List of the Navy on July 1, 1952, he was advanced to Rear Admiral on the basis of combat awards.

After graduating in June, 1922, he was assigned to the USS MARYLAND. In that battleship he made the cruise to Rio de Janeiro with the Secretary of State aboard. The next year he was detached to duty as Assistant Communication Officer on the staff of the Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet, aboard the USS SEATTLE, flagship, served the year 1923-1924, and thereafter until 1927 as Watch and Division Officer of that cruiser. Transferring to the USS GOFF, he served a two year tour, which included duty on the east coast of Nicaragua in the winter and spring of 1927-1928.

He returned to Annapolis in 1929 to attend the Naval Postgraduate School, General Line and Applied Communication course. The course completed in 1931, he served as Communication Officer on the staff of Commander, Destroyer Squadron ONE, and after two years transferred to duty as Radio Officer on the staff of Commander Destroyer Squadrons, Scouting Force, in the USS RALEIGH, flagship. The year 1935-1936, he had shore duty under instruction at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, followed by a year on the staff of that college.

In September, 1937 he was ordered to the Asiatic Fleet, where he served successively in the USS CANOPUS at Tsingtao, China, and as Commanding Officer of the USS FINCH at Shanghai. He was serving in the latter during the outbreak of Sino-Japanese hostilities in 1937. The year 1938-1939, he served as Fleet Communication Officer on the staff of the Commander in Chief, Asiatic Fleet, USS AUGUSTA, flagship. In 1939 he assumed duty as Commanding Officer of the USS STEWART. That destroyer operated in the China-Philippines area.

Upon returning from the Asiatic Station in 1940, he was assigned to the staff of the Naval Postgraduate School, Annapolis, until 1943. Ordered to the Atlantic Fleet, he was first assigned to duty as Communication Officer on the staff of Commander U.S. Naval Forces, Northwest African Waters, later as Communication Officer on the staff of Commander, U.S. EIGHTH Fleet in the Mediterranean area. While so serving, he was awarded the Legion of Merit, Gold Stars in lieu of second and third similar awards, and the Bronze Star Medal, each with combat distinguishing device, V. The citations in part follow:

Legion of Merit: "For exceptionally meritorious conduct . . . in both the planning and execution phases of the invasion of the Island of Sicily in July, 1943. Responsible for the establishment and the maintenance of Naval communications during the invasion, (he) worked tirelessly day and night to organize the system which resulted in the highly efficient coordination of the attacking forces during the assault. . . ."

Gold Star in lieu of second Legion of Merit: ". . . Captain Evans, with great energy and outstanding resourcefulness, applied himself to the task of establishing, planning, and directing the necessarily complex communication organization required for exercising command over a large amphibious force. Frequently encountering new technical problems and meeting great difficulties in the shortage of suitable equipment and trained personnel, he nevertheless succeeded, through his ingenuity and professional skill, in providing efficient communications throughout the periods of training and combat operations, thereby contributing greatly to the success of the invasion (of French Morocco). . . ."

Gold Star in lieu of third Legion of Merit: "For . . . outstanding services to the Government of the United States as Communication Officer on the staff of a Naval Task Force Commander prior to and during the amphibious invasion of Italy in September, 1943. Exercising sound technical skill and keen foresight, (he) developed the communication plans for controlling the operations of the large number of mixed Allied units constituting the Task Force, and was largely responsible for the subsequent efficient and orderly functioning of all communications throughout the vigorous assault. . . ."

Bronze Star Medal: "For meritorious service . . . during a period of almost continual operations against the enemy in the Mediterranean Theater from October 1943, to July 1944. . . (He) was largely responsible for the installation, maintenance and effective operation of highly technical radio, radar and countermeasures equipment in assigned combatant units engaged in the conduct of amphibious operations, the clearing of local convoy routes and in current operations in the area, thereby contributing materially to the development of efficient communications which insured the orderly and timely flow of operational traffic between all units of the U.S. EIGHTH Fleet and the agencies of Allied services. . . ."

Upon returning to the United States, he was ordered to the Naval War College, Newport, R.I., in October, 1944, to attend the Senior Course, completed in 1945. He remained the following two years for duty on the staff of that college. When detached in the summer of 1947 he became Commanding Officer of the transport LEJEUNE, transferred the next October to command the USS GENERAL H. W. BUTNER, and in May, 1948 he assumed duty as Commander, Transport Division 21.

In April, 1949 he was ordered to duty as Professor of Naval Science, Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit, University of Colorado at Boulder. He was so serving when relieved of active duty and transferred to the Retired List of the Navy on July 1, 1952.

In addition to the Legion of Merit (3 awards) and Bronze Star Medal, each with Combat V, Rear Admiral Evans has the Victory Medal; Second Nicaraguan Campaign Medal (USS GOFF); China Service Medal; American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with engagement stars; World War II Victory Medal; and Navy Occupation Service Medal.