

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN SANFORD E. WOODARD, UNITED STATES NAVY

Sanford Elza Woodard was born in Ashland, Kansas, on October 9, 1913, son of Sanford Ellsworth and Jessie Elmira (Hayes) Woodard. He attended Medicine Lodge, Kansas, public schools, prior to his enlistment in the U. S. Navy on August 10, 1931. On July 5, 1933, he was honorably discharged to enter the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland. As a Midshipman he won the Sabre "N" and was a member of the Trident Literary Society. Graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 3, 1937, he subsequently advanced in rank to that of Captain, to date from January 1, 1956.

Following graduation from the Naval Academy in 1937, he served for two years in the USS TENNESSEE, flagship of Commander Battleship Division TWO, Battle Force, and in June 1939 transferred to the USS BLUE, operating with Destroyer Squadron FOUR, based at San Diego, California. Between July and September 1940 he had submarine training at the Submarine Base, New London, Connecticut, and during the year following had successive duty in the USS DOLPHIN and the USS ARGONAUT, operating in the Pacific, the latter as flagship of Commander Submarine Squadron FOUR, Scouting Force.

In October 1941 he joined the USS PAUL JONES and was on board that destroyer during the early part of World War II, participating in operations in the Philippines and Netherlands East Indies from December 1941 to February 1942. For outstanding service in connection with the rescue of five personnel south of Sumbawa Island, Netherlands East Indies on February 5, 1942, he received a Letter of Commendation, with authorization to wear the Commendation Ribbon. Detached from the PAUL JONES in November 1942, he next served for eleven months as Executive Officer of the USS WHIPPLE, then assumed command of that destroyer. While in command of the WHIPPLE, he also served, June to November 1944, as Commander Destroyer Division FIFTY-SEVEN. In that assignment, he participated in convoy and antisubmarine duty in the Pacific, North Atlantic, South Atlantic, South Atlantic and Mediterranean.

In November 1944 he assumed command of the USS FORREST, which under his command, participated in the assault and occupation of Okinawa. The FORREST was struck by a Kamikaze plane in May 1945, and after temporary repairs at Kerama Retto, returned to the Boston Naval Shipyard. For outstanding services while in command of the FORREST, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," and the Silver Star Medal. The citations follow in part:

Bronze Star Medal: "For meritorious achievement...during operations against enemy Japanese forces on Okinawa, from March 24 to May 27, 1945. Demonstrating initiative and sound judgment, (he) skillfully directed his ship in executing hazardous minesweeping operations, anti-submarine and anti-aircraft screening, night retirement, screening, escort duties and fire support duties and, despite numerous enemy air attacks and the proximity of hostile shore installations, brought his vessel safely through an exacting schedule until hit by an enemy suicide plane on May 27. By his leadership and courage under fire, he contributed materially to the success of his ship in averting numerous hostile air attacks and in destroying five enemy aircraft and assisting in the destruction of several others..."

Silver Star Medal: "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity...in action against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of Okinawa on May 27, 1943. When attacked by three hostile suicide planes, (he) skillfully maneuvered his ship and directed heavy and accurate fire to destroy two of the enemy aircraft and drive off the third which later returned to make a shallow dive into the FORREST. By stopping the engines when the hit was inevitable and immediately organizing fire fighting and damage control after the crash, he kept casualties and damage to a minimum and undoubtedly saved his ship..."

During the period November 1945 to May 1946 he was Officer in Charge of the Naval Academy Preparatory School, Bainbridge, Maryland, after which he served as Operations Officer on the staff of Commander Florida Group, Atlantic Reserve Fleet. In January 1949 he joined the USS PORTSMOUTH as Operations Officer and in July of that year assumed command of the JOHN R. CRAIG, which under his command participated in operations in the Korean area during the hostilities there. "For meritorious service...during operations against enemy aggressor forces in the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea from March 18 to May 16, 1951..." he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Second Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V." The citation further states in part:

"Throughout this period, Commander Woodard discharged his responsibilities with exceptional skill and resourcefulness and directed the operations of the JOHN R. CRAIG with marked success. Exercising a thorough understanding of the complex techniques of modern naval warfare, he employed the striking power of his ship against the enemy with maximum effectiveness and directed accurate gunfire on hostile road nets, railroads, vehicles and troop concentrations along the east and west coasts of Korea, thereby contributing materially to the success of operations in these areas..."

In November 1951 he reported as Assistant Chief of Staff and Operations Officer to the Commander Military Sea Transportation Service, with headquarters in Washington, D. C., and continued to serve as such until July 1954. He next had duty as Assistant Chief of the Naval Section, later Chief of the Naval Section, Joint United States Military Advisory Group, Philippine Islands, and in August 1956 reported for instruction at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

He assumed command of the USS SKAGIT in July 1957 and in November 1958 was detached for duty as Operations, Plans and Training Officer on the staff of Commander Amphibious Force, Atlantic Fleet. He was Executive Officer and Naval Advisor in the Logistics Division, Staff, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, from September 1960 until ordered detached in April 1964 for duty with the Naval Board of Inspection and Survey, Washington, D. C.

In addition to the Silver Star Medal, the Bronze Star Medal, and the Commendation Ribbon, Captain Woodard has the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three operation stars; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with one star; World War II Victory Medal; China Service Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia Clasp; National Defense Service Medal; Korean Service Medal with three stars; United Nations Service Medal and the Philippine Defense Ribbon with one star. He also has the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation and the Korean Presidential Unit Citation.