

# NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

REAR ADMIRAL WILLIAM B. SIEGLAFF, U. S. NAVY, RETIRED

William Bernard Sieglaff was born in Albert Lea, Minnesota, on July 6, 1908, son of Henry William and Helen Beatrice (Knatvold) Sieglaff, both now deceased. He attended Los Angeles, California, High School and entered the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, from California, on June 13, 1927. Graduated and commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Navy on June 4, 1931, he advanced in rank to that of Rear Admiral, to date from October 1, 1959.

After graduation from the Naval Academy in June 1931, he was assigned to the USS OKLAHOMA until May 1933, then had instruction at the Submarine School, U. S. Submarine Base, New London, Connecticut, the next six months. In February 1934 he joined the USS S-37, a submarine unit of the Asiatic Fleet, and served on board until February 1937. After his return to the United States, he assisted in fitting out the USS POMPAÑO at the Mare Island Navy Yard, Vallejo, California, and served on board that submarine from her commissioning, June 12, 1937, until May 1938.

Returning to Annapolis, he had instruction in Naval Engineering at the Naval Postgraduate School in 1938-1939, and continued the course at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, from which he received the degree of Master of Science in June 1941. He then became Engineer Officer of Submarine Division 62 and was serving at Pearl Harbor at the outbreak of World War II in December 1941. Continuing duty with Division 62 in the Australian Area until November 1942, he assumed command of the USS TAUTOG, which accomplished six successful War Patrols in the Pacific Combat Area.

From June 1944 until April 1945 he commanded the USS TENCH, which operated in both the Atlantic and Pacific Areas, and during the latter months of the war he served on the Staffs of Commander Submarine Force, Pacific as Special Projects Officer and later as Force Engineer, and as Flag Secretary. He also served as Officer in Charge of the captured Japanese submarine I-400, during the occupation of Japan. For World War II service he was awarded the Navy Cross, a Gold Star in lieu of the second Navy Cross, the Silver Star Medal with two Gold Stars in lieu of additional awards, and the Legion of Merit with Gold Star in lieu of a Second Legion of Merit. He is also entitled to the Ribbon for the Navy Unit Commendation awarded the USS TAUTOG for heroic service during seven War Patrols in the Pacific Area. The citations follow, in part:

Navy Cross: "For extraordinary heroism as Commanding Officer of the USS TAUTOG in action against enemy Japanese forces from December 15, 1942, to April 19, 1943...(He) distinguished himself by his brilliant tactical knowledge and sound judgment in maneuvering his vessel into advantageous striking positions so skillfully and aggressively as to destroy three hostile merchant ships, a destroyer and three smaller craft, totaling 13,690 tons, and to damage an additional 9,750 tons consisting of a light cruiser and a tanker...without serious damage to his ship, despite persistent and violent enemy countermeasures..."

Gold Star in lieu of Second Navy Cross: "...as Commanding Officer of the USS TAUTOG during a War Patrol of that vessel in enemy Japanese-controlled waters...Commander Sieglaff directed his ship in attacks on heavily escorted enemy convoys and, despite premature torpedoes and hostile countermeasures, tenaciously pursued his targets to sink five enemy freighters totaling 17,736 tons and to damage two additional freighters totaling 8,000 tons. In spite of the enemy's concentrated efforts to the contrary, he succeeded in bringing his ship to port undamaged..."

Silver Star Medal: "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action as Commanding Officer of a submarine in enemy Japanese-controlled waters. By his courage, skill, and tenacious fighting spirit, Commander Sieglaff succeeded in sinking or damaging an important amount of hostile shipping..."

Gold Star in lieu of Second Silver Star Medal: "...as Commanding Officer of a submarine in enemy controlled waters. In three skillful and daring attacks on heavily escorted enemy convoys he sank an enemy freighter of over 3,000 tons and damaged a tanker and three freighters totalling over 11,000 tons. He also bombarded and severely damaged an enemy phosphate plant. After all torpedoes were expended he tenaciously pursued and maintained contact with a convoy and furnished information which enabled another submarine to contact and attack the same convoy. Despite severe enemy countermeasures, he brought his ship safely back to port undamaged..."

Gold Star in lieu of Third Silver Star Medal: "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity as Commanding Officer of the USS TAUTOG, during a War Patrol of that vessel in enemy Japanese-controlled waters of the Pacific...(He) launched five torpedo attacks to sink two hostile freighters totaling 9,000 tons and to damage three other freighters totalling 20,000 tons despite severe enemy countermeasures..."

Legion of Merit: "For exceptionally meritorious conduct...as Commanding Officer of the USS TENCH during the First War Patrol of that vessel in enemy Japanese-controlled waters from February 7 to April 13, 1945. Expertly directing his ship, (he) launched aggressive torpedo attacks to sink a large enemy vessel, conducted two gun engagements to sink two trawlers and directed the rescue of two Naval aviators despite intense enemy countermeasures..."

Gold Star in lieu of Second Legion of Merit: "For exceptionally meritorious conduct...as Special Project Officer of the Staff, Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, in connection with operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Pacific Ocean Area from April 1945 until cessation of hostilities. Supervising highly technical and specialized training for a group of submarines, (he) contributed directly to the success of our underseas craft during periods of intense submarine warfare. In addition, he assumed command of the captured Japanese submarine I-400 and competently carried out this difficult assignment..."

After his return to the United States early in 1947, he reported, in April of that year, to the Navy Department, where he served until July 1949 as Placement Officer (Submarines) in the Bureau of Naval Personnel. He commanded Submarine Division 81 in the Atlantic Area for the next year, and in August 1950 was designated Commander Submarine Development Group 2, Atlantic. On June 15, 1951, he reported as Officer in Charge of the Submarine School, at New London, and in June 1952 was transferred to duty as Commanding Officer, Naval Submarine Base, New London, and Commander New London Group, Atlantic Reserve Fleet.

A student at the National War College, Washington, D. C., from August 1953 until June 1954, he next served as Chief of Staff and Aide to the Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet. During the period September 1955 to October 1957 he had successive command of the fleet oiler USS ALLAGASH (AO-97) and heavy cruiser USS ALBANY (CA-123), and on November 1, 1957, reported for duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department. On September 15, 1959 he became Deputy Chief of Staff (Intelligence) to the Commander in Chief, Allied Forces, Mediterranean, and in December 1960 assumed command of Cruiser Division TWO.

On February 1, 1962 he became Director for Personnel (J-1), the Joint Staff Office, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, D. C., and in December 1963 was ordered detached for duty as Commandant of the First Naval District, with headquarters in Boston, Massachusetts. Reporting on January 27, 1964, he assumed additional duty as Commander Naval Base, Boston. "For exceptionally meritorious service from January 1964 to June 1966 as Commandant, First Naval District..." he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Third Legion of Merit. The citation continues in part:

"As the Navy representative in the New England area, Rear Admiral Sieglaff established to a very high degree the spirit of mutual cooperation with the civilian communities in the First Naval District, substantially extending and improving the Navy image throughout his area of responsibility. His frequent participation in Naval Reserve functions resulted in the establishment of mutually beneficial friendships with many civilian Naval Reservists and created an outstandingly cooperative and productive relationship between the Naval Reserve and the Navy. As a result of this close association, the Navy has received the dynamic support of Naval Reservists on all occasions, and the organized Naval Reserve Program in the First Naval District has gained national recognition for its outstanding performance. Throughout his assignment as Commandant, Rear Admiral Sieglaff, by his skillful application and interpretation of his intimate knowledge of the Navy's broad goals, has been able to present to the New England area a vivid account of a consolidated and cooperative Navy with definite objective..."

On July 1, 1966 he was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy.

In addition to the Navy Cross with Gold Star, the Silver Star Medal with two Gold Stars, the Legion of Merit with two Gold Stars, and the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon (USS TAUTOG), Rear Admiral Sieglaff has the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; the American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Europe Clasp; and the National Defense Service Medal.

Navy Office of Information  
Internal Relations Division (OI-430)  
9 August 1966