

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

REAR ADMIRAL JOHN ARTHUR SNACKENBERG, U. S. NAVY, RETIRED

John Arthur Snackenberg was born in Brooklyn, New York, on April 22, 1900, son of John C. Snackenberg and the late Mrs. Charlotte Kingsberry Snackenberg. He was graduated from Boys High School, in Brooklyn before his appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy from the Fifth District of New York in 1917. During World War I he served as a Midshipman in the USS OHIO, operating with the Atlantic Fleet. Graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 3, 1920, with the Class of 1921-A, he subsequently attained the rank of Captain to date from June 30, 1942. He served in the temporary rank of Commodore from March 5, 1946 until September 1946, and was selected to the rank of Rear Admiral on November 28, 1946, his nomination confirmed by the Senate to date from March 7, 1944.

After graduation from the Naval Academy in June 1920, he was assigned to the USS PENNSYLVANIA, in which he served until November 1923. In February 1924 he joined the USS GALVESTON, operating with the Special Service Squadron, and was aboard when that cruiser participated in the unveiling of the Theodore Roosevelt Monument at Santiago, Cuba on December 31, 1924. Detached from the GALVESTON in July 1925, he returned to Annapolis for instruction in Ordnance Engineering at the Postgraduate School, and continuing the course at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, received the degree of Master of Science in June 1927.

Successive duty in the USS PENNSYLVANIA and the USS OKLAHOMA preceded duty from May 1931 until June 1933 in the Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. He then joined the USS MEMPHIS, flagship of Commander Cruisers and Cruiser Division 2, Battle Force, to serve for two years. He was then ordered to the Staff of Commander Cruiser Division 2, Cruisers, Battle Force, U. S. Fleet, and was attached first to the USS MEMPHIS and later the USS TRENTON, flagships while in that assignment until June 1936. For two years thereafter he again had duty in the Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, where he served in the Design, Turret Mount and Machinery Sections. Returning to sea in June 1938, he served as Gunnery Officer of the USS IDAHO until January 1940. He was then transferred to duty as Assistant Operations Officer on the Staff of Commander Battle Force, and was attached to the USS CALIFORNIA flagship, until May 1941.

He served in the Research Division, Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, until March 1942, and after brief duty as Aide to the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, he returned to duty in the Bureau of Ordnance. In December 1942 he was assigned additional duty as the Navy Department Representative on the War Department Munitions Assignment Committee, and continued duty in the Bureau of Ordnance until July 1944. He received the following Letter of Commendation with authorization to wear the Commendation Ribbon from the Secretary of the Navy:

"For outstanding performance of duty as Ammunition Type Assistant for the Bureau of Ordnance from June 1942 to July 1944. Devoting his exceptional technical skill, keen judgment and resourcefulness to the many and varied problems connected with the development of the rocket, high capacity ammunition, and VT fuse programs, Captain Snackenberg played a major part in the ultimate success of these programs and in the successful outcome of the war. The

initiative, tenacity of purpose and untiring devotion to duty displayed by him reflect great credit upon Captain Snackenber and the United States Naval Service."

As Commanding Officer of the attack transport GEORGE CLYMER from September 5, 1944, until January 25, 1945, he participated in the Invasion of the Philippines. He returned to the United States to fit out the USS LOS ANGELES, and assumed command of that cruiser on her commissioning, July 22, 1945. Under his command the LOS ANGELES was assigned to San Pedro, California, as one of the vessels designated to take part in the Navy Day Celebration on October 27, 1945. In January 1946 he was ordered relieved of command of that cruiser, and to duty (temporary) in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C.

He was named Chief of Staff to Commander Joint Army-Navy Task Force ONE, formed by direction of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with the approval of the President of the United States, to conduct the atomic bomb tests against Naval vessels to gain information of value to the national defense. He was awarded the Legion of Merit for "...outstanding services to the Government of the United States as Chief of Staff to Commander Joint Task Force ONE, during Operation CROSSROADS, from February 15 to September 2, 1946..." The citation continues in part: "Rear Admiral (then Commodore) Snackenber was responsible for the functioning of a staff of approximately 600 officers and a force in excess of 42,000 officers and men. He supervised the preparation of Commander Joint Task Force ONE Operation Plan No. 1-46, which involved unique radiological and technical considerations vital to the safety of the personnel of the force. In addition, he successfully coordinated the functions of the Deputy Task Force Commanders for Technical Direction and for Aviation as well as the work of the Assistant Chiefs of Staff for Personnel, Intelligence, Operations and Logistics and maintained liaison with the Army Ground Force Advisor...(He) effected the smooth, efficient functioning of the large divisions of the staff and a sound coordination between the staff and the force, thereby contributing materially to the success of Operation CROSSROADS..."

On September 16, 1946 he again reported for duty in the Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, and on December 2, became Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance for Ordnance Establishments, in which capacity he served until March 1947. After temporary duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, he was assigned duty as U. S. Naval Attache and U. S. Naval Attache for Air, Greece. On July 15, 1947 he was appointed Chief of the Naval Group of the United States Mission to Greece.

On December 20, 1948 he was assigned duty as Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, and on February 26, 1949 he became Deputy Chief of that Bureau. On April 1, 1952 he assumed command of the Mine Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet, and remained in that command for a year. On August 24, 1954 he became Commandant, First Naval District, with additional duty as Commander Naval Base, Boston, and as Commander Naval Base, Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He was Chief of the Military Assistance Advisory Group to the Netherlands with headquarters at the Hague, from May 1953 until relieved of all active duty pending his retirement, effective July 1, 1961.

He was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of a Second Legion of Merit for "exceptionally meritorious conduct...from May 1958 to June 1961 as Chief, Military Assistance Advisory Group to The Netherlands..." The citation further states in part: "During this period, Rear Admiral Snackenberg was responsible for the undertaking of several important projects in the fields of propulsion and auxiliary machinery systems and for the development of a high effective ASW capability that resulted in an efficient hunter-killer group in the Royal Netherlands Navy. His fine sense of diplomacy and tactful manner motivated the military services of The Netherlands toward meeting their NATO commitments and encourage participation in the coordinated European production of F-104 fighter planes. Rear Admiral Snackenberg encouraged the development of a joint United States-Netherlands cost-sharing shipbuilding program and the implementation of the United States Army missile program..."

In addition to the Legion of Merit with Gold Star and the Commendation Ribbon, Rear Admiral Snackenberg has the Victory Medal; the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; American Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; National Defense Service; and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon. He has also been awarded the decorations of Commander of the Order of the British Empire by the Government of Great Britain and of Senior Commander of the Order of the Phoenix by the Government of Greece.