

REAR ADMIRAL NATHANIEL C. BARKER
UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED

Nathaniel Charles Barker was born in Memphis, Tennessee, on May 24, 1903, son of Horace Holt and Edna Phillips (Moss) Barker. He attended Gulf Coast Military Academy, Gulfport, Mississippi, and Wilmer and Chew Preparatory School, Annapolis, Maryland, before entering the Naval Academy on June 16, 1920, on appointment of Senator Kenneth McKellar of Tennessee. He resigned in 1922, but was again appointed Midshipman by Senator McKellar, and was graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 3, 1926. Subsequently advancing to the rank of Captain, to date from November 10, 1945, he was transferred to the Retired List on November 1, 1947, and promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral, having been specially commended for his performance of duty in actual combat.

After graduation from the Naval Academy in 1926 he had three years' duty in battleships, serving as a junior officer on board the USS CALIFORNIA and the USS UTAH, and while attached to the latter in 1929, he completed instruction at the Naval Torpedo School, Newport, Rhode Island. From June 1929 until April 1933, he had successive duty in destroyers, first on the East Coast in the STURTEVANT and BROOKS, and from February 1931, on China Station in the McCORMICK and POPE.

Returning to Annapolis in June 1933, he was a student in Ordnance and Gunnery at the Naval Postgraduate School for two years, followed by duty under further instruction at various places, including the Navy Yard, Washington, D. C., and East Coast Ordnance Activities. He joined the USS SHAW upon her commissioning at the Philadelphia Navy Yard in September 1936, and served as her Gunnery Officer on both coasts of the United States during the period ending in June 1939. He then reported to the Naval Gun Factory, Washington, D. C., and was on duty there at the outbreak of World War II in December 1941.

From February 1942 until December 1943, he served as Gunnery Officer of the USS PHILADELPHIA, and "For exceptionally meritorious conduct (in that capacity) prior to and during the amphibious assault on the Island of Sicily in July and the amphibious invasion of the Italian Mainland, in September 1943..." he was awarded the Legion of Merit, with Combat "V." The citation states that he "maintained the ship's armament in constant readiness for shore bombardment missions over an extended period and on innumerable urgent occasions directed effective gunfire attacks in support of the Army ground forces. Though the PHILADELPHIA was subjected to severe aerial attack during the Italian invasion, he directed her anti-aircraft batteries in destroying ten attacking planes and also contributed to the Naval gunfire support which assisted in repelling enemy counter attacks seriously threatening the Salerno Beachhead..."

He also received a Letter of Commendation, with authorization to wear the Ribbon and Combat "V," from the Commander U. S. Naval Forces in Northwest African Waters, for "outstanding performance of

duty while attached to the USS PHILADELPHIA as Gunnery Officer, during the assault on Sicily in July 1943 and the West Coast of Italy in September 1943..."

Detached from the PHILADELPHIA in December 1943, he served from January to April 1944 as Executive Officer of the USS TUSCALOOSA (CA-37) and for five months thereafter commanded Destroyer Division SIXTY. "For outstanding performance while serving as Commander Destroyer Division SIXTY during an enemy aerial attack off the Algerian Coast on May 11, 1944..." he received a Letter of Commendation, with Bronze Star for his Commendation Ribbon, from the Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet.

After brief command of Destroyer Division FIFTY-NINE, he reported in October 1944 as Gunnery Officer and Gunnery Observer of Group FOUR, Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet. He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," for "meritorious service as Gunnery Officer on the Staff of the Commander, Amphibious Group FOUR, during operations against enemy Japanese forces on Okinawa, Ie Shima, Ibeya Shima, Aguni Shima and Western Japan, from October 1944 to September 1945..." The citation states that "Prior to and during the operations, Commander Barker rendered invaluable service in planning for Naval gunfire in each campaign and in the execution of plans at the targets, thereby contributing materially to the success of our forces..."

In November 1945 he reported to the Navy Department, Washington D. C., for a tour of duty in the Bureau of Ordnance. He remained there until relieved of all active duty pending his retirement, at his own request, on November 1, 1947.

In addition to the Legion of Merit and Bronze Star Medal, each with Combat "V," and the Commendation Ribbon with star and Combat "V," Rear Admiral Barker has the Yangtze Service Medal, American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, with four engagement stars; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal.

