

REAR ADMIRAL HERBERT CHAUNCEY BEHNER,
UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

Herbert Chauncey Behner was born in Brooklyn, New York, on March 5, 1896, son of the late Jacob Behner and Mrs. Freda Schwarzman Maher. He attended public schools in Brooklyn, and enrolled in the United States Naval Reserve Force in the rank of Ensign in September 1918. He was thereafter commissioned in the regular Navy, and advanced in grade to the rank of Captain to date from March 10, 1945. On November 1, 1949, he was transferred to the Retired List of the Navy, advanced in rank to Rear Admiral on the basis of combat awards.

He was attached to the Naval Aircraft Laboratory, Hampton Roads, Virginia, from September to December, 1918, and after a period of inactive status, he reentered the Navy in October, 1919, and was ordered to Naval Air Station, Rockaway Beach, Long Island, New York, in connection with installation of radio in aircraft. He remained in that assignment until August, 1921, and after brief duty until the end of the year, at Naval Air Station, Lakehurst, New Jersey, and later at Naval Air Station, Anacostia, D.C., he had duty at sea with Aircraft Squadrons, Battle Fleet, serving aboard the flagship AROOSTOOK from December, 1921 to May, 1923.

Three years attached to Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, on the instruction staff, was followed by a three year tour with Aircraft Squadrons, Scouting Fleet, aboard the carrier WRIGHT, flagship. The year June, 1929-1930, he was under postgraduate instruction at the Naval Academy Postgraduate School, Annapolis, Maryland, for the course in Communication Engineering. He then reported to the Navy Department, Washington, D.C., and was attached for duty to the Office of Naval Communication, and the Bureau of Engineering. The school year September, 1930-June, 1931, he continued under instruction at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, and thereafter joined the USS LANGLEY for duty with Aircraft, Scouting Force, U.S. Fleet. The LANGLEY was flagship of Carrier Division 1 in the Atlantic. When detached from that assignment he reported for duty at the Fleet Air Base, Coco Solo, Canal Zone, and served from June, 1933 to July, 1935. He then served as Communication Officer consecutively one year in the USS WRIGHT, flagship of Aircraft, Base Force, U.S. Fleet, and three years aboard the USS YORKTOWN, which was flagship of Carrier Division 2, Battle Force, following her commissioning.

For one year from August, 1939, he was assigned to the District Communication Office, Twelfth Naval District, San Francisco, California. Transferring to the Naval Air Station, San Diego, California, he was attached until July, 1943. Ordered to the Pacific War Area, he was assigned to the staff of Commander, Aircraft, Southwest Pacific Force, until assuming command of the USS BOWDITCH in April, 1944. He served in that command until the end of the war, and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with combat distinguishing device V, the citation, in part, stating: "For heroic service . . . during survey operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Pacific War Area, from July 1944, to August 1945. Exercising judgment and skill in the face of arduous combat conditions, (he) provided outstanding hydrographic services to the Fleet, thereby assisting in the rapid utilization and development of harbors and anchorages essential to the success of Naval operations

"-in the forward areas. While engaged in surveying operations during the Okinawa Campaign, he directed his ship in the destruction of several enemy aircraft attacking units in the Fleet anchorage. . ."

Returning to the United States, he was named Officer in Charge of the Branch Hydrographic Office at San Francisco, and reported there in October, 1945. In March, 1948, he transferred to command of the USS CACAPON, oiler, and after five months he was relieved and ordered to the Department of the Navy. After temporary duty in the Bureau of Naval Personnel, he served in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, Communication Division, Equipment Engineering Section. He was so serving when relieved of active duty pending his retirement on November 1, 1949.

In addition to the Bronze Star Medal with Combat V, Rear Admiral Behner has the World War I Victory Medal; American Defense Service Medal, Base Clasp; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia Clasp; and China Service Medal.

Rear Admiral Behner is a member of the Institute of Radio Engineers.

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27 November 1950