

## COMMANDER JOHN P. BIENIA, U. S. NAVY

John Paul Bienia was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts on May 13, 1916, son of Joseph and Catherine (Dynda) Bienia. He attended New Bedford High School and Massachusetts Nautical Schoolship, and on February 25, 1941 was commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Naval Reserve. He subsequently advanced in rank, attaining that of Commander, to date from July 1, 1951, following his transfer to the U. S. Navy from the Naval Reserve in 1946.

Reporting for active duty in April 1941, he was serving in the USS RIGEL (AR-11) at the outbreak of World War II in December of that year. He was detached in January 1942 for duty in the USS SILVERSIDES (SS-236), in which he served until April 1944. For outstanding service in that submarine he was awarded the Silver Star Medal, the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," and a Letter of Commendation, with Ribbon and Combat "V," the latter from the Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet. The citations follow, in part:

**Silver Star Medal:** "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity as Engineering and Diving Officer of the USS SILVERSIDES, during her Seventh War Patrol in enemy Japanese-controlled waters. Efficient and conscientious, Lieutenant Bienia rendered invaluable service to his commanding officer by maintaining his engineering plant in a high state of readiness at all times and during evasion of enemy counter-attacks, he contributed materially to the success of the mission by his expert operation of diving control equipment..."

**Bronze Star Medal:** "For heroic service as Assistant Diving and Damage Control Officer on board the USS SILVERSIDES during four highly successful War Patrols in enemy Japanese-controlled waters. When his ship was damaged by severe enemy depth charge attacks, (he) determinedly and efficiently supervised the caulking of serious leaks, thereby enabling the diving officer to maintain proper depth control. By tirelessly performing his duties, he contributed to the continuance and completion of the SILVERSIDES' patrols, which resulted in sinking 61,677 tons of shipping and severely damaging 30,210 tons..."

**Letter of Commendation:** "For meritorious conduct in the performance of his duties as Diving Officer and Engineering Officer of the USS SILVERSIDES during the Fifth War Patrol of that vessel in Japanese-controlled waters from 17 May to 1 July 1943. (His) careful and precise control of depth and his outstanding ability, leadership and supervision of engineering personnel in the maintenance and operation of his department were of valuable assistance to his commanding officer in conducting a successful attack which resulted in the sinking of a 10,000 ton vessel and performing a dangerous mine-laying operation..."

From April to July 1944 he served with Submarine Division 182, then reported to the Navy Yard, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to assist in fitting out the USS TRUTTA (SS-421). He joined that submarine at her commissioning in December 1944, and served on board briefly as her Engineer and Repair Officer, and from January to March 1945 had similar duty on the Staff of Commander Submarine Squadron 3. He was attached to the Submarine Operational Training

Group during the last months of hostilities, and from September 1945 until January 1946 served at Headquarters, Third Naval District, New York, N. Y.

He next had fifteen months at sea as Repair Officer of the USS FULTON (AS-11), after which, from April to September 1947, he was attached to Mare Island Sub Group THREE of the San Francisco Group, Pacific Reserve Fleet. Two years' service as an instructor in the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit of the University of Nebraska, at Lincoln, was followed by instruction at the Naval School, General Line, in Newport, Rhode Island. He again went to sea in July 1950, this time as Executive Officer and Navigator of the USS TILEFISH (SS-307), and commanded that submarine for one month before his transfer in August 1951 to duty as Commanding Officer of the USS REDFISH (SS-395), in Korean waters.

Detached from the REDFISH in December 1953, he completed a tour of duty at the U. S. Navy and Marine Corps Training Center, Tacoma, Washington, in March 1957. For four months thereafter he was Logistics Officer of the U. S. Naval Advisory Group, Republic of Korea, and in July 1957 became Logistics Officer of the Provisional Military Assistance Advisory Group, Korea, at Seoul, Korea. On February 28, 1958, he was ordered to Pearl Harbor, T. H. for duty with the Naval Sub Board of Inspection and Survey.

In addition to the Silver Star Medal, Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," and the Commendation Ribbon, also with Combat "V," Commander Bienia has the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; American Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; National Defense Service Medal; Korean Service Medal; and United Nations Service Medal.

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