

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN WREFORD G. CHAPPLE, UNITED STATES NAVY

Wreford Goss Chapple was born in Billings, Montana, on March 19, 1908, son of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Chapple. He attended Billings High School before entering the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, from his native state on June 28, 1926. As a Midshipman he played football, was heavyweight boxing champion and was elected President of his graduating class. Graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 5, 1930 he subsequently advanced in rank attaining that of Captain, to date from July 1, 1949, having served in that rank (temporary) from December 10, 1945 until December 1, 1947.

After graduation from the Naval Academy in 1930, he joined the USS MONTANA and in May 1932 was detached for submarine training at the Submarine Base, New London, Connecticut. Qualified in submarines, he was ordered to Asiatic Station, where he served in the USS S-38 from February 1933 until June 1935, after which he had duty ashore in the Department of Physical Training at the Naval Academy.

He reported in January 1936 on board the USS PIKE and in June of the next year returned to Annapolis, Maryland for the course in naval engineering at the Postgraduate School. Following successive duty, June 1939-November 1940 in the submarines PERCH and TARPON, he again joined the USS S-38, on Asiatic Station, this time as her Commanding Officer and was attached to her when the United States entered World War II. For heroism in command of the S-38 "in action against enemy Japanese forces in the Philippine Islands Area from December 12 to 22, 1941..." he was awarded the Navy Cross. The citation continues in part:

"Although menaced by treacherous currents while patrolling in shallow waters, (he) daringly maneuvered his vessel into advantageous striking positions for attacks on enemy transports and supply ships engaged in landing operations. He directed the activities and fire of his ship with such expert tactical skill and sound judgment as to destroy two loaded enemy vessels without sustaining serious damage to his own ship...contributed in large measure to the success of these vital missions..."

He assumed command of the USS PERMIT at Surabaya, Java in February 1942. As such he participated in her fourth war patrol in Southern Philippine waters, including a trip to Corregidor in February 1942, to land several thousand rounds of ammunition; her fifth war patrol in the Macassar Strait and Celebes Sea; her sixth war patrol off Ambon and Davao and in the Marianas and Carolines; her seventh war patrol off the northern coast of Honshu and the southern coast of Hokkaido; her eighth war patrol in the Marianas and her ninth patrol in the Sea of Japan. For

outstanding services as Commanding Officer of the USS PERMIT he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Second Navy Cross, the Silver Star Medal and a Gold Star in lieu of a Second Silver Star Medal. The citations follow in part:

Gold Star in Lieu of a Second Navy Cross: "For extraordinary heroism as Commanding Officer of a submarine on patrol in enemy Japanese-controlled waters. With outstanding courage and skill, (he) succeeded in closing an enemy convoy, sinking two ships and, in two other attacks, inflicting severe damage on two hostile freighters, thereby furthering the war of attrition. His aggressive leadership and indomitable fighting spirit and the gallant devotion to duty of his command were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Silver Star Medal: "...during action against enemy Japanese forces in the Pacific Area. Despite the strain of prolonged undersea operations in perilous hostile waters, (he) pressed home his relentless attacks with cool courage and outstanding ability, sinking an important amount of Japanese shipping. Employing skillful evasive tactics against the determined anti-submarine measures of ships and aircraft, he successfully completed the dangerous assignment by bringing his vessel to safety without having sustained disabling damage. His daring aggressiveness and unswerving devotion to duty at great personal risk were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Gold Star in lieu of Second Silver Star Medal: "...Skillfully maneuvering his ship into striking position, (he) attacked the enemy with outstanding courage and determination and succeeded in sinking or damaging an important amount of Japanese shipping. His superb leadership and aggressive fighting spirit reflect great credit upon himself, his command, and the United States Naval Service."

Returning to the United States in the summer of 1943, he had duty in connection with fitting out the USS BREEM at the Submarine Base, New London, Connecticut and commanded that submarine from her commissioning, January 24, 1944 until December of that year. For outstanding service as Commanding Officer of the USS BREEM he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V" and a Gold Star in lieu of the Third Silver Star Medal and cited in part as follows:

Bronze Star Medal: "For heroic achievement as Commanding Officer of the USS BREEM during her First War Patrol against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of Halmahera and Morotai from June 1 to 29, 1944. Pressing home vigorous attacks on all

occasions despite unusually severe countermeasures, (he) succeeded in inflicting damage on three enemy freighters in two hazardous attacks. Although the BREAM received three, dangerously close aircraft bombs just before firing on a medium freighter, and each attack was accompanied by particularly severe depth charge attacks by enemy escorts, (he) undaunted by the fierce Japanese assault, fired his torpedoes and completed his mission. In addition to carrying out a difficult special mission, he skillfully directed the BREAM in other bold attacks which resulted in the damaging of a total of 12,000 tons of Japanese shipping..."

Gold Star in lieu of the Second Silver Star Medal: "For distinguishing himself by gallantry and intrepidity as Commanding Officer of the USS BREAM during the Third War Patrol of that vessel off the west coast of Luzon from October 21 to November 22, 1944. Despite rigorous enemy air and surface antisubmarine measures, Commander Chapple pressed attacks upon two enemy cruisers, damaging them severely. In addition skillful attacks were made which resulted in the BREAM's receiving one-half credit in sinking a large AP and damaging another. Commander Chapple also displayed exceptional ability as Officer in Tactical Command of a successful coordinated search and attack group consisting of the USS BREAM, USS BATON and USS GUITARRO. In three well-planned attacks these submarines sank three large enemy cargo ships, a large transport and a heavy cruiser..."

Between February and December 1945 he was an Instructor at the Submarine School, New London, Connecticut and in January 1946 became Commander Submarine Division ONE HUNDRED TWO. Three months later he transferred to command of Submarine Division EIGHTY-TWO and in June 1947 joined the staff of Commander SECOND Task Fleet as Anti-Submarine Warfare Officer. He was Executive Officer of the Naval Training Station, Newport, Rhode Island from July 1948 until July 1950, after which he commanded the USS MANATEE, operating in the Korean area of hostilities. In December 1951 he reported as Commanding Officer of the attack transport RENVILLE and in July 1952 was detached for duty as Director of the Special Services Division, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Department, Washington, D. C.

In June 1956 he reported as Commanding Officer of the Naval Port Control Office and Naval Port Control Officer at the Naval Base, San Francisco, California and continued to serve in that capacity until March 1958 when he was ordered to duty in the Eleventh Naval District with headquarters in San Diego, California

In addition to the Navy Cross with Gold Star, the Silver Star Medal with two Gold Stars and the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," Captain Chapple has the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; the American Campaign Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; the World War II Victory Medal; the National Defense Service Medal; the Korean Service Medal; the United Nations Service Medal; the Philippine Defense Ribbon; the Philippine Liberation Ribbon and the Philippine Independence Ribbon. He also has the Korean Presidential Unit Citation.