

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN FREDERIC A. CHENAULT  
UNITED STATES NAVY

Frederic Archibald Chenault was born in Jacksonville, Florida, on October 14, 1914, son of Archibald C. and Winnie Roach Chenault. He attended public schools in Jacksonville, and Marion Institute, Marion Alabama, prior to his appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, in 1932. Graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 4, 1936, he was subsequently promoted, attaining the rank of Captain to date from August 1, 1954.

Upon graduation from the Naval Academy in June 1936, he was assigned to the USS CALIFORNIA, and had three years' duty as a junior officer in the gunnery department of that battleship. He joined the USS LUZON on Asiatic Station in September 1939 for gunnery duties, and also served as Aide and Flag Lieutenant on the Staff of Commander, Yangtze Patrol. From May 1941 until March 1942 after the United States entered World War II, he served on the Staff of Commander, U. S. Naval Forces, Southwest Pacific.

He is entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of, the Presidential Unit Citation awarded the USS HOUSTON, flagship of Vice Admiral William A. Glassford, Commander, U. S. Naval Forces, Southwest Pacific, as follows: "For outstanding performance against enemy Japanese forces in the Southwest Pacific, from December 7, 1941 to February 28, 1942. At sea almost constantly, often damaged but self-maintaining, the HOUSTON kept the sea. She maneuvered superbly and with deadly anti-aircraft fire repulsed the nine-plane Japanese bombing squadrons attacking a troop convoy under her escort. Later, in company with other Allied ships, she engaged a powerful enemy force, carried the brunt of the action with her two remaining turrets and aided in damaging and routing two enemy heavy cruisers from the line of battle. On February 28, the HOUSTON went down, gallantly fighting to the last against overwhelming odds. She leaves behind her an inspiring record of valiant and distinguished service."

He returned to the United States for instruction during the period May until July 1942, at the Submarine Chaser Training Center, Miami, Florida, after which he was a student at the Naval Postgraduate School, Annapolis, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, from which he received the degree of Master of Science in 1944.

In October 1944 he joined the USS GUAM, light cruiser, and served first as Assistant Gunnery Officer, later as Gunnery Officer, and from January to April 1946 as Executive Officer. In the GUAM he participated in the FIFTH and THIRD Fleet raids in support of the Okinawa Gunto operation, and the THIRD Fleet operations against Japan.

After his detachment from the USS GUAM in April 1946, he reported to Commander Task Force SIXTY EIGHT, Atlantic Fleet, to serve for six months in Operations on the Staff. In November 1946 he assumed command of the USS WILLIAM R. RUSH (DD 714), remaining in command of that destroyer until

October 1948. He was next ordered to the Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., where he served until May 1951 as Deputy Chief of the Guided Missiles Branch, Research Division. From July 1951 until June 1953 he was Assistant Fleet Readiness Officer on the Staff of the Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet.

In August 1953 he joined the USS NEW JERSEY (BB-62) as Executive Officer, remaining in that assignment, after the NEW JERSEY'S participation in operations in the Korean Theater, until September 1954. Upon his return to the United States, he reported to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Washington, D. C., where he was a student until June 1955. He next served as Executive Officer of the Naval Ordnance Test Station, China Lake, California, and in March 1958 was ordered detached for duty as Commanding Officer of the USS MATHEWS (AKA-96).

In August 1959 he was assigned to the Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, where he served for five months as Assistant Director of the Special Projects Office. Effective January 1, 1960, the Bureau of Ordnance and the Bureau of Aeronautics were consolidated. In the new Bureau of Naval Weapons he had duty as Deputy Director of the Special Projects Office. "For meritorious service from August 13, 1959 to July 20, 1960 as Deputy Director of the Special Projects Program..." he was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal. The citation continues in part:

"As principal advisor to the Director on all policy, program and administrative matters within the Special Projects Office, Captain Chenault carried out his responsibilities with excellent leadership and judgment. By giving guidance and direction to the program in consonance with the established policy, he made a major contribution toward the attainment of an operational Fleet Ballistic Missile System.

In January 1961 he assumed command of the USS LITTLE ROCK (CLG-4) and in February 1962 was detached to serve as Chief of Staff and Aide to Commander SIXTH Fleet. In October 1963 he assumed command of the Naval Ordnance Test Facility, White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico and in July 1964 was ordered to duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department.

In addition to the Navy Commendation Medal and the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon, Captain Chenault has the Army Distinguished Unit Emblem; the China Service Medal with star; American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three stars; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Europe and Asia Clasps; National Defense Service Medal; Korean Service Medal; United Nations Service Medal; Philippine Defense Ribbon; Philippine Liberation Ribbon and the Philippine Independence Ribbon.

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