

CAPTAIN ORAN WARD CHENAULT  
MEDICAL CORPS, U. S. NAVY

Oran Ward Chenault was born in England, Arkansas, on February 6, 1904, son of John Calvin and Florence Mildred (Clay) Chenault. He received his education in public schools of his native city; Ouachita College, Arkadelphia, Arkansas; Hendrix College, Conway, Arkansas; and the University of Arkansas School of Medicine, at Little Rock, and holds the degrees of Bachelor of Science (1928) and Doctor of Medicine (1930); Commissioned Assistant Surgeon, with rank of Lieutenant (jg) in the Medical Corps of the U. S. Navy on June 3, 1930, he advanced in rank to that of Captain, with date of rank March 20, 1945.

Reporting for active duty on June 30, 1930, he completed his internship at the U. S. Naval Hospital, Chelsea, Massachusetts, in July 1931. He was then ordered to the Naval Hospital, Brooklyn, New York, where he served on the staff (Neuro-Psychiatry) until May 1933. Transferred to the War Department, he had duty with Civilian Conservation Corps in Idaho and Pennsylvania until February 1935 when he joined the USS TUTUILA on Asiatic Station. He had duty as Senior Medical Officer of that river gunboat, operating on Yangtze Patrol, until July 1936, and for a year thereafter was attached to the U. S. Fourth Marines in Shanghai, China, as Medical Officer, EENT.

Upon his return to the United States, he reported to the Naval Hospital, Washington, D. C., for instruction in Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat, and detached in July 1939, had a year's residency in Ophthalmology at Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary, Chicago, Illinois. He was Chief of EENT Service at the U. S. Naval Hospital, Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, from July 1940 until March 1942, being on duty at the time of the Japanese attacked the U. S. Fleet there on December 7, 1941. He is entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Navy Unit Commendation awarded the Naval Hospital, Pearl Harbor, "For extremely meritorious service in support of military operations during the enemy Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, T. H., on December 7, 1941..." The citation further states:

"As a heavy stream of casualties began flowing in, this gallant organization expended every effort in utilizing all available facilities and worked without thought of rest for the relief of the hundreds of injured, rendering further efficient service by maintaining complete records. The courage, initiative and valiant devotion to duty displayed by the personnel attached to the Naval Hospital throughout this period of extreme emergency were in keeping with the highest traditions of the U. S. Naval Service."

The personnel of the Naval Hospital, Pearl Harbor, was also awarded a Letter of Commendation by the Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet, "For meritorious achievement and distinguished service subsequent to the Japanese Air Attack on the U. S. Pacific Fleet, on December 7, 1941..." which states that "at the time of the attack and afterwards, this unit displayed conspicuous devotion

in the line of duty ...(and) its ability to cope with this disaster was responsible for the successful care of all casualties and the saving of many lives..."

From March until July 1942 he attended the Naval School of Aviation Medicine, Pensacola, Florida, and was designated Flight Surgeon. He was detached with orders to the Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida, where he served for a year as Senior Flight Surgeon. During that period, he assisted in commissioning eight Dispensaries of the Operational Training Command. In August 1943 he reported for duty as Senior Medical Officer on board the USS BUNKER HILL, and while so serving until October 1944, participated in twenty-six strikes against the enemy in eighteen separate engagements.

He is also entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of, the Presidential Unit Citation awarded the USS BUNKER HILL, "For extraordinary heroism in action against enemy Japanese forces in the air, ashore and afloat in the South, Central, Southwest and Western Pacific, from November 11, 1943, to May 11, 1945..." The citation states that the BUNKER HILL spearheaded our concentrated carrier-warfare in the most forward area, and "...with her gallant officers and men rendered loyal service in achieving the ultimate defeat of the Japanese Empire."

Upon his return to the United States, he reported in November 1944 to the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., where he served throughout the remaining war period, and until May 1946, as Medical Liaison Officer to the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air) and to the Bureau of Aeronautics. He received Commendatory Letters from the Chiefs of the Bureaus of Medicine and Surgery, and of Aeronautics, and was awarded a Letter of Commendation, with Ribbon, from the Secretary of the Navy, which stated in part: "For outstanding services (in that capacity) until October 15, 1945...Displaying unusual foresight, judgment and professional ability, Captain Chenault rendered invaluable service in directing and participating in the development of improved equipment for protection against high acceleration oxygen equipment for use at extremely high altitudes; new improved rescue and survival devices and methods; and the redesigning of aircraft cockpits with a view to greater safety and increased efficiency of the pilot..."

In June 1946 he reported as Chief EENT Service, at the U. S. Naval Hospital, San Diego, California, and during his three year tour of duty there was certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology. From July 1949 until January 1952 he was attached to the Naval School of Aviation Medicine, Pensacola, Florida, as Executive Officer and Chief of Ophthalmology; and for two and one-half years thereafter served as Staff Medical Officer to the Chief of Naval Air Training. While there he was certified by the American Board of Preventive Medicine.

When detached in June 1954 he reported to the Naval Air Station, North Island, San Diego, California, where he currently serves as Senior Medical Officer, with additional duty as Staff Medical Officer to Commander Naval Air Bases, Eleventh and Twelfth Naval Districts.

In addition to the Commendation Ribbon, the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon (USS BUNKER HILL), the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon (Naval Hospital, Pearl Harbor), Captain Chenault has the American Defense Service Medal with star; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with one silver and four bronze stars (nine engagements); the American Campaign Medal; the World War II Victory Medal; and the National Defense Service Medal.

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