

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN SAM E. CLARK, UNITED STATES NAVY

Sam Echols Clark was born in Florala, Alabama, on July 14, 1913, son of Sam E. and Ethel (Willis) Clark. He graduated from the Dale County High School, Ozark, Alabama, attended the Alabama Polytechnic Institute at Auburn for two and one half years, and on June 14, 1936 enlisted in the Navy as a Seaman Second Class, V-5 Program. He had elimination flight training at the Naval Air Station, Miami, Florida, during June and July of that year, after which he, as an Aviation Cadet, USNR, had flight training at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. Commissioned Ensign, U. S. Naval Reserve on October 1, 1937, he advanced progressively in rank to that of Captain, to date from July 1, 1956, having transferred to the U. S. Navy on March 7, 1941.

Designated Naval Aviator on September 10, 1937, he served with Utility Squadron TWO, based at the Naval Air Station, San Diego, California until October 1940, when he was released to inactive duty. Recalled to active duty the next month, he was assigned as an Instrument Flight Instructor at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, and was serving in that capacity when the United States entered World War II, December 8, 1941. In June 1942 he joined the USS CHENANGO (CVE-28) for duty as V-2 Division Officer and later as Assistant Air Officer. That escort aircraft carrier participated in the original landings at Casablanca, Africa, delivering eighty Army P-40s and pilots for land-based defense. The CHENANGO transferred in December 1942 to the Pacific Theater, based in the Solomons area, and there escorted convoys into and out of Guadalcanal and later took part in the landings at Tarawa, Kwajalein and Eniwetok. He is entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Navy Unit Commendation awarded the USS CHENANGO. The citation follows in part:

"For outstanding heroism in action against enemy Japanese forces in the air, ashore and afloat...Attacking boldly by day and night in the face of heavy enemy resistance, the courageous officers and men of the CHENANGO achieved a notable record of service and aggressiveness in combat, thereby upholding the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Detached from the CHENANGO in April 1944, he commanded Night Fighting Squadron ONE HUNDRED SEVEN until that squadron was decommissioned in October 1944. He then became Officer in Charge of Amphibious Air Support Training Unit Number ONE. In August 1945 he assumed command of Fighter Bomber Squadron EIGHTEEN (later redesignated Fighting Squadron EIGHT-A), operating off the USS LEYTE (CV-32). From June 1947 to June 1948 he was a student at the Naval School, General Line, Newport, Rhode Island, after which he was assigned to the Office of Public Relations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., where he was Executive Officer to the Director of the Aviation Division and later Assistant Head of that Division. He served from May 1949 to the summer of 1950

in the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, where he was a member of the Aeronautical Standards Group; National Aircraft Standards Council; Air Force-Navy Civil Aircraft Design Criteria Sub Committee; and Aircraft Committee Sub Committee on Aeronautical Standards.

In July 1950 he assumed command of Carrier Air Group FOUR and from November 1951 to June 1954 he was attached to the Joint Amphibious Board, Little Creek, Norfolk, Virginia. He next reported as Executive Officer of the USS SIBONEY (CVE-112) and in June 1955 was detached for duty as Navy Member of the Brown Team of the Joint Staff Planning Group, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, D. C. During July and August 1957 he had jet transitional training at Olathe, Kansas, after which he was assigned to Headquarters, Naval Striking and Support Force, Southern Europe, as Naval Representative at the Joint Command and Operations Center, Ismir, Turkey. In September 1959 he became Commanding Officer of the Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Chase Field, Beeville, Texas, and in September 1961 was detached to command Tactical Air Control Group TWO. In July 1963 he reported for duty at Headquarters, Eighth Naval District, New Orleans, Louisiana and in March 1965 was designated Commander Naval Air Transport Wing, Pacific.

In addition to the Navy Unit Commandation Ribbon, Captain Clark has the American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Europe Clasp; and the National Defense Service Medal.