

COMMANDER HENRY C. COLEE, JR.
UNITED STATES NAVY

Henry Charles Colee, Jr., was born in New Smyrna Beach, Florida, on March 19, 1918, son of Henry C. and Agnes (Gause) Colee. He graduated from DeLand (Florida) High School in 1935 and subsequently attended the University of Florida at Tallahassee, John B. Stetson University, DeLand, and Marion (Alabama) Institute, from which he received the degree of Associate in Science in 1937. He enlisted in the U. S. Navy on July 8, that year, and on July 24, 1939 was discharged to accept an appointment as Aviation Cadet in the U. S. Naval Reserve. Commissioned Ensign in the Naval Reserve on March 25, 1940, he progressed in rank, attaining that of Commander, to date from July 2, 1950, having transferred to the U. S. Navy on February 25, 1943.

Following his enlistment in the U. S. Navy in 1937, he had a year's duty at Norfolk, Virginia, and in June 1938 joined the USS NEW YORK. He continued to serve in that battleship until May 1939, when he was ordered to the Naval Reserve Aviation Base, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for elimination flight training. In July 1939 he reported for flight training at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, and on May 22, 1940 was designated Naval Aviator.

In July 1940 he joined Patrol Squadron SEVENTY-THREE and was serving with that squadron when the United States entered World War II, December 8, 1941. "For meritorious achievement in aerial flight as Pilot of a Bomber Plane engaged in anti-submarine patrols and convoy coverage flights in the North Atlantic Area during the winter of 1941-1942..." he was awarded the Air Medal. The citation further states in part: "Operating from newly-established bases despite icing, low visibility, blizzards and high winds, (he) participated in numerous missions to counter-act enemy submarine activity and contributed materially to the safe passage and protection of our valuable convoys..."

Detached from Patrol Squadron SEVENTY-THREE in September 1943, he next served on the staff of Commander Caribbean Sea Frontier and in October 1946 was assigned to the Naval Air Missile Test Center, Point Mugu, California. He remained there until June 1947, after which he had instruction at the Naval School, General Line, Newport, Rhode Island. Completing the course there in May 1948, he had training in Privateer Type Aircraft at the Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi, Texas, prior to reporting in October 1948 for duty with Aircraft Development Squadron FOUR at the Naval Air Station, Patuxent River, Maryland.

For two years, December 1950-December 1952, he was assigned to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., after which he commanded Air Transport Squadron TWENTY-TWO, attached to the Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia. In March 1955 he was ordered to duty as Executive Officer of the Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Sanford, Florida.

In addition to the Air Medal, Commander Colee has the American Defense Service Medal with bronze "A"; the American Campaign Medal; the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with one star; the World War II Victory Medal; and the National Defense Service Medal.

NAVY - Biographies Section, OI-140

12 May 1955