

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN PAUL F. DICKENS, JR., MEDICAL CORPS, U. S. NAVY

Paul Frederick Dickens, Jr., was born in Vallejo, California, on June 26, 1914, son of Lieutenant Commander Paul F. Dickens, MC, USN, Retired and Mrs. (Dorothy Clair Chance) Dickens. He received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from George Washington University, Washington, D. C., in 1936, and in 1939 was awarded the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the School of Medicine of that university. He then served his internship and residency in Internal Medicine at George Washington University Hospital. On December 20, 1940 he was commissioned Lieutenant (junior grade) in the Medical Corps of the U. S. Naval Reserve. He transferred to the Regular Navy on January 5, 1942 and subsequently advanced in rank to that of Captain, to date from July 1, 1955.

Reporting for active duty in July 1941, he had duty as Junior Ward Medical Officer at the Naval Hospital, Washington, D. C. He remained there (hospital moved to Bethesda, Maryland in February 1942), until March 1942, interspersed with an assignment, October-December 1941, as an Instructor at the Naval Medical School, Washington, D. C.

Ordered to duty afloat, he joined the USS SOUTH DAKOTA and while attached to that battleship participated in action during the Battle of Santa Cruz and at Guadalcanal (Third Savo). He is entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Navy Unit Commendation awarded the USS SOUTH DAKOTA. The citation follows in part:

Navy Unit Commendation: "For outstanding heroism in action against enemy Japanese invasion forces attempting to recapture Guadalcanal, from the Battle of Santa Cruz on October 26, 1942, to the Second Battle of Savo Island, November 14-15, 1942. Displaying her tremendous fire power as she went into action for the first time on October 26, the USS SOUTH DAKOTA repeatedly attacked the heavy waves of enemy dive-bombers and torpedo planes which swept down upon our Carrier Task Force of the Santa Cruz Islands and, during the furious two-hour battle, destroyed approximately thirty-two of the hostile aircraft. Shortly after midnight three weeks later, when our battleships intercepted several Japanese Fleet units near Savo Island, the SOUTH DAKOTA fired her salvos accurately to score direct hits on two enemy cruisers and sink them almost immediately. Continuing her effective fire as another column of Japanese vessels was sighted, she destroyed an additional cruiser, assisted in sinking a battleship and damaged the two remaining ships before she was forced to retire from the battle area to repair the damage from several major-caliber shell hits..."

Detached from the SOUTH DAKOTA in September 1943, he next served as Ward Medical Officer at the Naval Hospital, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. While there he attended a course in internal medicine. Assigned in November 1944 to the Pre-Commissioning Detail at Treasure Island, California, he joined the USS TUCSON, when that cruiser was commissioned on February 3, 1945. That vessel participated in the THIRD Fleet strikes

against Japan. After the cessation of hostilities in August 1945, he remained on board the TUCSON until March 1946, when he reported as Ward Medical Officer at the Naval Hospital, National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland.

In April 1948 he became Director of the Special Weapons Medicine Division, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. During the period June 1950 to October 1951, he was assigned to the Navy Unit, Army Chemical Corps, Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland. There he served as Medical Officer of the Navy Unit, as a member of the Faculty at the Chemical Corps School and as Medical Deputy to the Commanding Officer of the Medical Labs. He next had duty as Officer in Charge of the Bio Chemical School, Naval Schools Command, Treasure Island, California.

Again reporting as Director of the Special Weapons Medicine Division, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, he served as such from July 1955 until October 1961. He was next Director of Training at the Naval Medical School, Bethesda, Maryland, with additional duty as Assistant in matters pertaining to radiological safety and Interim Commanding Officer of the Naval Medical School. On August 23, 1962 command of the Naval Medical School became his primary assignment. In August 1963 he became Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Liaison Officer at the Naval Radiological Defense Laboratory, San Francisco, California, and in March 1965 was assigned to the Naval Station, Washington, D. C.

In addition to the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, Captain Dickens has the American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three operation stars; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal; and the National Defense Service Medal.