

VICE ADMIRAL EDWIN DORSEY FOSTER,
SUPPLY CORPS, UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

Edwin Dorsey Foster was born in Cape May Court House, New Jersey, on February 17, 1896. He attended Princeton University, Class of 1918, and while there was a member of the Varsity baseball team. He was commissioned Assistant Paymaster in the Navy, with the rank of Ensign on June 29, 1917, and subsequently advanced through all the grades until his promotion to Rear Admiral to rank from June 16, 1943. On October 4, 1949 he was appointed Vice Admiral, and transferred to the Retired List of the Navy in that rank on January 1, 1951.

In November, 1917 he was ordered to duty in Europe, and was assigned first to U.S. Naval Aviation Forces, Foreign Service, Paris, France, and later had duty as Supply Officer in connection with the establishment of seaplane bases in Ireland, at the Naval Base, and at the Naval Aviation Base, Queenstown, Ireland, having duty as Disbursing and Commissary Officer at the latter. When detached in August, 1919, he returned home and was assigned as Supply Officer of the USS SAVANNAH, serving one year in that duty until November, 1920. He was next attached to the Naval Air Station, Naval Operating Base, Hampton Roads, Norfolk, Virginia, with duty as Supply, Disbursing and Commissary Officer for several nearby units. Detached in February, 1924, he then returned to Princeton to complete his studies interrupted by the war, and received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in June, 1924.

From June to November, 1924 he served at the Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and on December 1 he reported to the Naval Station, Tuituila, American Samoa, for duty as Disbursing and Commissary Officer and Cashier of the Island Bank. After his return to the United States in August, 1926, he became Officer in Charge of the Commissary Store, San Diego, California, and served a two year tour, and on August 31, 1928 he joined the USS LANGLEY, flagship of Aircraft Squadrons, Battle Fleet, as Supply Officer, and was closely associated with aviation supply.

From January to August, 1931, at Philadelphia, he was Assistant to the Supply Officer of the Naval Aircraft Factory. Reporting to Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, he had two years postgraduate instruction at the Graduate School of Business Administration, graduated with high distinction, and received the degree of Master of Business Administration in June, 1933. He then reported to the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, Newport News, Virginia, for duty in connection with fitting out the USS RANGER, new aircraft carrier. He served aboard the RANGER for two years from her commissioning, June 4, 1934.

When detached from the RANGER he was ordered to the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts, Navy Department, Washington, D.C., for brief duty, and from August, 1936 until June, 1937 he attended the Army Industrial College, Washington, D.C., and completed the course. He then returned to the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts and served two years as Officer in Charge, War Plans Division.

From June, 1939 to April, 1942 he had staff duty as Supply Officer successively on the staffs of Commander Aircraft, Scouting Force, Commander, Aircraft, Atlantic Squadron, and Commander Aircraft, Patrol

Force, U.S. Fleet. From June to December, 1942 he again served in the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts, and was Officer in Charge of the Aviation Supply Division. On December 9, 1942, he reported to the Naval Aircraft Factory, Philadelphia, as Aviation Supply Officer. Upon establishment of the Naval Aviation Supply Depot at Philadelphia, the following summer, he became Supply Officer in Command there, and continued also his duties at the Aircraft Factory. He had additional duty also as District Supply Officer, Fourth Naval District, Philadelphia, from July, 1946. While so serving he completed a tour of aviation bases in Europe, North Africa, Central and South America, and Panama, as well as on the West Coast of the United States. For this period of service, he was awarded the Legion of Merit, the citation in part stating:

Legion of Merit: "For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services . . . as Supply Officer in Command and Aviation Supply Officer at the Naval Aircraft Factory, Philadelphia Navy Yard, from December 1942, to September 25, 1945. Displaying keen foresight, judgment and professional ability in developing the original concept for the central procurement and distribution agency for naval aviation to meet the needs of our rapidly expanding aircraft program, (he) rendered invaluable service in estimating requirements, procurement, distribution, disposal and the control of inventories in the field . . . and was in large measure responsible for the organization and smooth functioning of this office in supplying materials necessary for the support of naval aviation . . ."

On February 1, 1947 he assumed duty as Deputy Chief and Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts. On February 18, 1948 his appointment as Chief of that bureau was confirmed by the United States Senate, and the following March 1 he assumed the duties of that office with the title Paymaster General of the Navy. In June, 1949 he assumed additional duties as the Navy member on the Munitions Board Petroleum Committee. In October, 1949 he was ordered relieved and to duty as Chief of Naval Material, Office of the Secretary of the Navy, with the accompanying rank of Vice Admiral. He was so serving when relieved of active duty pending his retirement on January 1, 1951.

In addition to the Legion of Merit, Vice Admiral Foster has the Victory Medal, Overseas Clasp; the American Defense Service Medal with Bronze "A" (USS RANGER); the American Campaign Medal; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal; and World War II Victory Medal. He also has the decoration of Honorary Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (Military Division), with Ribbon, awarded by the British Government.

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24 January 1951