

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

ADMIRAL FRANK G. FAHRION
U. S. NAVY, RETIRED

Frank George Fahrion was born in Pickens, West Virginia, on April 17, 1894, son of Lew Fahrion, Jr., and Mrs. Cora Alice (Fornash) Fahrion. He attended West Virginia Wesleyan College at Buckhannon, before his appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, from the Third District of his native state in 1913. Graduated and commissioned Ensign in March 1917, with the class of 1917, he subsequently attained the rank of Vice Admiral to date from December 28, 1951. On May 1, 1956 he was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy, and was advanced to the rank of Admiral on the basis of combat citations.

After graduation from the Naval Academy in 1917, he joined the USS SOUTH DAKOTA, serving in that battleship during the early part of World War I, while she operated on patrol duty with the South Atlantic Squadron. In November 1917 he transferred to the transport MARTHA WASHINGTON in which he made five round trips before he reported in August 1918 to the USS CUSHING, employed on escort duty out of Brest, France. Detached from that destroyer in June 1919, he had consecutive duty until December 1921 in the destroyers LAMBERTON, HOGAN, SINCLAIR, STODDERT, KENNEDY, PAUL HAMILTON and MC CORMICK.

Returning to the United States, he had instruction in ordnance engineering at the Postgraduate School, Annapolis, Maryland, continuing the course at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, at Cambridge, where he received the degree of Master of Science in mechanical engineering in 1924. Completing his instruction, he reported in June of that year as Torpedo Repair Officer in the USS MELVILLE. He remained aboard that vessel until May 1927, and the two succeeding years had duty at the Naval Torpedo Station, Newport, Rhode Island. He joined the USS TEXAS in August 1929, serving in that battleship until June 1932, when he was again assigned to the Naval Torpedo Station, Newport, Rhode Island.

In May 1934 he joined the staff of the Commander in Chief, U. S. Asiatic Fleet, USS AUGUSTA, flagship, and between June 1937 and January 1940 had a third tour of duty at the Naval Torpedo Station, Newport. Following service as Commanding Officer of the USS WARRINGTON, he reported in March 1941 as Commander Destroyer Division THREE. He served in that command until February 1942, when he transferred to the staff of Commander Destroyers, Battle Force, as Chief of Staff and Aide. "For exceptionally meritorious conduct..." in that assignment during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Aleutian Islands Area from May 22 to December 1942, he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of a Second Legion of Merit. The citation continues in part:

"Aiding in the formulation of the initial plans for the employment of this force and the maintenance of close liaison with Army ground and air support, (he) contributed materially to the repelling of the Japanese invasion forces and to the progressive advancement of United States Bases westward from Dutch Harbor until the successful conclusion of the Aleutian campaign..."

Returning to the United States in December 1942, he had temporary duty in the Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., and in February 1943 reported as Inspector of Naval Ordnance in Charge (later changed to Commanding Officer) at the Naval Torpedo Station, Newport, Rhode Island. For services in this assignment he was awarded the Legion of Merit. The citation follows in part:

"...Displaying exceptional judgment, foresight and professional ability during this period of rapid expansion, (he) rendered invaluable service in directing the research, development and manufacturing phases of the torpedo program to meet ever increasing wartime schedules and, despite the difficulties imposed by shortages of material and personnel as well as insufficient operating facilities, was in large measure responsible for the success of this station in maintaining an uninterrupted flow of torpedoes to the Fleet without jeopardizing the quality of workmanship..."

Between August and October 1944 he had temporary duty in the USS NEW JERSEY in the Pacific Area, and on October 6 he assumed command of the USS NORTH CAROLINA. "For meritorious achievement as Commanding Officer of the USS NORTH CAROLINA, during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Western Pacific Area from October 6 1944 to January 28, 1945..." he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, with Combat "V." The citation continues in part: "Participating in numerous Fleet raids against enemy-held positions, (he) skillfully fought his ship to inflict damage upon the enemy and to aid materially in preventing serious damage to our forces..."

On February 3, 1945 he became Commander Cruiser Division FOUR, and for services in that command during the capture of Okinawa was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Second Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V." The citation follows in part: "...Operating in heavily mined and incompletely charted waters, (he) braved continuous air, surface and submarine attacks to direct the ships under his command in carrying out brilliantly executed fire support missions..."

He reported as Commander Joint Task Group 1.2 and Commander Naval Groups, Joint Task Force ONE on January 25, 1946. His title was changed in August 1946 to Commander Naval Task Groups 1.2 and Commander Advance Echelon, Joint Task Force ONE. This force formed by the direction of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and with the approval of the President conducted the atomic bomb tests against naval vessels in order to gain information of value to the national defense. Tests "Able" and "Baker," known as "Operation CROSSROADS," were held on schedule in Bikini Lagoon, Marshall Islands, in July 1946. "For exceptionally meritorious conduct..." during Operation CROSSROADS, he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of a Third Legion of Merit. The citation is quoted in part:

"Rear Admiral Fahrion displayed sound judgment, broad vision and initiative in organizing and directing all operations of the target and salvage units during Operation CROSSROADS and in exercising command over all Joint Task Force ONE activities in the Pacific area prior to the arrival and after the departure of the Task Force Commander. By his understanding of operational and technical problems, he rendered valuable assistance to the Task Force Commander during the planning, preparational and post-operational phases, and contributed to the preservation of many seriously damaged target ships despite the danger from radioactivity and explosion...

In January 1947 he was designated General Inspector Pacific and U. S. Pacific Fleet, and served as such until March of that year, when he reported as Commander Destroyers, Pacific Fleet. He became Superintendent of the Naval Gun Factory, Washington, D. C., on July 21, 1948, and continued duty in that capacity until July 1950, when he assumed command of Destroyer Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet. He was Commander Amphibious Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet, from January 5, 1952, until ordered relieved of all active duty pending his retirement effective May 1, 1956.

In addition to the Legion of Merit with two Gold Stars and the Bronze Star Medal with Gold Star and Combat "V," Admiral Fahrion has the World War I Victory Medal, Destroyer Clasp; the American Defense Service Medal with Bronze "A"; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; American Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia Clasp; the National Defense Service Medal; and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon with one star.