

## NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

### FLEET ADMIRAL WILLIAM FREDERICK HALSEY, JR. UNITED STATES NAVY, DECEASED

William Frederick Halsey was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey, on October 30, 1882, son of the late Captain William F. Halsey, U. S. Navy, and Mrs. (Anne Masters Brewster) Halsey. He attended Kindergarten in Coronado, California, public schools in Vallejo, California, Pingey-Swarthmore Preparatory School, St. John's College, Annapolis, Maryland, the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, and the Naval Academy Preparatory School in Annapolis, Maryland. Appointed to the U. S. Naval Academy by President William McKinley in 1900, he was a member of the "Lucky Bag" staff, won his letter in football, playing fullback on the team, was president of the Athletic Association, and as First Classman had his name engraved on the Thompson Trophy Cup as the Midshipman who had done most during the year for the promotion of athletics.

Graduated in February 1904, he served the two years at sea then required by law before he was commissioned Ensign, February 2, 1906. He was promoted to Lieutenant, both grades, February 2, 1909, to Lieutenant Commander, August 29, 1916, received temporary promotion to Commander during the World War, was commissioned in that rank June 3, 1921, and his subsequent promotions were as follows: Captain, February 10, 1927; Rear Admiral, March 1, 1938; Vice Admiral, June 13, 1940; and Admiral, November 18, 1942. On November 28, 1945, he was nominated to be a Fleet Admiral of the U. S. Navy, his nomination confirmed by the Senate on December 4, 1945, and on December 11, 1945 he took the oath as Fleet Admiral, becoming the fourth officer to hold that rank. He was transferred to the Retired List of the Navy, at his own request, on March 1, 1947.

After graduation in February 1904, he joined the USS MISSOURI, and in December 1905 was transferred to the USS DON JUAN DE AUSTRIA. He served as her watch and division officer until that vessel was placed out of commission in March 1907. He joined the USS KANSAS at her commissioning April 11, 1907, and made the World Cruise of the Fleet in that battleship. In April 1909 he had instruction in torpedoes with the Reserve Torpedo Flotilla, Charleston, South Carolina, and commanded the USS DUPONT from May to November 1909. After assisting in fitting out the USS LAMSON, he served on board from her commissioning, February 10, until April 1910, then was transferred to the USS FRANKLIN, Receiving Ship at Norfolk, Virginia.

In August 1912 he assumed command of the USS FLUSSER, and in February 1913 was assigned additional command of the First Group, Torpedo Flotilla, Atlantic Fleet. In September 1913 he was transferred to command of the USS JARVIS, and in July 1915, returned to the Naval Academy, where he had duty in the Executive Department until December 1917. Ordered to duty with the Destroyer Force based on Queenstown, Ireland, during the first World War, he had temporary duty in the USS DUNCAN before assuming command of the USS BENHAM in February 1918. In May he was transferred to command of the USS SHAW, and for service in command of both destroyers, he was awarded the Navy Cross with the following citation:

Navy Cross: "For distinguished service in the line of his profession as Commanding Officer of the USS BENHAM and the USS SHAW, engaged in the important, exacting, and hazardous duty of patrolling the waters infested with enemy submarines and mines, in escorting and protecting vitally important convoy of troops and supplies through these waters, and in offensive and defensive action, vigorously and unremittingly prosecuted against all forms of enemy naval activity."

Relieved of command of the SHAW in August 1918, he returned to the United States to fit out the USS YARNELL, and commanded her from her commissioning, November 29, 1918, until January 1920. He was then transferred to command of the USS CHAUNCEY, with additional duty as Commander-Destroyer Division THIRTY-TWO. In July 1920 he assumed command of the USS JOHN FRANCIS BURNES, continuing in command of Destroyer Division THIRTY-TWO, and in October of that year assumed command of the USS WICKES, and of Destroyer Division FIFTEEN. Relieved in September 1921, he had duty in the Office of Naval Intelligence, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., the following year. In October 1922, he reported as Naval Attache at the American Embassy, Berlin, Germany, and in June 1923 was assigned additional duty as Naval Attache at the American Embassies in Christiana, Norway; Copenhagen, Denmark; and Stockholm, Sweden.

In July 1924 he assumed command of the USS DALE, operating with the U. S. Naval Forces in European Waters, and in June 1925 was transferred to command of the USS OSBORNE at Gibraltar. After his return to the United States in November 1925, he served as Executive Officer of the battleship WYOMING from January 1926 until January 1927, then assumed command of the USS REINA MERCEDES, Station Ship at the Naval Academy. In June 1930 he was transferred to duty as Commander Destroyer Squadron THREE, Scouting Force, to serve until June 1932. The two succeeding years he was under instruction first at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, later at the Army War College, Washington, D. C. In July 1934 he reported to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, for flight training. He was designated Naval Aviator May 15, 1935, at the age of 52.

He commanded the aircraft carrier SARATOGA from July 1935 until June 1937, and the succeeding year had command of the Naval Air Station, Pensacola. On June 28, 1938, with rank of Rear Admiral, he was assigned duty as Commander, Carrier Division TWO, USS YORKTOWN, flagship, and on May 31, 1939, was transferred to duty as Commander, Carrier Division ONE, Aircraft, Battle Force, USS SARATOGA, flagship. On June 13, 1940, with the rank of Vice Admiral, he was designated Commander, Aircraft, Battle Force, with additional duty as Commander, Carrier Division TWO, his flag again in the YORKTOWN. He was serving in that command, with his flag in the USS ENTERPRISE, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, T. H., December 7, 1941.

The ENTERPRISE was returning to Pearl Harbor from delivering planes at Wake Island when the news of the attack was received and planes were launched in a fruitless search for the fleeing enemy. Early in February 1942, in the first offensive war in the Central Pacific, his force, consisting of the ENTERPRISE, the carrier YORKTOWN, four heavy cruisers, one light cruiser

and ten destroyers, made a foray into the Gilbert and Marshall Islands, bombing and bombarding Wotje, Maleolap, Kwajalein, Roe, Jaluit, Makin, Taroa and Gugewe. Later that month, with the ENTERPRISE, two cruisers and seven destroyers, he shelled and bombed Wake Island, which had been in enemy hands since December 22, 1941, and proceeded on to bomb Marcus Island.

For distinguished service in the Gilbert and Marshall raids, Admiral Halsey was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the citation states: "For distinguished service in a duty of great responsibility as Commander of the Marshall Raiding Force, United States Pacific Fleet, and especially for his brilliant and audacious attack against the Marshall and Gilbert Islands on January 31, 1942. By his great skill and determination, this drive inflicted heavy damage to enemy ships and planes."

He also received the Ribbon for the Presidential Unit Citation awarded the USS ENTERPRISE, the first carrier to be so honored. The citation follows:

Presidential Unit Citation - USS ENTERPRISE: "For consistently outstanding performance and distinguished achievements during repeated action against enemy Japanese forces in the Pacific war area, December 7, 1941, to November 15, 1942. Participating in nearly every major carrier engagement in the first year of the war, the ENTERPRISE and her Air Group, exclusive of her far-flung destruction of hostile shore installations throughout the battle area, did sink or damage, on her own a total of 35 Japanese vessels and shoot down a total of 185 Japanese aircraft. Her aggressive spirit and superb combat efficiency are fitting tribute to the officers and men who so gallantly established her as an ahead bulwark in defense of the American Nation."

On April 10, 1942, Admiral Halsey was designated Commander, Task Force SIXTEEN, and Commander, Carriers, Pacific Fleet, with additional duty as Commander, Carrier Division TWO. On April 18, his Task Force escorted to within 800 miles of Tokyo, the aircraft carrier HORNET which launched the Army planes of Lieutenant General James Doolittle for the initial bombing raid on Tokyo, the ENTERPRISE providing search and fighter planes preceding that surprise bombing. On October 18, 1942, Admiral Halsey was appointed Commander, South Pacific Force and South Pacific Area. Forces under his command defeated the Japanese in the Battle of Santa Cruz, October 26, 1942, and in the following month completely routed them in the Battles at Guadalcanal.

During the next sixteen months, in the rank of Admiral, he was in command of Naval, Marine and Army ground and air forces which repeatedly attacked Japanese navy power, smashed at enemy bases in the Bismarck Archipelago, and successfully invaded the central and northern Solomons. In the early days of the war, during the Solomon Islands Campaign, where Army and Navy became, of necessity, so thoroughly integrated and intermingled that they were, to all practical purposes, a single service, operations were directed by Admiral Halsey in a system of command successful, because, as were others in various theaters, it was devised to meet a specific condition imposed

by the characteristics of a current situation, according to the statement made in the final official report of Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King, USN, then Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Fleet, and Chief of Naval Operations.

For meritorious services during the early period of that command, he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Second Distinguished Service Medal, and after the successful completion of the South Pacific campaign with the occupation of Emirau Island in the spring of 1944, was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal by the War Department. The citations follow:

Gold Star in lieu of a Second Distinguished Service Medal: "For exceptionally meritorious and distinguished service to the Government of the United States in a position of great responsibility as Commander South Pacific Force and South Pacific Area from October 19, 1942, to December 7, 1943. In command of Naval forces and certain Army ground and air forces during this critical period, Admiral Halsey conducted a brilliantly planned and consistently sustained offensive, driving the enemy steadily northward, and occupying strategic positions through the Solomons, thereby securing the South Pacific Area for the United Nations. A forceful and inspiring leader, Admiral Halsey indoctrinated his command with his own fighting spirit and an invincible determination to destroy the enemy. His daring initiative and superb tactical skill have been responsible for the continued success of the South Pacific Campaign and have contributed vitally toward breaking down Japanese resistance."

Army Distinguished Service Medal: "For exceptionally meritorious and distinguished service in a position of great responsibility from December 8, 1943, to May 1, 1944. Having created and integrated, well-knit combat force through his superior leadership, personal guidance and strict adherence to the sound principles of unit of command, Admiral Halsey used this powerful striking force with such vigor and determination as to crush the Japanese garrison on certain South Pacific island groups and isolate enemy forces in others. As a result of Admiral Halsey's conduct of command, the Army forces in the South Pacific Area were splendidly cared for and were able to accomplish the combat and logistic mission assigned in the most effective manner."

On June 16, 1944, he assumed command of the Third Fleet, and was also designated Commander, Western Pacific Task Forces. Beginning in August 1944, his forces left a trail of enemy ruin and destruction in the Palaus, Philippines, Formosa, Okinawa and the South China Sea, inflicting greater loss upon the Japanese Fleet than had ever been suffered by any fleet. On September 13, 1944, he made urgent recommendation for the revision of the campaign plans and for the early landing at Leyte, which resulted as the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt later announced, "in a complete change in the campaign plans for the Philippine invasion." During the period August 24, 1944, to January 26, 1945, when the THIRD Fleet was engaged in supporting the Western Carolines and Philippine Islands operations, 4,370 enemy aircraft were destroyed, 82 enemy combatant ships were sunk, and 372 enemy auxiliaries and miscellaneous shipping were sunk (excluding small craft), against the loss in combat of 449 planes and the light cruiser PRINCETON.

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He was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of a Third Distinguished Service Medal, with citation to follow: "For exceptionally meritorious service to the Government of the United States in a duty of great responsibility as Commander, Third Fleet, operating against enemy Japanese forces from June 15, 1944, to January 25, 1945. Carrying out a sustained and relentless drive against the enemy, Admiral Halsey skillfully directed the operations which resulted in the capture of the Western Carolines and a crushing defeat on the Japanese carrier force in the battle off Cape Engano on October 25, and associated attacks on the Japanese Fleet in waters of the Philippines. Conducting a series of brilliant and boldly executed attacks on hostile air forces, shipping and installations in the Ryukyus, Formosa, the Philippines South China and Indo-China, Admiral Halsey was directly responsible for the great damage inflicted on enemy aerial forces and the destruction of shipping vital to the Japanese in fighting an increasingly defensive war. Under his forceful and inspiring leadership, the recovery of the Philippines was painstakingly prepared for, covered and effectively supported during operations which evidenced his daring tactics and the devotion to duty of his gallant command."

In the final phases of the War in the Pacific, Admiral Halsey's THIRD Fleet participated in the latter stages of the Okinawa campaign. Subsequent to the Okinawa operations, the fast carrier task forces of his Fleet, comprising the greatest mass of seapower ever assembled, proceeded northward toward Japan and in July 1945 struck at Tokyo and then attacked Honshu and Hokkaido. Moving southward, the THIRD Fleet, joined by units of the British Pacific Fleet, with Fleet Admiral Halsey in overall command, on July 17, made the first combined American-British bombardment of the Japanese homeland, and later that month the same force made extended air strikes in the Inland Sea area and on the Japanese naval base at Kure, returning to harass Tokyo for the third time in three weeks.

During the first eight days of August the Fleet rode out a heavy typhoon, then renewed the attacks on the Japanese homeland at Honshu. On August 13, 1945, Fleet Admiral Halsey's final blow against Tokyo was started. On August 15, the cease fire order was received too late to stop the first of the day's air strikes against Tokyo, but the second strike which had been launched was recalled in time. In his final official report on the war, Fleet Admiral King stated: "This impressive record speaks for itself and helps to explain the sudden collapse of Japan's will to resist."

Admiral Halsey was awarded a third Gold Star in lieu of the Fourth Distinguished Service Medal, with the following citation: "For exceptionally meritorious service to the Government of the United States in a duty of great responsibility as Commander THIRD Fleet, operating in waters off the Ryukyus and Japan from May 28 to September 2, 1945. Returning to the helm of the THIRD Fleet to complete the final phase in the ever-tightening blockade of Japan's home islands, Admiral Halsey placed in action the greatest mass of sea power ever assembled and initiated attacks on the enemy's naval and air forces, shipping, shipyards and coastal objectives to support Ryukyus operations and to protect sea and air communications along the Central Pacific Axis. In operations conducted with brilliant military precision and

characteristic aggressiveness, the ships and planes of the powerful THIRD Fleet bombarded Okinawa, Okino Daito and Minami Daito in the Ryukyus; they blasted every industry and resource which enabled Japan to make war; gallantly riding out the perilous typhoon of June 5, they effected repairs and went in to knock out remnants of the once mighty Japanese Fleet hiding in camouflaged nets throughout the length of Honshu Island. When the 'Cease Fire' order was flashed on August 15, the Naval and Air Forces under Admiral Halsey's command had destroyed or damaged nearly 3,000 of the enemy's planes and had sunk or disabled 1,650 of his combatant and merchant vessels from Northern Hokkaido to Tokyo in the crushing blow to Japanese resistance which materially hastened surrender. Completing his long period of distinguished service to the Navy and to his country toward the overthrow of Japanese domination of the Pacific, Admiral Halsey organized and effected the Naval occupation of the Tokyo Plains Area following the formal capitulation of this formidable and fanatic enemy. His professional skill and inspiring devotion to the fulfillment of a mission vital to lasting peace reflect the highest credit upon Admiral Halsey and the United States Naval Service."

When on August 14, 1945, the Japanese declared acceptance of the terms of the Potsdam Proclamation, the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, was designated to receive the surrender of the senior Japanese commanders of all forces. For this purpose, the THIRD and FIFTH Fleets, which previously had been alternative organizational titles for much the same assemblage of ships, were each assigned approximately equal forces and became separate entities. Correlating Fleet assignments with various zones of responsibility assigned the various Army commands, the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, assigned naval responsibility to the THIRD Fleet for the zone of the EIGHTH Army, northward and eastward of a line crossing Honshu west of Yokohama and Tokyo.

On August 29, 1945, when Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN, Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas, arrived from Guam to break out his flag in the USS SOUTH DAKOTA, Fleet Admiral (then Admiral) Halsey, Commander THIRD Fleet, flying his four-star flag in the USS MISSOURI, entered Tokyo Bay and anchored off Yokosuka naval base. The following day General of the Army Douglas MacArthur arrived at Atsuzi Airfield to set up General Headquarters for Yokohama, and on September 1, 1945 (Eastern War Time), aboard the MISSOURI in Tokyo Bay, was signed the formal surrender of the Japanese Imperial Government.

Late in September 1945, fifty-four ships of the THIRD Fleet of which the USS SOUTH DAKOTA had been flagship since September 5, 1945, were ordered to return to the west coast of the United States for participation in the annual Navy Day celebration, October 27. On November 22, 1945, in the harbor at San Pedro, California, Fleet Admiral Halsey hauled down his flag from the SOUTH DAKOTA, relinquishing command of the THIRD Fleet which had exemplified his slogan of "Hit hard, hit fast, hit often." He was then assigned to special duty in the Office of the Secretary of the Navy, Navy Department, Washington, D. C.

During a six weeks' goodwill trip through South America, Fleet Admiral Halsey fulfilled a new role as goodwill ambassador to the countries of Mexico, Cuba, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Panama and Guatemala. Flying his five-star flag in a Navy R5D Skymaster, he covered nearly 28,000 statute miles of Central and South American jungle, mountains and coastline, with a total of 144 hours in the air. Three and four day stops permitted him to receive ovations and make official calls on high-ranking members of governments. He was given numerous honors in the form of parades, reviews, gifts and military decorations. He received awards from eight nations.

Fleet Admiral Halsey was relieved of active duty in December 1946, and upon his own request was transferred to the Retired List of the Navy on March 1, 1947.

After his retirement he joined the boards of two subsidiaries of the International Telephone and Telegraphy Company, resigning both posts in October 1957. He was a staunch campaigner for the preservation of the carrier ENTERPRISE as a national shrine.

Fleet Admiral Halsey died on August 16, 1959, at Fishers Island Country Club (off the Connecticut shore) and was buried with full military honors on August 20, in Arlington National Cemetery, Washington, D. C. He was survived by his wife, the former Frances Cooke Grandy of Norfolk, Vir-

In addition to the Navy Cross, the Distinguished Service Medal with three Gold Stars, the Army Distinguished Service Medal, and the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon, Fleet Admiral Halsey had the Mexican Service Medal; Victory Medal, Destroyer Clasp; American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal, and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon. He also was awarded the Gold Cross of the Chevalier of the Order of the Savior, by the Government of Greece; the Insignia, Al Merito, First Class, and Diploma, by the Government of Chile; and was made an Honorary Knight Commander of the British Empire by the Government of Great Britain. On his goodwill tour to South America in 1946 he was awarded the Order of Naval Merit from Cuba; the Order of the Liberator from Venezuela; the Order of Ayacucho from Peru; and Chile's Grand Cross of the Legion of Merit. Ecuador awarded him her highest medal of Abdon Calderon, Colombia and Panama, the Grand Crosses of Boyaca and Balboa, while Guatemala made him a Supreme Chief in the Order of the Quetzal, and he received the Order of the Southern Cross (Grand Cross) from the Government of Brazil.