

CAPTAIN HARRY J. ALVIS, MEDICAL CORPS, U. S. NAVY

Harry James Alvis was born in East St. Louis, Illinois, on September 15, 1910, son of Harry J. and Louisa A (Perdue) Alvis. He attended the University of Illinois in 1926-1929, and was awarded the degree of Bachelor of Science in Chemistry, then spent a year at the University of Chicago, and in 1930 transferred to the University of Iowa College of Medicine, from which he received the degree of Doctor of Medicine in 1933. He interned at City Hospital #1, St. Louis, Missouri, and entered private practice of medicine at Newberg, Oregon in 1935. A year later he moved to McMinnville, Oregon, where he associated with the McMinnville Clinic, and in 1940 served as a member of the committee on charitable care, State Medical Society of Oregon.

Commissioned Lieutenant (junior grade) in the U. S. Naval Reserve Medical Corps in June 1940, he began active service in January 1941, eleven months prior to the outbreak of World War II. He transferred to the Medical Corps of the U. S. Navy in 1942, and subsequently advanced to the rank of Captain, MC, USN, to date from July 1, 1955.

From January to May 1941 he was assigned to the Second Marine Division as Company Medical Officer for Company H. In July 1941 he joined the USS NEW MEXICO, and served as Junior Medical Officer in that battleship, operating in Iceland in August and September 1941, and after war began, in the Pacific. Detached in April 1943, he returned to the United States for duty as Sick Officer Quarters Medical Officer at the Naval Hospital, Oakland, California. A year later he was ordered to the Pre-Commissioning Training Center, Treasure Island, where he served from June 1944 throughout the remaining war period as Medical Department Training Officer.

In September 1945 he joined the Staff of Commander Naval Forces, Germany, where he served as Force Medical Officer until July 1948. While there he was Head of the Medical Section, Naval Technical Unit, Europe; assembled reports of German war-time medical research, and was concerned with selection of German scientists brought to the United States by the U. S. Navy under "Operation Paperclip." After his return to this country, he was a student for a year at the Harvard School of Public Health, majoring in Industrial Medicine. A Master of Public Health degree was awarded him in July 1949.

During the period July 1949 until December 1950 he established and served as Head of the Physiology Department at the Medical Research Laboratory, U. S. Submarine Base, New London, Connecticut. For six months thereafter he was a student at the Submarine School and Deep Sea Diving School, and in June 1951 was designated Submarine Medical Officer. From July 1951 until September 1953 he was at sea as Squadron Medical Officer for Submarine Squadron TEN, with additional duty from the Fall of 1952 until September 1953 as Medical Officer of Submarine Development Group TWO, and from March to September 1953 as Force Medical Officer. In those assignments he also participated in Submarine Exercises on board the submarines CROAKER, TUSK, TRIGGER, K-1, REDEFIN and TRANG.

In October 1953 he reported for duty as Force Medical Officer on the Staff of Commander Submarines, Atlantic, and in June 1954 assumed the duties of Squadron Medical Officer on the Staff of Commander Submarine Squadron 8, in addition to the duties of Force Medical Officer. Detached in April 1956, he reported in May to the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. to serve as Director of the Submarine Medicine Division.

Captain Alvis has the American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Europe Clasp; and the National Defense Service Medal.

Dr. Alvis has been a member of the Masons, Elks, Rotary, and various Medical Societies, and is a Certified Specialist in Occupational Medicine. He is the author of numerous articles and a book on Organization and Administration of Shipboard Medical Department, widely used in the Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet, during World War II.

Navy Office of Information
Biographies Branch
22 April 1958