

ADMIRAL ARLEIGH A. BURKE, UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED

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Arleigh A. Burke was born far from the sea in Boulder, Colorado on October 19, 1901. On June 8, 1923, he was graduated from the U. S. Naval Academy, commissioned Ensign in the United States Navy, and married to Miss Roberta Gorsuch of Washington, D. C.

Throughout his professional career, Arleigh Burke had prepared himself for combat with the enemy having served in battleships, destroyers, and having received the degree of Master of Science in Engineering at the University of Michigan. Then, when World War II came, he found himself, to his great disappointment, in a shore billet at the Naval Gun Factory in Washington, D. C. After persistent effort on his part, he received orders to the South Pacific where, under Admiral Halsey, he successively commanded Destroyer Division 43, Destroyer Division 44, Destroyer Squadron 12, and Destroyer Squadron 23. This latter squadron, known as the "Little Beavers," covered the initial landings in Bougainville in November 1943, and fought in 22 separate engagements during the next four months. During this time, the "Little Beavers," were credited with destroying one Japanese cruiser, nine destroyers, one submarine, several smaller ships, and approximately 30 aircraft. Because he pushed his destroyers just under boiler-bursting speed, he became known as "31-Knot Burke."

From Destroyer Command in the South Pacific, he reported in March of 1944 as Chief of Staff to Commander, Fast Carrier Task Force 58, Admiral Marc Mitscher. While serving with this famed carrier force, Arleigh Burke was promoted to Commodore, and participated in all its naval engagements until June 1945 shortly before the surrender of Japan. He flew many combat missions. He was aboard both BUNKER HILL and ENTERPRISE when they were hit by Japanese suicide planes during the Okinawa campaign.

At the outbreak of the Korean war, Admiral Forrest Sherman, then CNO, ordered Admiral Burke to duty as Deputy Chief of Staff to Commander Naval Forces, Far East. From there, he assumed command of Cruiser Division Five, and in July 1951 he was made a member of United Nations Truce Delegation to negotiate with the Communists for a military armistice in Korea. After six months in the truce tents, he returned to the Office of Chief of Naval Operations where he served as Director of Strategic Plans Division until 1954.

In April 1954, he took command of Cruiser Division Six, and in January 1955 assumed command of Destroyer Force Atlantic Fleet in which capacity he served until he succeeded Admiral Robert B. Carney as Chief of Naval Operations in August 1955. He served an unprecedented three terms in that duty before being transferred to the Retired List on August 1, 1961.

Adm. A.A. Burke, USN, Ret.

Admiral Burke has received numerous combat awards during his forty-two years in the Navy including the Distinguished Service Medal, the Navy Cross, the Legion of Merit and the Purple Heart. But none are more cherished than two awards which came early in his career. In 1928 while serving aboard the USS PROCYON, he was commended for the "rescue of shipwrecked and seafaring men," and in 1939 while serving in his first command, USS MUGFORD, he was commended when his destroyer won the fleet gunnery trophy with the highest score that had been achieved in many years. His ship also stood third in engineering competition and high in communication competition.

Admiral Burke's current residence is 8624 Fenway Drive, Bethesda, Maryland.

29 January 1962