

# NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

## CAPTAIN ARNOLD R. CHRISTIANSEN, UNITED STATES NAVY

Arnold Robert Christiansen was born in Oslo, Norway, on June 30, 1920, son of Amund and Hildur L. (Stolpestad) Christiansen. He attended Arlington (Massachusetts) High School and on May 11, 1939 was appointed Cadet Engineer Officer by the U. S. Maritime Commission. He was graduated (first in his class) from the Massachusetts Nautical School on April 2, 1940, and from that time until April 1941 was employed as an Engineer on tankers operated by the Sun Oil Company of Pennsylvania. Commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Naval Reserve on December 9, 1940, he subsequently advanced in rank to that of Captain, to date from July 1, 1960, having transferred from the Naval Reserve to the Regular Navy on November 29, 1946.

Reporting for active duty in April 1941, he assisted in fitting out the USS CANARY in the First Naval District, and in June 1941 transferred to the W. A. Robinson Company, Ipswich, Connecticut for duty in connection with the conversion of the USS ALCHIBA. He had engineering duties on board that vessel from her commissioning, June 15, 1941 until July 1943. While attached to that attack cargo ship, he participated in the initial invasion and supply of Guadalcanal. During that campaign the ALCHIBA was sunk by torpedoes. She was later salvaged, repaired and returned to service. He received the Navy Commendation Medal. The citation follows in part: "For meritorious devotion to duty under adverse conditions as Assistant Engineering Officer of a cargo ship which was badly damaged by two enemy attacks near Guadalcanal Island, on November 28 and December 7, 1942..." He is also entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Presidential Unit Citation awarded the USS ALCHIBA.

After instruction in submarines at the Submarine School, New London, Connecticut, he had duty from January to September 1944 as Executive Officer and Navigator of the USS R-9. Continuing service afloat, he joined the USS R-18 as Executive Officer and Navigator and in December 1944 transferred, in a similar capacity, to the USS R-7. During the period April to June 1945 he had duty in connection with relief crews, while attached to Submarine Division THREE HUNDRED TWENTY-TWO, after which he served as Engineering Officer on board the USS PIPER (SS-409). That submarine participated in operations with the THIRD Fleet against the Japanese homeland and in submarine war patrols in the Pacific.

Detached from the PIPER in December 1945, after occupation duty, he joined the USS HERALD OF THE MORNING as Executive Officer. Detached from that transport in April 1946, he then became Civil Readjustment Officer in the First Naval District, with headquarters in Boston, Massachusetts. In December 1946 he again reported on board the USS PIPER and was Executive Officer and Navigator of that submarine until April 1948, when he was assigned as Assistant Reserve Coordinator and Assistant Operations Officer on the Staff of Commander Submarine Force, Atlantic Fleet.

From January 1950 to June 1951 he was a student at Cornell University, Ithica, New York, after which he commanded the USS SPIKEFISH. In October 1952, he assumed command of the USS TIRANTE and in December 1953 was detached for duty as the Bureau of Ships Project Officer in the Office of Naval Research Branch Office, New York, New York. He remained there until May 1956, when he joined the Staff of Commander Submarine Squadron TEN as Operations and Gunnery Officer. In July 1957 he became Commander Submarine Division EIGHTY-TWO.

He attended the Naval Warfare course at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, from August 1958 to June 1959, then had duty as Anti-Submarine Warfare Planning Officer in the Office of the Anti-Submarine Warfare Readiness Executive, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. In September 1960 he reported as Assistant Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations to the Commander Submarine Force, Atlantic Fleet and in September 1962 assumed command of the USS HOWARD W. GILMORE. Detached from that submarine tender in August 1963, he next had instruction at the National War College, Washington, D. C., and in June 1964 assumed command of Submarine Squadron EIGHT. In August 1965 he became Chief of Staff and Aide to Deputy Commander, Submarine Force, Atlantic, and in June 1966 transferred in a similar capacity to Submarine Flotilla TWO. "For meritorious service from August 2, 1965 to July 10, 1967 as Chief of Staff to the Deputy Commander Submarine Force, United States Atlantic Fleet and Commander Submarine Flotilla TWO..." he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Second Navy Commendation Medal. The citation further states in part:

"During this period, with the Submarine Force faced with unprecedented combinations of logistic challenges, technical demands, tremendous growth and a rapidly growing tempo of force operations, Captain Christiansen demonstrated dynamic leadership and outstanding professional competence in guiding the progress of this increasingly complex and technically diverse force to an enviable level of excellence. He supervised the great volume of details involved with the merging of Deputy Commander Submarine Force, United States Atlantic Fleet and Commander Submarine Flotilla TWO staffs, and later supervised the disestablishment of Deputy Commander Submarine Force, United States Atlantic Fleet. As Chief of Staff to the senior officer in the New London complex, Captain Christiansen exercised outstanding tact and diplomacy in escorting and co-hosting many foreign dignitaries, government officials, and high-ranking military officers during visits to the area..."

In addition to the Navy Commendation Medal with Gold Star and the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon, Captain Christiansen has the American Defense Service Medal with Bronze "A"; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three operation stars; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia Clasp; and the National Defense Service Medal with bronze star. He also has the Submarine Combat Insignia.

Prior to entering active naval service, Captain Christiansen held licenses issued by the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation as Third Assistant Engineer (Steam), Unlimited and Third Assistant Engineer (Diesel), Unlimited.

Navy Office of Information  
Internal Relations Division (OI-430)  
12 April 1968