

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

REAR ADMIRAL JOHN E. CLARK, UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED

John Edward Clark was born near Atcheson, Kansas, on August 13, 1905, son of Lon C. and Agnes (Benner) Clark. He attended Leavenworth (Kansas) grade and high schools, prior to his appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, from his native state in 1923. Graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 2, 1927, he subsequently progressed in rank, attaining that of Rear Admiral to date from August 1, 1955.

Following graduation in 1927, he remained at the Naval Academy for the summer course in aviation. In August he reported on board the USS MILWAUKEE, and in August 1928 transferred to the USS PITTSBURGH, both operating on Asiatic Station. Detached from the latter in July 1931, he was ordered to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, for flight training. Designated Naval Aviator on September 28, 1932, the next month he joined Fighting Squadron THREE D, attached to the USS LANGLEY.

Between June 1935 and July 1937 he was assigned to the Naval Air Station, Naval Operating Base, Norfolk, Virginia, after which he had duty at the Naval Aircraft Factory, Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In June 1938 he joined Torpedo Squadron THREE, based on the USS SARATOGA and on June 10, 1941 he assumed command of that squadron, continuing to command it, following the United States' entry into World War II, December 8, 1941, until April 1942.

He next served as Gunnery Officer on the Staff of Commander Carrier Division ONE, USS LEXINGTON, flagship. "For outstanding performance of duty...as Aircraft Gunnery Officer on the Staff of the Air Task Group Commander in preparation for, during and after the successful engagements with the enemy in the Coral Sea, on May 7-8, 1942..." he received a Letter of Commendation, with authorization to wear the Commendation Ribbon, from the Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet. The citation further states: "With his very extensive experience in aircraft gunnery and particularly his thorough knowledge of aircraft torpedo tactics, he was of great assistance to the Task Group Commander...and contributed materially to the success of our forces in the battle."

In August 1942 he reported as Gunnery Officer on the Staff of Commander Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet. He was awarded the Legion of Merit for "exceptionally meritorious conduct...as Force Gunnery and Training Officer on the Staff of Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet, from August 1942 to June 1943..." The citation continues: "Serving with distinction during this period, (he) directed the establishment of a multitude of activities and facilities for training the flying and non-flying personnel of all air, surface and ground units assigned to the aeronautical organization within the Pacific Fleet, thereby contributing materially to the success of these forces in maintaining superiority over the enemy. In addition, he planned and directed the allocation of all aviation munitions and rendered invaluable service in matters pertaining to aviation ordnance and ship antiaircraft gunnery..."

From July 1943 until January 1945 he was assigned to the Aircraft Armament Unit at the Naval Air Station, Patuxent River, Maryland, after which he had successive instruction at the Army Air Force School of Applied Tactics, Orlando, Florida; Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island; and the Army-Navy Staff College, Washington, D. C. In July 1945 he reported as Aviation Officer on the Staff of the Commander Philippine Sea Frontier, and four months later became Commanding Officer of the USS CURRITUCK (AV-7).

In July 1947 he reported as Chief of the Air Objectives Section, Office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air), Navy Department, Washington, D. C. He remained there until August 1949 and following instruction, which lasted until June 1950, at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Washington, D. C., joined the Staff of the Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet. He had duty in connection with guided missiles in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Washington, D. C., from April 1952 until July 1953 when he assumed command of the USS WRIGHT. Detached from command of that aircraft carrier in September 1954 he returned to the United States, and in October became Commander, Navy Guided Missile Test Center, Point Mugu, California.

On November 18, 1955 he was assigned duty as Director of the Guided Missiles Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department. "For meritorious service...(in that capacity) and as Executive Member of the Navy Ballistic Missile Committee..." he was commended by the Secretary of the Navy. In March 1958 he became Deputy Director of the Advanced Research Projects Agency, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Washington, D. C. "For meritorious service...(in that assignment)..." he received a Letter of Commendation, with authorization to wear the Bronze Star in lieu of a Second Commendation Ribbon, from the Secretary of Navy. The citation further states:

"Called upon to provide military leadership and direction of the important components and projects of this Agency during a period of unequalled peacetime pressure of rapid technological achievement outside the Free World, Rear Admiral Clark has exercised unusual professional ability, sound judgment, and foresight in discharging his many responsibilities. A key figure in crystallizing the Agency's method of operation and in insuring the cooperation of the entire Department of Defense, he succeeded in gaining early acceptance for many new ideas and concepts through his persistence and adherence to sound management principles, thereby providing a major contribution to the progress of defense-oriented advanced research. Maintaining extensive contacts with various private industrial concerns, and accepting speaking engagements before the major professional and technical groups of the United States, he won the respect and admiration of important officials everywhere..."

On December 11, 1959 he assumed command of Carrier Division SIXTEEN, and in August 1961 reported as Commander Pacific Missile Range, Point Mugu, California. He was detached in September 1965 for duty as Commandant of

the Twelfth Naval District, headquartered in San Francisco, California, with additional duty as Commander, Naval Base, San Francisco. He remained there until relieved of all active duty pending his retirement, effective September 1, 1967. He was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Second Legion of Merit and cited as follows:

"For exceptionally meritorious service from September 1965 to August 1967...As the direct representative of the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations in this important position, Rear Admiral Clark successfully coordinated the efforts of the large, diversified complex of naval activities that comprise his command, all of which are dedicated to the mission of providing support to the Fleet. His demonstration of interest and active participation in official Naval Reserve functions has brought new life to the Twelfth District Naval Reserve Program. The results of his personal efforts and leadership in this program are reflected in the award to the district of the Vice Admiral Felix Johnson Trophy for 1966, awarded annually to the district making the most improvement in its administration of the Naval Reserve Program. Through his active and direct participation in community affairs, Rear Admiral Clark has established outstanding relationships with civilian community officials and leaders, and with the many foreign consuls general in the San Francisco area..."

In addition to the Legion of Merit with Gold Star and Commendation Ribbon with Bronze Star, Rear Admiral Clark has the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; American Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia Clasp; National Defense Service Medal with bronze star; Antarctic Service Medal; and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon. He has also been awarded the Order of the British Empire (Honorary Officer), from the Government of Great Britain.