

COMMANDER MAURICE FERRARA
UNITED STATES NAVY

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

Maurice Ferrara was born in New York, New York, on June 15, 1914, son of Joseph and Rose (Castilla) Ferrara. He was graduated from Wingate Junior High School and Stuyvesant High School in New York City, and attended Long Island University briefly before entering the U.S. Naval Academy from his native state in June 1933. As a Midshipman he participated in athletics, winning his letters in football, wrestling, boxing, and track; was a member for three years of the Executive Council, Naval Academy Christian Association; received the Naval Interpreters Certificate for Spanish; and belonged to the Musical Club and N-Club. Graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 3, 1937, he advanced progressively to the rank of Commander to date from July 31, 1949.

After graduation from the Naval Academy in June 1937, he served for two years in the USS NEVADA, operating with Battleship Division ONE, Battle Force. In July 1939 he transferred to the USS BALCH, flagship of Destroyer Squadron 6, Battle Force, and from July to September 1940 served in the USS CHICAGO, flagship of Cruisers, Scouting Force, and Cruiser Division 5. Ordered to the Submarine Base, New London, Connecticut, he had instruction at the Submarine School there, until December 1940, qualifying for submarine duty.

From February 1941 until June 1942 he served in the USS S-41, submarine of the Asiatic Fleet, having consecutive duty aboard as Gunnery and Torpedo Officer and Executive Officer. For a year thereafter, he was Executive Officer of the USS PIKE, and in July 1943 reported to the Electric Boat Company, Groton, Connecticut, to assist in fitting out the USS GABILAN. He served as Executive Officer of that submarine from her commissioning, December 28, 1943, until June 1944, when he reported to Submarine Division 202 for assignment.

In July 1944 he assumed command of the USS GAR (SS 206), and remained in that command until December 1944. For heroism during the fourteenth and fifteenth War Patrols of the GAR, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," and the Legion of Merit with Combat "V," respectively. The citations follow in part:

Bronze Star Medal: "For heroic service.....from November 3 to 30, 1944. A skilled and inspiring leader, (he) completed two extremely hazardous special missions during which time his vessel was engaged in delivering supplies to guerilla forces in the Philippine Islands. On one occasion, he contacted an enemy vessel of 1,000 tons andsucceeded in sinking this ammunition-laden craft....."

Legion of Merit: ".....During the Fifteenth War Patrol of the USS GAR in the Philippine Islands Area from December 4 to 18, 1944.... (he) daringly maneuvered his submarine close into enemy-held positions to complete an important and special mission and, evading hostile countermeasures, brought his ship and crew to port....."

Detached from the GAR in December 1944, he commanded the USS TAMBOR (SS 198), throughout the remaining months of the war and until January 1946 when he was transferred to command of the USS FINBACK (SS 230). He continued in that command until June 1948 and in July reported as an instructor in the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit of the College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Massachusetts, to serve for three years.

On June 25, 1951 he reported to the Fleet Sonar School, Key West, Florida, for instruction preparatory to commanding the USS GEARING (DD 710).

In addition to the Legion of Merit with Combat "V," and the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," Commander Ferrara has the American Defense Service Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; American Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon.

He is a member of the Knights of Columbus.