



**George L. Compo, Rear Admiral, USN**  
(Naval Aviator Number 201)

George Leo Compo was born in Potsdam, New York on November 10, 1892. He attended Potsdam Normal School before his enlistment as a Quartermaster first class, U.S. Naval Reserve Force, on May 3, 1917. He attended Aviation Ground School at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and was appointed Ensign in the Naval Reserve Flying Corps and designated Naval Aviator on December 21, 1917. Transferred to the Regular Navy in the rank of Lieutenant on November 14, 1921, retroactive to August 3, 1920, he advanced through the various grades to the rank of Captain to date from June 17, 1942. He transferred to the Retired List of the Navy in the rank of Rear Admiral, effective July 1, 1949, advanced on the basis of combat awards.

After a brief period of training at Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, he was assigned duty on the staff of Commander, Naval Forces in France, reporting on January 23, 1918. He was further ordered to London to report to the Commander, Naval Forces operating in European waters on February 2nd, for duty with the Commanding Officer, Royal Naval Air Station, Cattewater, England, in connection with patrol flights from that station. In June, 1918 he was transferred to the Royal Air Force Station, Killingholme, England, having duty there until detached in October, 1918. He was then assigned duty as Squadron Commander at the Naval air Station, Queenstown, Ireland. For services during this period he was awarded the Navy Cross and cited "For distinguished and heroic service as an aviator....cooperating with the Allied Armies on the Belgian Front during September, October, and November, 1918, bombing enemy bases, aerodromes, submarine bases, ammunition dumps, railroad junctions, etc., attached to Northern, Bombing Group.

In February, 1919, he was detached from the Naval Aviation Base, Queenstown, and returned to the United States on board the *Aquitania*, reporting to the Naval Air Station, Bay Shore, Long Island New York, for duty. From March

9, until May 10, 1919, he had duty at Sperry Gyroscope Company, Brooklyn, New York, in connection with experimental work with the flying bomb under the Naval Inspector of Ordnance. He was then transferred to duty under the Naval Inspector of Ordnance at the Naval Proving Ground, Dahlgren, Virginia. From October, 1919 he served in the USS *Aroostook*, temporary flagship of the Air Detachment, Pacific Fleet.

In November, 1920, after one month at the Naval Air Station, San Diego, California, he was transferred to the staff of Commander, Air Force, Pacific Fleet, and was again attached to the USS *Aroostook* flagship and tender. In 1921, he took part in a flight of twelve F5Ls from San Diego to Panama and back, a distance of over seven thousand miles. Detached from the Air Squadrons, Pacific Fleet in the spring of 1922, he had duty at the Naval Aircraft Factory, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for a brief period, and in connection with fitting out a seaplane at Naval Air Station, Hampton Roads, Virginia, for transfer to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. On March 28, 1922 he reported there as Engineer Officer, and therefore had additional duty (temporary) as Commanding Officer and first pilot of a flight of the F5L seaplane to Hannibal, Missouri, via New Orleans and return.

He was detached from Pensacola Naval Air Station in May, 1925, and was ordered as Instructor at the U. S. Naval Academy. The following September he joined the USS *Langley*, flagship of Commander Aircraft Squadrons, Battle Fleet. In May, 1927, when detached from the *Langley*, he reported for duty in connection with fitting out the aircraft carrier *Lexington*, building at the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation plant, Quincy, Massachusetts, and from her commissioning, December 14, 1927 until November, 1928 he served aboard that carrier. He again had duty at the Pensacola Air Station as Commander of the Primary Seaplane Squadron until July, 1931.

Assuming command of Patrol Squadron 8, attached to the USS *Wright*, flagship of Commander Aircraft, Scouting Force, he served in that command from July to December, 1931, and thereafter until June, 1933, he was attached to the USS *Wright* for staff duty. For two years June, 1933-1935, he commanded Patrol Squadron 3, Aircraft Squadron based on Coco Solo, Canal Zone. Assuming command of Observation Squadron 2 aviation unit of Battleship Division 2, Aircraft, Battle Force, he served until January, 1937, when he transferred to duty as Aviation Officer on the staff of the Commander, Battle Force, in the USS *California*, flagship.

He was Inspector of Naval Aircraft, Buffalo, New York, and Inspector of Naval Aircraft, Brewster Aeronautical Corporation, Long Island, New York, consecutively from June, 1937 until July, 1940. The two years following, he had duty at the Naval Air Stations, Pensacola, Florida, at Corpus Christi, Texas (Executive Officer)° and at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (Commanding Officer), successively. In June, 1942

he assumed command of Patrol Wing 3, based at Coco Solo, Canal Zone. For services in that command he was awarded the Legion of Merit by the War Department, and cited for exceptionally meritorious conduct ". As Commander of Fleet Air Wing 3 from 21 June 1942 to . . . operating under army command in conjunction with Army Air Force units, he was engaged continuously in anti-submarine operations in the Atlantic Sector and offshore patrol operations in the Pacific Sector of the Panama Coastal Frontier with operating units widely dispersed in advance bases all of which presented complicated administrative, operational, supply and morale problems. By effective use of military aircraft for observation purposes, thorough planning, and tenacity, he organized and directed numerous searches for persons missing as a result of catastrophes at sea and merited the highest praise for himself and members of the rescue parties..."

In July, 1944 he was ordered to duty as Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Station, Hampton Roads, Virginia, serving there until August, 1947. He then had orders to duty as Commander, Naval Operating Base, Saipan, in which assignment he was serving when transferred to the Retired List of the Navy on July 1, 1949.

In addition to the Navy Cross and the Army Legion of Merit, Rear Admiral Compo has the Victory Medal, Aviation Clasp; the American Defense Service Medal, Base Clasp; the American Campaign Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal. He also received from the government of Colombia the decoration Order of Boyaca (Rank of Commendador); and from the Government of Peru, the Diploma of the Order of Ayacucho (Commendador), and the Flying Cross, First Class, for his services during his administration of the U.S. Air Forces in the Peruvian Area.

He was married to the former Miss Jean Coltart Bergner of Philadelphia.