



**Edward W. Hessel, Captain, USN**

Edward William Hessel was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on August 19, 1913, a son of John Michael and Anna Elizabeth Hessel. He graduated from Withrow High School in Cincinnati in 1931, and attended the University of Cincinnati for three semesters, while endeavoring to secure an appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy. In March 1932 he enlisted in the Naval Reserve (51<sup>st</sup>. Division, Ninth Naval District Reserve) in the hope that he might be permitted to take the competitive entrance examination, but soon thereafter he received an appointment from Senator (then congressman) Stephen M. Young, and entered the Naval Academy as a Midshipman from Ohio on June 16, 1933. He was graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Science and commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Navy on June 3, 1937 and by subsequent advancement attained the rank of Captain, to date from August 1, 1955.

His service as an officer in the U. S. Navy began in the USS *West Virginia* (BB-48), in which he had duty from June 1937 to June 1939 as Air Defense Division Officer, with additional duties in communications and engineering. The next year he had flight training as a student Naval Aviator at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, where he was designated Naval Aviator on July 5, 1940. He returned to the Naval Academy in August to serve for three months with Training Plane Squadron 8D5 and as Assistant Plebe Football Coach.

In December 1940 he joined Fighting Squadron 72, and during the early period of World War II, until March 1943, served as a pilot with additional duties in communications, personnel, administration and engineering, while his squadron was based variously on the USS *Ranger* and USS *Wasp* in the Atlantic and the USS *Saratoga*, USS *Hornet*, USS

*Enterprise* and USS *Nassau* in the Pacific. For "meritorious achievement in aerial flight as Pilot of a Fighter Plane in Fighting Squadron SEVENTY-TWO, of the USS *Hornet* Air Group during action against enemy Japanese forces in the Solomon Islands Area, on October 26, 1942, and near Santa Cruz Islands on October 26, 1942..." he was awarded the Air Medal.

He won Gold Stars in lieu of three additional Air Medals, the first for action "during the Battle of Santa Cruz and in the vicinity of Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, from October 6 to 26, 1942..." during which period he completed his fifth flight; the next "as a member of a Marine Aircraft Group...in the Solomon Islands from February 4 to 15, 1943..."; and the third "as Pilot of a Fighter Plane in Fighting Squadron SEVENTY-TWO...from February 6 to 20, 1943..." to complete his tenth flight and contribute "materially to the success of his squadron."

Returning to the West Coast in March 1943, he was ordered to the Naval Air Intermediate Training Center, Corpus Christi, Texas, where he served for eleven months as Commanding Officer of Training Squadron 14D8A. From April 1944 to June 1945 he commanded Fighting Squadron 82, based on the USS *Bennington* (CV-20) for the first carrier strikes against Tokyo. During that period he was shot down by anti-aircraft fire at Minami Daito in April 1945 and was rescued by OS2U aircraft. For outstanding service in that command, he was awarded the Navy Cross, Silver Star Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross (twice) and Gold Stars in lieu of eight additional Air Medals. The Air Medals were awarded for five strike missions each, and citations to the other medals follow in order of dates of action for which awarded

Silver Star Medal: "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity as Squadron Leader in Torpedo Squadron EIGHTY-TWO, attached to the USS *Bennington*, during action against enemy Japanese forces in the Tokyo Area, on February 16 and 17, 1945. Fearlessly defying intense antiaircraft fire and strong aerial opposition, Commander (then Lieutenant Commander) Hessel led his squadron in a daring strike against enemy aircraft and airfield installations to destroy six of the hostile planes in the air and damage or destroy eight on the ground. On the following day, he again led his squadron against another heavily defended airfield in an attack which resulted in the destruction of four airborne planes and in the probable destruction of another..."

Distinguished Flying Cross: "For heroism and extraordinary achievement in aerial flight as Commanding Officer of Fighting Squadron EIGHTY TWO, attached to the USS *Bennington*, during action against enemy Japanese forces at Okinawa from February 16 to April 6, 1945. Conducting twenty flights over strongly defended hostile territory, Lieutenant Commander Hessel pressed home determined attacks on enemy airfields, artillery positions and military establishments, thereby rendering invaluable assistance in support of our advancing ground forces..."

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Navy Cross: "For extraordinary heroism as Commanding Officer of Fighting Squadron EIGHTY TWO, attached to the USS *Bennington*, in action against major units of the enemy Japanese Fleet in the East China Sea, April 7, 1945. While escorting bomber and torpedo aircraft in a coordinated attack against a hostile Task Force which included a battleship, cruisers and destroyers, Lieutenant Commander Hessel dived through an intense barrage of antiaircraft fire to press home a determined attack on two enemy destroyers of the screen and, silencing their guns by strafing and bombing, contributed materially to the sinking of the destroyers and to the effectiveness of the attack on the heavier ships by accompanying bombers..."

Gold Star in lieu of Second DFC: "For heroism and extraordinary achievement in aerial flight as a Pilot and Commanding Officer of Fighting Squadron EIGHTY TWO, attached to the USS *Bennington*, in action against enemy Japanese forces in the East China Sea Area on May 22, 1945. Leading his division in the face of accurate antiaircraft fire, Commander (then Lieutenant Commander) Hessel pressed home his attack through a low cloud ceiling to score a direct hit on an enemy transport and...made repeated strafing attacks on two escorting patrol craft..."

From July 1945 until June 1946 he assisted in fitting out the USS *Saipan* (CVL-48) at the New York Shipbuilding Corporation, Camden, New Jersey, as Prospective Air Officer, but before her commissioning in July 1946 was detached for duty until November 1948 as an Instructor in Seamanship at the Naval Academy, with additional duty in the Department of Physical Training, and was Junior Varsity Football Coach in 1946 and 1947. He next commanded Carrier Air Group SEVEN, based on the USS *Philippine Sea*, later on the USS *Leyte*, and from April 1950 to June 1951 was Executive Officer of the Fleet All-Weather Training Unit, Key West, Florida.

A student at the Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Virginia, for six months, he next served for two years in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air), Navy Department, Washington, D. C., as Head of the Aircraft Section of the Military Requirements and New Development Division. From March 1954 until April 1945 he was Executive Officer of the USS *Lake Champlain*, then had command of Composite Squadron FOUR until March 1956. He returned a month later to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, for a second tour of duty.

From August 1958 to June 1959 he was a student at the National War College, Washington, D. C., and upon graduation was ordered to duty in command of the USS *Navasota* (AO-106), Detached in May 1960, he served for a year thereafter as Commanding Officer of the USS *Franklin D. Roosevelt* (CVA-42). He then returned to the Naval War Colleges Newport, for two years' duty on the Staff, after which in June 1963 he reported as Chief of Staff and Aide to Commander Carrier Division TWO. In July 1964 he was ordered detached for similar duty to Commander Naval Aviation Safety Center, Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia,

In addition to the Navy Cross, Silver Star Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross with Gold Star, and the Air Medal with ten Gold Stars, Captain Hessel has the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon with Star (USS *Enterprise*, and 1st. Marine Division, Reinforced); the American Defense Service Medal; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with one operation star; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with one silver star and one bronze star (six operations); American Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Europe Clasp; and National Defense Service Medal.

Captain Hessel was married on December 12, 1941, to the former Annabel Farinholt Lumkin of Chesterfield, Virginia.

A member of Delta Tau Delta Fraternity (University of Cincinnati) and Vice President of his USNA Class in 1934-35, Captain Hessel also has an outstanding athletic record: Captain, Withrow High School Football Teams 1930; played tackle and was lettered at the University of Cincinnati, 1932; and at the Naval Academy was Captain, Plebe Teams and played tackle and was lettered in 1935 and 1936.

### Duty Assignment Chronology

6/37-6/39	USS West Virginia. (Air Defense Div. Officer)
7/39-7/40	NAS Pensacola, FL. (Student Naval Aviator).
8/40-11/40	U. S. Naval Academy (Training Plane Squadron 8D5 and Assistant Plebe Football Coach).
11/40-3/43	VF-72 in <i>Wasp, Ranger, Saratoga, Hornet, Enterprise</i> and <i>Nassau</i> (Naval Aviator).
4/43-3/44	NAS Kingsville, TX. (CO, VN 14D8A).
4/44--6/45	CO, VF-82, USS <i>Bennington</i> .
7/45-6/46	USS <i>Saipan</i> (Prospective Air Officer).
7/46-11/48	U. S. Naval Academy. (Seamanship Instructor, JV Football Coach '46 and '47).
12/48-3/50	Commander CVG-7 in USS <i>Philippine Sea</i> and USS <i>Leyte</i> .
4/50-6/51	XO, FALLWEATRALANT, Key West, FL.
7/51-1/52	Armed Forces Staff College (DUINS).
2/52-2/54	OPNAV (OP-551C - Head, Aircraft Section of Military Requirements and New Development Division).
3/54-4/55	XO, USS <i>Lake Champlain</i> .
4/55-3/56	CO, VC-4/CFAD, Atlantic City, NJ.
4/56-7/58	OPNAV (OP-561 - Head, Aircraft Training Branch).
8/58-6/59	National War College (DUINS).
7/59-6/60	CO, USS <i>Navasota</i> (AO-106).
6/60-6/61	CO, USS <i>Franklin D. Roosevelt</i> .
7/61-5/63	Naval War College (Director, Naval Command for Senior Foreign Officers).
6/63-10/64	Chief of Staff, COMCARDIV 2.
11/64-12/64	Commander, Naval Aviation Safety Center.
1/65-6/67	Chief of Staff, NAVAVNSAFECEN.