



**Louis J. Kirn, Rear Admiral, USN**

Louis Joseph Kirn was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on June 8, 1908. He attended High School in Milwaukee, and the Peddie School, Hightstown, New Jersey, before entering the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, in 1928, from Wisconsin. As a Midshipman he was a trackman, played varsity football for three years, and commanded the winning Color Company in his First Class year. Graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 2, 1932, he subsequently attained the rank of Rear Admiral, to date from May 1, 1959.

Upon graduation from the Naval Academy in 1932, he was assigned to the USS *Tennessee* and served in that battleship until December 1934. He was then ordered to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, for flight training, and on January 6, 1936, was designated a Naval Aviator. From February 1936 to June 1937 he was attached to Fighting Squadron ONE, based first on the USS *Langley*, and later on the USS *Lexington*. He was assigned next to Torpedo Squadron TWO, based on the USS *Saratoga*, and after two years' service attended the General Line Course at the Postgraduate School, Annapolis, until it was terminated because of the National Emergency in 1939. In January 1940 he returned to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, for duty as a Flight Instructor,

In October 1941 he was ordered to duty as Executive Officer of Scouting Squadron THREE, aboard the USS *Saratoga*, then under command of Captain D. C. Ramsey, USN. He assumed command of that squadron in May 1942, and participated in the Guadalcanal and Solomons operations in the Pacific. For heroism during that period of service, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Gold Star in lieu of a second Distinguished Flying Cross, the Navy Cross, and the Air Medal. The citations follow, in part:

Distinguished Flying Cross: "For heroism and extraordinary achievement as Commander of a Scouting Squadron... in the Solomon Islands Area on August 24, 1942. Leading his Squadron...in the face of tremendous anti-aircraft fire and fierce fighter opposition (he) pressed home his attack with skill and determination then returned his squadron intact to its carriers. By his superb airmanship and conscientious devotion to duty, he contributed immeasurably to the severe damaging of an enemy aircraft carrier..."

Gold Star in lieu of second Distinguished Flying Cross: "For heroism and extraordinary achievement as Squadron Commander of Scouting Squadron THREE during operations of the United States Naval Forces against Japanese-occupied Solomon Islands on August 7, 1942. Leading his squadron in vigorous dive-bombing and strafing raids against hostile land and troop installations, (he)...assisted in completely silencing Japanese opposition and thereby assuring the success of our landing operations with minimum casualties..."

Navy Cross: "For extraordinary heroism as Squadron Commander of a group of dive bombers and torpedo planes in aerial combat against enemy Japanese surface forces in the Solomon Islands area, between September 16 and October 5, 1942. Leading his squadron in repeated attacks against enemy vessels, (he) and his valorous comrades in the face of heavy and accurate anti-aircraft fire, scored many near misses and three sure hits...He personally on October 5, scored a direct hit with a thousand pound bomb on an enemy destroyer, which sank within five minutes..."

Air Medal: "For meritorious achievement in aerial flight...during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of New Georgia and the Solomon Islands from October, 6 to 14, 1942..."

Returning to the United States, he commanded Bombing Squadron FOUR, reforming at San Diego, during January-March 1943; and from April to September of that year served on the Staff of the Chief of Naval Air Operational Training, Jacksonville, Florida. During that period he also had two months' temporary additional duty in the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, Washington, D. C.

In October 1943 he was assigned as Operations Officer on the Staff of Vice Admiral A W. Fitch, USN, Commander Aircraft, South Pacific Force, based on Guadalcanal. During this period, the Solomon Islands Campaign was successfully concluded. He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for "meritorious service (in that assignment) from November 23, 1943 to May 1, 1944..." The citation states in part: "Utilizing his sound professional knowledge of our aircraft, Commander Kirn planned and directed the institution of new search plans as required by the changing situation in the South Pacific Theatre, and in addition was responsible for the excellent coordination of the activities of air units in that area..."

When detached in May 1944, he continued on staff duty as Operations Officer on the Staff of Rear Admiral R.

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Davison, USN, Commander Carrier Division TWO (Past Carrier Task Groups 38.4 and 58.4) and participated in Peleliu, Iwo Jima, Chichi Jima, Philippine Islands and Japan operations from the USS *Franklin* and other carriers. On two occasions when the *Franklin* suffered heavy battle damage, the staff continued operations from other carriers--*Lexington*, *Enterprise* and *Hancock*. He received the Legion of Merit with Combat "V," "For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services to the Government of the United States as Operations Officer on the Staff of Commander Carrier Division TWO, during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Western Pacific Area from August 15, 1944 to March 24, 1945..."

Upon returning to the U. S., he was ordered in August 1945 to the Staff of Rear Admiral F. Wagner, USN, Chief of Naval Air Training at Pensacola, Florida, where he served as Assistant Director of Flight Training until January 1948. Thereafter until June 1948, he attended the Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Virginia. In July, he joined the USS *Leyte* and served one year as Executive Officer of that aircraft carrier. In September 1949 he reported as Force Training Officer on the Staff of Vice Admiral T. L. Sprague, USN, Commander Air Force, Pacific, with headquarters at San Diego, California. He attended the Strategic and Tactical course at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, from August 1951 to July 1952, when he was assigned as Head of the Field Liaison Branch, Office of Information, Executive Office of the Secretary of Navy, Navy Department.

He was hospitalized from March 1954 until November 1955 and after instruction at the Imperial Defense College, London, England, assumed command in February 1957, of the USS *Currituck* (AV-7). Six months later he transferred to command of the attack aircraft carrier *Randolph* and in June 1958 was detached for duty as Chief of Staff and Aide to Commander Carrier Division FOUR.

His selection for the rank of Rear Admiral was approved by the President on July 18, 1958, and on February 14, 1959 he became Commander Carrier Division NINETEEN. He was Chief of Naval Air Advanced Training, with headquarters at the Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi, Texas, from February 1960 until June 1962, when he assumed command of Carrier Division, FIVE. In July 1963, he reported as Commander Key West Force, with additional duty as Commander Naval Base, Key West, Florida, and on January 15, 1964, assumed further additional duty as Commander Fleet Air, Key West. From January 1965 until January 1966 he was Deputy Director of the Joint Staff, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, D. C., then served as Vice Director of the Joint Staff. "For exceptionally meritorious service as Deputy Director, Joint Staff, from January 1965 to January 1966, and as Vice Director, Joint Staff, Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, from January through December 1966..." " he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Second Legion of Merit. In April 1967 he reported as U. S. Defense Attaché/U. S. Naval Attaché and U. S. Naval Attaché for Air, United Kingdom, with headquarters in London, and served as such until relieved of active duty. Pending his retirement, effective July 1, 1970, he was

awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

In addition to the Navy Cross, the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with Gold Star and Combat "V," the Distinguished Flying Cross with Gold Star, the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," and the Air Medal, Rear Admiral Kirm has the American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; the National Defense Service Medal with bronze star; and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon. He also has the facsimiles of and Ribbons for, the Presidential Unit Citation to the First Marine Division, Reinforced, and the Navy Unit Commendations to the USS *Franklin* and USS *Enterprise*.

Rear Admiral Kirm was married to the former Miss Ray Reynoir of New Orleans, Louisiana.

#### SHIPS AND STATIONS

6/32-9/34	USS <i>Tennessee</i> (BB-43)
9/34-12/34	Staff, U. S. Naval Academy
12/34-2/36	NAS, Pensacola, Fla. (Instruction)
2/36-6/37	Fighter Squadron ONE B
6/37-6/39	Torpedo Squadron THREE
6/39-12/39	U. S. Naval Academy PG School (Student)
12/39-9/41	NAS, Pensacola, Florida.
9/41-10/42	CO, Scouting Squadron THREE
10/42-3/43	CO, Bombing Squadron FOUR
3/43-7/43	NAS, Jacksonville, Fla.
7/43-10/43	CO, Bombing Squadron 99
10/43-11/43	CO, Bombing Squadron TWENTY
11/43-6/44	Staff, Commander Aircraft, South Pacific (Operations Officer)
6/44-7/45	COMCARDIV TWO (Operations Officer)
7/45-1/48	Staff, Chief of Naval Air Training, Pensacola, Fla. (Ass't Director of Training)
1/48-6/48	Armed Forces Staff College (Student)
6/48-8/49	USS <i>Leyte</i> (CV-32) (Executive Officer)
8/49-7/51	Staff Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet (Training Officer)
7/51-6/52	Naval War College (Student)
6/52-3/54	Office of Information, Washington, D. C. (Director, Field Liaison Division)
3/54-11/55	Naval Hospital, NNMC, Bethesda, MD. (Patient)
11/55-12/56	U. S. Naval Forces, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean (Student at Imperial Defense Colleges London, England)
12/56-7/57	CO, USS <i>Currituck</i> (AV-7)
7/57-6/58	CO, USS <i>Randolph</i> (CVA-15)
6/58-1/59	COMCARDIV FOUR (C/S and Aide)
1/59-2/60	COMCARDIV NINETEEN
2/60-6/62	Chief of Naval Air Advanced Training, NAS, Corpus Christi, TX.
6/62-5/63	COMCARDIV FIVE
5/63-12/64	Commander, Key West Force
12/64 -4/67	The Joint Staffs Office of JCS. (Deputy Director/Vice Director)
4/67-	U. S. Chief of Mission, London, England