



**Thomas J. Hamilton, Rear Admiral, USN**

Thomas James Hamilton was born in Hoopston, Illinois, on December 26, 1905, the son of John. L. and Mary Hall Hamilton. He attended Indianola School, Columbus, Ohio, and Doane Academy, Granville, Ohio, before his appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy from Ohio in 1923. While a midshipman, he won letters in football, baseball, and basketball, was president of his class, and as a first classman had his name engraved on the Thompson Trophy Cup as the Midshipman who had done most during the preceding year to promote athletics at the Academy. He was also awarded the Navy Athletic Association Sword for general athletic ability and leadership. Graduated and commissioned Ensign in June 1927, he progressed in rank attaining that of Captain, to date from March 20, 1945. His retirement from the Navy dates from February 1, 1949, when he was advanced to the rank of Rear Admiral on the basis of Combat citations,

After graduation in 1927, he remained at the Naval Academy for Aviation instruction and the following December joined the USS *Maryland*. He served in that battleship for two years with the exception of the football seasons of 1927 and 1928, when he had temporary duty as assistant coach at the Naval Academy. Ordered to the Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida, for flight training, he was designated Naval Aviator on July 26, 1930, then again served as assistant football coach at the Naval Academy until the following December.

In January 1931 he joined Torpedo Squadron ONE, based on the aircraft carrier *Lexington*, and in June 1932 was transferred to Scouting Squadron SIX, aviation unit of the cruiser *Milwaukee*. While so assigned he was head football coach of the U. S. Fleet Team on the Pacific Coast during the

seasons 1931, 1932 and 1933. From 1934 until 1937, he had duty in the Department of Physical Training, Naval Academy, with additional duty in 1936 as Instructor in Aviation for Midshipmen. From March 1937 to early 1940, he served in Squadrons of patrol Wing ONE as Gunnery Officer, and made flights from the mainland to Hawaii, Alaska, and the Caribbean. For two consecutive years his squadron received awards for highest standing gunnery competition,

In June 1940, he reported as assistant Operations Officer at the Naval Air Station, Anacostia, D. C., and from July until December 1941 was Operations Officer of that station. He next served as Officer-in-Charge of Pre-Flight and Physical Training Section, Aviation Training Division, Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., where he was in charge of organizing and developing physical training programs for Naval Aviation Cadets entering the service for the first time. He was awarded a Legion of Merit with the following citation:

“For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services to the Government of the United States as Officer-in-Charge, Physical Training Section, Naval Air Training Division, Bureau of Aeronautics, December 1941, to June 1943. Charged with the difficult task of preparing a thorough physical and indoctrination program for air cadets, Captain (then Lieutenant Commander) Hamilton formulated effective plans and was responsible for the selection and establishment of the first four as well as other Pre-Flight Schools at which approximately 250,000 cadets received ground training and the physical conditioning essential for combat. He selected and indoctrinated approximately 2100 officers for teaching in the schools and other aviation units of the Navy. In addition, he was instrumental in establishing the Naval Recognition School at Ohio State University. His untiring efforts in training skilled airman, his administrative ability and unwavering devotion to duty reflect the highest credit upon Captain Hamilton and the United States Naval Service.”

When detached, in June 1943, he reported for duty as Air Officer on board the aircraft carrier *Enterprise*, and from June to December 1944, as her Executive Officer, he participated in the invasions of the Gilbert and Marshall Islands, and all engagements in the Battle of Leyte Gulf. For his services during this period he “as awarded the Bronze Star Medal, with Combat “V,” and the following citation:

“For meritorious service as Executive Officer of the USS *Enterprise*, during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Philippine Islands Area and the Battle for Leyte Gulf from August 30, 1944, to October 25, 1944. Displaying sound judgement and professional skill, Captain (then Commander) Hamilton rendered invaluable assistance to his commanding officer throughout the hazardous missions of the *Enterprise* and materially aided his ship and air group in successfully repelling numerous hostile air attacks and inflicting great damage on enemy ships, aircraft and shore installations...”

Detached from the *Enterprise* in December 1944, he joined the staff of Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet, in January 1945. For his services as Air Force Training Officer, he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of a second Legion of Merit, with the following citation:

“For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services to the Government of the United States as Force Training Officer on the Staff of Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet, during operation against enemy Japanese forces in the Pacific War Area from January 20 to October 1, 1945. Demonstrating outstanding ability, Captain Hamilton established facilities to provide each man in every branch of the Fleet’s aviation organization with a thorough knowledge of modern war equipment. In addition, he supervised the development of new techniques for solving the manifold problems incident to a constantly expanding aviation organization and aided in the integration of a complete training program for pilots, aircrewmen and all other aviation specialists, thereby contributing materially to the superior record of the Air Force, Pacific Fleet...”

In October 1945, he returned to the United States and reported to Commander Training Command, Pacific Fleet, as a prospective commander of an aircraft carrier escort. He assumed command of the USS *Savo Island* on December 1945. On February 5, 1946, he was again ordered to the Naval Academy for duty this time as Director of Athletics and Head of the Department of Physical Training, a post he held until his retirement on December 31, 1948. Soon thereafter he accepted a similar position at the University of Pittsburgh, in accordance with his desire “to devote all his time to the development of youth.”

In addition to the Legion of Merit with Gold Star in lieu of the second Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star Medal, with Combat “V,” Rear Admiral Hamilton has the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; the American Area Campaign Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Area Campaign Medal, with engagement stars; and the World War II Victory Medal.

He was married to the former Miss Emmie S. Spalding of Coronado, California. They has two sons, Thomas James Hamilton Jr., and William Howard Hamilton.