



Albert C. Read , Rear Admiral, USN

Albert Cushing Read was born in Lyme, New Hampshire, on March 29, 1887, son of Joseph Brown Read and Mrs. (Mary Elizabeth Barker) Read. He attended High School in Whitman, Massachusetts, and entered the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, on appointment from the State of Massachusetts in 1903. He was graduated fourth in the Class of 1907, and two years later, after service at sea then required by law, was commissioned Ensign to date from September 12, 1908. Through subsequent advancement, he attained the rank of Rear Admiral on December 22, 1941, and retired in that rank on September 1, 1946.

Assigned first to the USS *Decatur*, he later served in the USS *Indiana*, USS *Ohio*, USS *Barry*, USS *Bainbridge* and USS *Delaware*, and after seven years at sea was assigned shore duty at the Naval Torpedo Station, Newport, Rhode Island, from 1913 to 1915. On July 8, 1915, he began aviation instruction at the Naval Aeronautic Station, Pensacola, Florida, and upon completion of his flight training was designated Naval Aviator on March 7, 1916. In 1916-1917 he was at sea attached successively to the USS *North Carolina* and USS *Seattle*, and during World War I he had command of the Naval Air Stations at Bay Shore, New York, and Miami, Florida.

Following brief duty in the Office of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., he assumed command of the NC-4, which was the first of the NC seaplanes of the group commanded by Admiral (then Lieutenant Commander) John H. Towers, USN, to complete the trans-Atlantic flight on May 31, 1919. He was awarded the Distinguished Service

Medal and cited: "For exceptionally meritorious service in a duty of great responsibility in the development of U. S. Naval Aviation and especially for his achievement in making the first trans-Atlantic flight in the NC-4."

In January 1920 he returned to Pensacola for further duty at the Naval Air Station, and from October of that year until June 1922 he had consecutive service as Commanding officer of the USS *Harding*, tender of the NC seaplanes of the Air Force, Atlantic Fleet, and on the staff of Commander Aircraft Squadrons, Scouting Fleet, attached to the USS *Shawmut*, flagship. He was a student at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, during the 1922-1923 school year, and for a year thereafter served as an instructor on the Staff.

On June 24, 1924 he assumed command of Aircraft Squadron TWENTY, Asiatic Fleet, and of the USS *Ajax*, and after a year at that command he was transferred to command ff Torpedo Squadron TWENTY of Aircraft Squadrons Battle Fleet, with additional duty on the Staff of Commander Aircraft Squadrons, and Torpedo Bombing and Scouting Wing Commander. Before he was detached in October 1926, he also commanded Torpedo squadron TWO. He next served until May 1929 as Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Station, Hampton Roads, Virginia, then went to sea as Executive Officer of the USS *Saratoga*, an aircraft carrier assigned as flagship of Commander Aircraft squadrons, Battle Fleet.

On August 25, 1931, he was assigned to the Navy Department, where he had a tour of duty in the Bureau of Aeronautics, during which he also served as BuAer Engineering Liaison Officer to the Office of the Chief of Air Corps, War Department. From June 7, 1934, until May 1936, he commanded the USS *Wright*, which served as the flagship of Commander Base Force. On May 27, 1936, he became Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, and on May 26, 1938, he assumed command of the USS *Saratoga*, flagship of Commander Aircraft, Battle Force, and Commander Carrier Division ONE.

Detached from the *Saratoga* on March 15, 1940, he reported in April as Commandant of the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, and in October 1942, after the outbreak of World War II nearly a year before, he became Chief of Air Technical Training, with Headquarters in Chicago, Illinois. In January 1944 he was designated Commander Fleet Air, Norfolk (Virginia), and served in that capacity throughout the remaining period of hostilities. He was awarded the Legion of Merit and cited in part as follows:

"For exceptionally meritorious conduct as Commander Fleet Air, Norfolk, from January 1944 to September 1945. Demonstrating outstanding ability and leadership, Rear Admiral Read aided immeasurably in increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of units of the Air Force, Atlantic Fleet, for anti-submarine warfare, and of carriers and carrier air groups destined for operations in the Pacific..."

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In December 1946 Admiral Read returned to the Navy Department, where he served in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air) until May 1946, when he was relieved of active duty, pending his transfer to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy on September 1, 1946. Rear Admiral Read died at Mercy Hospital, Miami, Florida, on October 10, 1967.

In addition to the Distinguished Service Medal and the Legion of Merit, Rear Admiral Read had the NC-4 Medal, commemorating the first trans-Atlantic flight in the seaplane NC-4 in May 1919; the Cuban Pacification Medal (USS *Indiana*); the Victory Medal (World War I); American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal. He was also decorated by the British Government with the Royal Air Force Cross, and by the Government of Portugal with the Award of Commander of the Military Order of the Tower and Sword, Class 2.

He was married to the former Miss Bess Anderson Burdine. They had two children Albert Cushing Read, Jr, and Elizabeth Burdine Read.

Admiral Read was a passenger aboard the P2V-2 TRUCULENT TURTLE on the memorial flight in May 1949 commemorating thirtieth anniversary of the famous NC-4 flight to span the Atlantic Ocean in May 1919. The plane took off from the Naval Air Station, Floyd Bennett Field, New York, a few miles from Rockaway, starting point for the plywood-canvas NC-4, and made the 3900-mile flight in 20 hours, 55 minutes, in comparison with the NC-4's 19 days to Plymouth, England, via the Azores and Lisbon, Portugal. The NC-4 made numerous stops in its epic flight, once off Cape Cod because of engine trouble; at Newfoundland, the Azores, Lisbon, Ferrol, Spain and Plymouth. The P2V-2 stopped only once at Lisbon, for commemorative ceremonies. Also a passenger on the 1949 flight was Chief Aviation Pilot Eugene S. Rhodes, mechanic of the NC-4 piloted by Lieutenant Commander Read in 1919.