



William A. Read, Rear Admiral, USNR

William Augustus Read was born in Rye, New York, on August 21, 1895, son of William Augustus and Caroline Hicks (Seaman) Read. He was graduated from the Pomfret School, Pomfret, Connecticut, in 1913 and entered Harvard College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, as a member of the Class of 1918. In 1914 he joined Battery A, First Massachusetts Field Artillery, and served as a Private, First Class, on the Mexican Border. He was honorably discharged in November 1916, and on November 3, 1917 enlisted in the U. S. Naval Reserve Force for World War I service.

Called to active duty early in 1918, he had flight training at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, and was commissioned Ensign on July 22, 1918, and designated Naval Aviator #1366 in July of that year. He had aerial gunnery training at Taliaferro Field, Fort Worth, Texas, and was assigned to the Aviation Section of the Office of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., before the signing of the Armistice on November 11, 1918, and was relieved of active duty on November 30, that year. He resigned from the U. S. Naval Reserve Force on July 28, 1919.

In civil life he was a member of the firm of Dillon, Read and Company from 1919 to 1929, and during the period 1930 to 1940 was a Vice President of the Central Hanover Bank and Trust Company. He was in charge of the Personal Trust Department of that bank from 1932 to 1940. In 1933 he became a member of the Executive Committee of the Corporate Fiduciaries Association, serving as such until 1940, and also was a member of the Executive Committee Trust Companies Association, its President in 1938-1939. He

accepted an assignment to active duty in the U. S. Naval Reserve in July 1940, and resigned from the Central Hanover Bank on November 1, 1940 to continue on duty in the Bureau of Aeronautics.

Commissioned Lieutenant Commander in the Naval Reserve on May 4, 1930, he was promoted to the rank of Commander on January 9, 1941, to Captain on September 17, 1943, and to Commodore on November 2, 1945. His nomination for the rank of Rear Admiral was confirmed by the Senate on September 17, 1953.

On July 23, 1940 he reported for duty in the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., and in September 1942 was ordered to Pearl Harbor, T. H., for duty as Aide and Flag Secretary on the staff of Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet (Vice Admiral John H. Towers, USN). He was awarded the Legion of Merit and cited "For exceptionally meritorious conduct...as Flag Secretary on the Staff of Commander Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet, from November 1942 to March 1943, and as Officer in Charge of Advanced Bases from September to November 1943. The citation states further:

"By his exceptional skill in supervising the multitude of complex details involved in discharging his secretarial and legal functions (he) rendered invaluable assistance in the efficient administration of the command..."

In March 1943 he joined the staff of Commander Fleet Air Noumea (the late Admiral Marc A. Mitscher, USN), going on, as Assistant Chief of Staff for Administration, to Guadalcanal, when the Admiral became Commander Air, Solomons Islands on April 1, 1943.

Upon completion of this duty on July 25, 1943, he was awarded a commendation by Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force with a citation reading in part:

"For...carrying out important duties under difficult conditions, including frequent large scale enemy air attacks. His duties also included flights to outlying islands within the sphere of enemy control as the representative of Commander Air, Solomons Islands, for the purpose of rescuing stranded American flight personnel...."

In June 1944 he joined the staff of Commander First Carrier Task Force, Pacific (the late Admiral Marc A. Mitscher, USN). He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal and a Gold Star in lieu of the Second Bronze Star Medal, each with Combat "V," and citations, following in part:

Bronze Star Medal: "For meritorious service as Awards Officer on the Staff of the Commander of the First Carrier Task Force, during action against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of the Marianas, Carolines, Bonins, Halmahera, Philippines, Formosa and the Nansei Shoto, from June through October 1944. Discharging his duties with great professional skill and efficiency, Captain Read aided in the

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support of amphibious landings, thereby contributing to the success of many hazardous mission...”

Gold Star in lieu of Second Bronze Star Medal: “For meritorious service as Logistics Officer and Staff Watch Officer on the staff of Commander FIRST Carrier Task Force, Pacific, in action against enemy Japanese forces, from December 1944 to May 1945. Serving with distinction throughout this period, (he) contributed materially to the success of our operations against Tokyo, Iwo Jima, Kyushu, Kure Naval Base Okinawa and major units of the Japanese fleet, on April 7, 1945. Although his ship was hit by enemy aircraft on two occasions he continued to carry out his assignment in an outstanding manner..”

Returning to the United States in the summer of 1945, he again served under Admiral Mitscher, then Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air), Navy Department. He was released from active duty on October 12, 1945, was confirmed in the rank of Commodore on November 2, that year, and a few days later was recalled for temporary duty with the Commandant, Third Naval District, New York, New York.

In addition to the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal with Gold Star and Combat “V,” and the Commendation Ribbon, Rear Admiral Read has the Mexican Service Medal; the World War I Victory Medal, Aviation Clasp; the Presidential Unit citation with two stars; the Navy Unit Commendation; American Defense Service Medal; the American Campaign Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; the World War II Victory Medal; and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon with one star.

Rear Admiral Read was married to the former Miss Edith Fabyan of Boston, Massachusetts. They had nine children: William A. Jr., Curtis S., David W., Roderick F., Peter B., Alexander D., Donald B., Jean, and Frederick H. Read.