



### **Paul D. Stroop, Vice Admiral, USN**

Paul David Stroop was born in Zanesville, Ohio, on October 30, 1904, son of John H. and Margaret M. (Jacobs) Stroop. He attended Mobile, Alabama, High School and Werntz Preparatory School before entering the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland on appointment from the Seventh Congressional District of Alabama in June 1922. As a Midshipman he was a member of the Varsity Gymnastic Team for four years (Captain, one year), and was All-Around Intercollegiate Champion. Graduating on June 3, 1926, he was commissioned Ensign, and through subsequent promotions, attained the rank of Rear Admiral to date from November 1, 1953. His date of rank as Vice Admiral is September 25, 1962.

After graduation from the Naval Academy in 1926, he had preliminary aviation instruction there before joining the USS *Arkansas* in September. In May and June 1927 he had temporary additional duty under instruction at the Optical School, Navy Yard, Washington, D. C., and the Naval Air Station, Hampton Roads, Virginia. When detached from the *Arkansas* in March 1928; he reported to the Naval Academy as a candidate for the 1928 Olympic Team. Returning from the Games the following August, he was ordered to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida for flight training. Designated Naval Aviator in September 1929, he joined the USS *Wright* to serve three years with torpedo and patrol squadrons of Aircraft squadrons, Scouting Fleet, based on that tender.

He returned to Annapolis in June 1932, and there completed courses at the Naval Postgraduate School in Applied Communications and General Line. From June 1934 to June 1936 he was attached to Bombing Squadron 5, based first on the USS *Ranger*, later on the USS *Lexington*. Transferring to the USS *Portland*, he served until May 1937 as Senior Aviator, with Scouting Squadrons 10-S and 11-S, while the *Portland* operated in the Pacific. When detached he was assigned duty in the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, Washington,

D. C., and remained there until May 1940.

Ordered next to the Staff of Commander Patrol Wing TWO, as Gunnery and Tactical Officer, he was transferred in November 1940 to the Staff of Commander Carrier Division ONE, to serve as Aide and Flag Secretary, first on board the USS *Saratoga*, later the USS *Lexington*. In July 1942 he became Operations Officer when his Carrier Division was assigned to the U. S. Naval Air Forces, Pacific Fleet. He later was assigned to the Staff of Commander Aircraft, South Pacific Force. He was awarded the Legion of Merit with Combat "V," and received a Letter of Commendation, with Ribbon and Combat "V." The citations follow in part: Legion of Merit: "For exceptionally meritorious conduct... as Flag Secretary for Commander Task Force ELEVEN during the Coral Sea action on May 7-8, 1942, and as Planning Officer for Commander Aircraft, South Pacific Force, during the period from September 26, 1942, to April 4, 1943. Frequently called upon to make numerous recommendations affecting military decisions of great importance, (he) displayed unerring judgment and excellent foresight in planning. His calm deliberation while under fire of Japanese aerial forces was an inspiration to his subordinates..." Letter of Commendation (from the Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet): "For distinguished service in the line of his profession as Intelligence and Plotting Officer on the Staff of the Air Task Group Command in preparation for, during and after the successful engagements with the enemy in the Battle of the Coral Sea on May 7-8, 1942. He assisted in planning the air attack, maintaining an excellent system of recording intelligence information received and gave valuable assistance to the Task Group Commander..."

In April 1943 he assumed command of the USS *Mackinac* (AVP-13), a small seaplane tender operating in the South and central Pacific. In February 1944 he was detached for duty in the Navy Department, Washington, D. C., as Aviation Plans Officer on the Staff of the Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet; During this period he attended Allied Military Staff Conferences at Quebec, Malta, Yalta and Potsdam. Upon completion of this duty in August 1945, he assumed command of the USS *Croatan* (CVE-25), operating in the Atlantic. Three months later he was transferred to duty on the Staff of the Commander FIFTH Fleet in the Western Pacific, and served as Operations Officer until February 1946. He then became Fleet Aviation Officer on the Staff of the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, and later served as Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations. Upon his return to the United States in September 1948, he reported as Executive Officer of the General Line School, Monterey, California, and after a two year period of duty there was a student, from August 1950 until June 1951, at the National War College, Washington, D. C. During the period August 1951 until October 1952 he commanded, successively the USS *Princeton* (CV-37) and USS *Essex* (CV-9), both carriers operating against communist forces in the Sea of Japan. "For exceptionally meritorious conduct...as Commanding Officer of the USS *Princeton* during operations against enemy aggressor forces in Korea from 30 April to 31 August 1952..." he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Second

Legion of Merit. The citation further states: "A capable and resourceful leader, he organized a group of recalled reserves, inexperienced recruits and members of the regular Navy into a highly efficient fighting team, thereby overcoming numerous obstacles presented by increasing shortages of trained personnel and deficiencies of material and enabling him to apply the striking power of his vessel against the enemy with maximum effectiveness..." He is also entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Navy Unit Commendation awarded the USS *Princeton* .

Reporting in October 1952 as Commander Naval Ordnance Test Station, Inyokern, California, he remained there almost a year being detached in September for duty as Senior Naval Member Weapons Systems Evaluation Group, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Research and Development), Washington, D. C. Returning to the Navy Department, he served as Deputy and Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, from December 29, 1954 until March 1957, and for a year thereafter he was Commander U. S. Taiwan Patrol Force, with additional duty as Commander Fleet Air Wing ONE.

On March 14, 1958, he assumed the duties of Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, and on September 9, 1959, became Chief of the newly created Bureau of Naval Weapons, activated in September 1959 to combine the functions of the Bureaus of Ordnance and Aeronautics. "For meritorious service as Chief, Bureau of Ordnance from March 14, 1958 to September 8, 1959, and as Chief Bureau of Naval Weapons from September 9, 1959 to July 20, 1960... " he was awarded the Commendation Medal. The citation further states: "Through his keen foresight and judicious direction of the many competent resources within his cognizance, Rear Admiral Stroop provided vital research, development, technical and administrative facilities and knowledge in support of the Fleet Ballistic Missile Program. Demonstrating an undeviating determination to utilize the total capabilities of his Bureau in meeting the varied and complex problems and schedules imposed by the Fleet Ballistic Missile Development Program, he made an important contribution toward the achievement of the final tactical weapon system on an accelerated schedule, which was five years in advance of the originally optimistic target date..." He was also awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and cited as follows: "For exceptionally meritorious service... during the period September 9, 1959 to October 29, 1962 as the first Chief of the Bureau of Naval Weapons. Exercising sound professional judgment, dynamic leadership and keen foresight Vice Admiral (then Rear Admiral) Stroop welded the Bureau of Ordnance and the Bureau of Aeronautics into a smoothly functioning Bureau of Naval Weapons. Providing the chief impetus through his own adeptness at getting things done, he efficiently solved some of the most complex management problems imaginable, causing the merger of the two bureaus to be completed seven months ahead of schedule. Operational support was not impaired at any time during this organizational melding. Vice Admiral Stroop's keen appreciation of both the human and technical problems involved was a major factor in the smoothness with which the consolidation

was effected, His dedication to managing the Bureau resulted in great strides being taken to reduce the lead time between the expression of an operational requirement and delivery to the combat forces of fully developed and effective weapons systems. Through his personal effort, multi-service weapons systems such as the F4 aircraft, become a reality. His dedication to reducing the cost of weapons systems acquisitions has been directly reflected in the Department of Defense cost reduction achievements. By his exceptional devotion to duty, (he) rendered valuable and distinguished service and contributed greatly to the improvement of weapons systems acquisition and management. .."

Early in November 1962 he was detached from duty as the Chief of the Bureau of Naval Weapons and on November 30, reported as Commander Naval Air Force, Pacific Fleet, in the rank of Vice Admiral. During the period December 11, 1963 to April 1964 he also served as Acting Commander SECOND Fleet. On November 1, 1965 he was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy. "For exceptionally meritorious service...as Commander Naval Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet from November 7, 1962 to October 30, 1965..." he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Second Distinguished Service Medal, The citation continues in part: "During this period, Vice Admiral Stroop skillfully directed the transition of Naval Air Force Pacific units from a peacetime tempo of operations to full combat strike operations in Southeast Asia. Under his adroit leadership the Naval Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet proved to be efficient and responsive to the constantly changing requirements occasioned by the increased participation of attack carriers in support of operations in Vietnam. (He) successfully introduced several new types of aircraft into the fleet in a minimal period of time, thereby increasing the effectiveness of the air arm of the Navy and providing air superiority in an area where air support is vitally important in the attainment of U. S. objectives..."

In addition to the Distinguished Service Medal with Gold Star, the Legion of Merit with Gold Star (two awards) and Combat "V," the Commendation Medal with Star and Combat "V," and the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, Vice Admiral Stroop has the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with four operation stars; American Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia Clasp; National Defense Service Medal; Korean Service Medal; and United Nations Service Medal. He was awarded the following foreign decorations: Grand Master of the Order of Naval Merit (Commander) by Brazil; Order of Cloud and Banner by the Republic of China and the Italian Order of Merit. He also has the Korean Presidential Unit Citation Badge.

He was married to the former Esther Holacher of Baltimore, Maryland. They had four children: Paul D. Stroop, Jr., Margaret Ann, wife of Commander J. T. Wells, USN; Barbara Winthrop, wife of Commander J. M. Draddy, USN; and Patrick Allen Stroop.