



Arleigh A. Burke, Admiral, USN

Arleigh A. Burke was born far from the sea in Boulder, Colorado on October 19, 1901. On June 8, 1923, he was graduated from the U. S. Naval Academy, commissioned Ensign in the United States Navy, and married to Miss Roberta Gorsuch of Washington, D. C.

Throughout his professional career, Arleigh Burke had prepared himself for combat with the enemy having served in battleships, destroyers, and having received the degree of Master of Science in Engineering at the University of Michigan. Then, when World War II came, he found himself, to his great disappointment, in a shore billet at the Naval Gun Factory in Washington, D. C. After persistent effort on his part, he received orders to the South Pacific where, under Admiral Halsey, he successively commanded Destroyer Division 43, Destroyer Division 44, Destroyer Squadron 12, and Destroyer Squadron 23. This latter squadron, known as the "Little Beavers," covered the initial landings in Bougainville in November 1943, and fought in 22 separate engagements during the next four months. During this time, the "Little Beavers," were credited with destroying one Japanese cruiser, nine destroyers, one submarine, several smaller ships, and approximately 30 aircraft. Because he pushed his destroyers just under boiler-bursting speed, he became known as "31-Knot Burke."

From Destroyer Command in the South Pacific, he reported in March of 1944 as Chief of Staff to Commander, Fast Carrier Task Force 58, Admiral Marc Mitscher. While serving with this famed carrier force, Arleigh Burke was promoted to Commodore, and participated in all its naval engagements until June 1945 shortly before the surrender of Japan. He was aboard both *Bunker Hill* and *Enterprise* when

they were hit by Japanese suicide planes during the Okinawa campaign.

At the outbreak of the Korean war, Admiral Forrest Sherman, then CNO, ordered Admiral Burke to duty as Deputy Chief of Staff to Commander Naval Forces, Far East. From there, he assumed command of Cruiser Division Five, and in July 1951 he was made a member of United Nations Truce Delegation to negotiate with the Communists for a military armistice in Korea. After six months in the truce tents, he returned to the Office of Chief of Naval Operations where he served as Director of Strategic Plans Division until 1954.

In April 1954, he took command of Cruiser Division Six, and in January 1955 assumed command of Destroyer Force Atlantic Fleet in which capacity he served until he succeeded Admiral Robert B. Carney as Chief of Naval Operations in August 1955. He served an unprecedented three terms in that duty before being transferred to the Retired List on August 1, 1961.

Admiral Burke has received numerous combat awards during his forty-two years in the Navy including the Distinguished Service Medal, the Navy Cross, the Legion of Merit and the Purple Heart. But none are more cherished than two awards which came early in his career. In 1928 while serving aboard the USS *Procyon*, he was commended for the "rescue of shipwrecked and seafaring-men," and in 1939 while serving in his first command, USS *Mugford*, he was commended when his destroyer won the fleet gunnery trophy with the highest score that had been achieved in many years. His ship also stood third in engineering competition and high in communication competition.

For his service in Destroyer Squadron 23, Admiral Burke was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the Navy Cross, the Legion of Merit, and is entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of, the Presidential Unit Citation awarded Destroyer Squadron 23. The citations follow, in part:

Distinguished Service Medal; "For exceptionally meritorious service to the Government of the United States in a duty of great responsibility as Commanding Officer of a Destroyer Division and subsequently a Destroyer Squadron operating against enemy Japanese forces in the South Pacific Area from early February to December 1, 1943. Throughout this period, Captain Burke led his forces in many offensive operations... His indomitable fighting spirit and great personal courage contributed directly to the success of our forces in that area and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Navy Cross: "For extraordinary heroism and distinguished service ... as the Commander of a destroyer squadron operating in the Northern Solomon Islands area during the period from midnight October 30 to noon November 2, 1943. (His) squadron, as a part of a task force, participated in the first bombardment of the Buka-Bonis area and also in the first daylight bombardment of the Shortland area... During the

the night of November 1-2, a heavier gunned Japanese naval force was met and decisively defeated with the loss to the enemy of one cruiser and four destroyers sunk, and an additional two cruisers and two destroyers damaged. The action contributed much to the success of our operations at Empress Augusta Bay. Thereafter, a heavy air attack by sixty-seven enemy dive bombers was fought off with a total of seventeen enemy planes being destroyed..."

Legion of Merit (with Combat "V"): "For exceptionally meritorious conduct...as Commander Destroyer Squadron Twenty-three, in action against enemy Japanese forces north-west of the Bismarck Archipelago, at Kavieng, New Ireland, and Duke of York Island, February 17 to 23, 1944...(He) expertly directed his squadron in destroying two Japanese naval auxiliary vessels, one large cargo ship, a mine layer, four barges and inflicting severe damage on enemy shore installations and subsequently effected a skillful withdrawal without damage to his vessels..."

Silver Star Medal; "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity as Chief of Staff to Commander FIRST Carrier Task Force in action against enemy Japanese forces in the Pacific War Area, May 11, 1945. When the flagship on which he was embarked was hit by two enemy suicide dive bombers.. Commodore Burke proceeded to a compartment in which personnel were trapped by fire and heavy smoke, and succeeded in evacuating all hands. When the flagship to which he had removed his staff was in turn hit by a suicide plane on May 14, he again arranged for the transfer of his command to a new ship. In spite of all difficulties, he maintained tactical control of the Task Force throughout, thereby contributing materially to the success of the operations..."

Duty Assignment Chronology

6/20-9/20 USS *South Carolina* for Midshipman cruise.
 6/21-8/21 USS *Michigan* for Midshipman cruise.
 6/22-8/22 USS *North Dakota* for Midshipman cruise.
 6/8/23 Graduated from U. S. Naval Academy with Bachelor of Science Degree.
 6/3/23 Appointed to rank of Ensign.
 6/23-4/28. USS *Arizona*. Gunnery Division, Turret Officer, Torpedo Officer, Engineering Division and Plotting Room Officer.
 6/8/26 Appointed to rank of Lieutenant junior grade.
 4/28-6/28 USS *Procyon*. Division Off./Ass't Navigator
 6/28-9/28 Commander Fleet Base Force, Pearl Harbor, Flag Lieutenant (Aide).
 9/23-5/29 USS *Procyon*. Division Off./Ass't Navigator
 5/29-9/30 U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis. Maryland Postgraduate Student (Ordnance)
 8/1/30 Appointed to rank of Lieutenant
 9/30-6/31 University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI. Post Graduate Student (Chemical Engr.) (MS).
 6/31-5/32 Navy Yard, Washington, D. C. (U. S. Naval Gun Factory). Post Graduate Student (Ordnance) Also included periods at the Naval Proving Ground, Dalghren, VA and Indian Head, MD.

5/32 -4/33 USS *Chester*. Assistant Gunnery Officer and Main Battery Officer.
 4/33-9/34 Commander Base Force, U. S. Fleet. USS *Argonne*. Assistant to Officer in Charge, Battle Force Camera Party.
 9/34-4/35 Battle Force Camera Officer and Staff Duty Officer.
 4/35-6/37 Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department. Assistant in Explosives Section.
 6/37-9/37 USS *Craven*. Commissioning/fitting out.
 9/37-6/39 XO/Navigator, USS *Craven*
 6/23/38 Appointed to rank of Lieutenant Commander.
 6/39-7/40 CO, USS *Mugford*.
 7/40-1/43 Navy Yard, Washington, D. C. U. S. Naval Gun Factory Inspector
 6/30/42 Appointed to permanent rank of Commander.
 1/43-5/43 Commander, Destroyer Division 43.
 5/43-8/43 Commander, Destroyer Division 44.
 8/43-10/43 Commander, Destroyer Squadron 12.
 10/43-3/44 Commander, Destroyer Squadron 23.
 11/6/43 Appointed to temporary rank of Captain.
 7/45-10/45 Headquarters, Commander in Chief, U.c.S. Fleet, Washington, D. C. Temporary Duty.
 10/45-2/46 Bureau of Ordnance, Washington, D. C. Director, Research and Development Division.
 2/46-9/46 Commander, Eighth Fleet Chief of Staff/Aide.
 3/5/46 Appointed to rank of temporary Commodore.
 9/46-3/47 Commander. U.S. Atlantic Fleet. Chief of Staff/Aide.
 3/47-7/48 General Board, Navy Department. Member.
 4/1/47 Appointment as Commodore terminated, reverted to rank of Captain.
 8/7/47 Appointed to permanent rank of Captain.
 7/48-12/48 CO, USS *Huntington* (CL-107).
 14/48-11/49 OPNAV, Washington, D. C. ACNO (Organizational Research and Policy Division
 11/49-1/50 Assistant to Deputy CNO for preparation of Report on Discipline
 1/50-8/50 Department of Defense, Washington, D. C. Research and Development Board
 7/15/50 Appointed to rank of Rear Admiral for temporary service.
 8/50-5/51 Commander Naval Forces, Far East. Chief of Staff.
 5/51-9/51 Commander, Cruiser Division FIVE.
 9/51-12/51 Delegate, Military Armistices Delegation, United Nations Forces, Korea, while Commander, Cruiser Division FIVE.
 12/51-3/54 OPNAV, Director Strategic Plans Division.
 5/1/52 Appointed to permanent Rear Admiral.
 3/54-1/55 Commander, Cruiser Division SIX.
 1/55-6/55 Commander, Destroyer Force, Atlantic Fleet
 6/55-8/55 Office of Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C.
 8/17/55 Appointed to rank of Admiral to rank from 6 June 1955
 8/17/55 Appointed as Chief of Naval Operations and Member of Joint Chiefs of Staff