

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN AUGUST A. BARTHES, UNITED STATES NAVY

August Aloysius Barthes was born in Biloxi, Mississippi, on November 6, 1916, son of Francis J. and Mary J. (Staehling) Barthes. He received the degree of Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical Engineering from Mississippi State College at Starkville in June 1939 and while there was a member of the Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit for four years. He enlisted in the U. S. Navy after graduation from College and had elimination flight training at the Naval Air Station, Opa Locka, Florida. Appointed Aviation Cadet on September 25, 1939, he had flight training at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, and on May 22, 1940 was designated Naval Aviator.

He was commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Naval Reserve on April 15, 1940. Advancing progressively in rank, he subsequently attained that of Captain, to date from January 1, 1959, having transferred to the regular Navy on December 12, 1944.

After receiving his "Wings" in 1940 he joined Patrol Squadron TWENTY-TWO and continued service with that squadron until April 1942. The squadron was operating out of Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, when the Japanese attacked the Naval Base there on December 7, 1941, and subsequently, as a unit of Patrol Wing TEN, based in Java, participated in the defense of the Netherlands East Indies in early 1942. He was awarded Gold Stars in lieu of the Second and Third Air Medals for completing five combat missions each, during the period December 8, 1941 to February 24, 1942. He is also entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Presidential Unit Citation awarded Patrol Squadron TWENTY TWO. The citation follows in part:

"For extraordinary heroism...as a Unit of Patrol Wing TEN attached to Aircraft, U. S. Asiatic Fleet, operating against enemy Japanese forces in the Philippine and Netherlands East Indies Areas from January 1942 to March 3, 1942. Holding fast to their courage as the Japanese ruthlessly hunted them down, the Pilots of Patrol Squadron TWENTY-TWO doggedly maintained their patrols in defiance of hostile air and naval supremacy, scouting the enemy and fighting him boldly regardless of overwhelming odds and in spite of the crushing operational inadequacies existing during the first months of the war. Resourceful and daring in combat, sustaining terrific losses with undiminished morale, Squadron TWENTY-TWO operated continuously in the most forward areas, taking off on hazardous flights before dawn to locate and bomb the enemy's shipping and returning to bases or tenders after dark with vital information of Japanese movements..."

In May 1942 he joined Patrol Squadron TWENTY-THREE and "for meritorious achievement...as Commander of a Patrol Plane during rescue operations after the Battle of Midway, June 9, 1942..." he was awarded the Air Medal. The citation further states in part: "Skillfully effecting a precarious landing of his heavily loaded PB5-5 airplane in the open

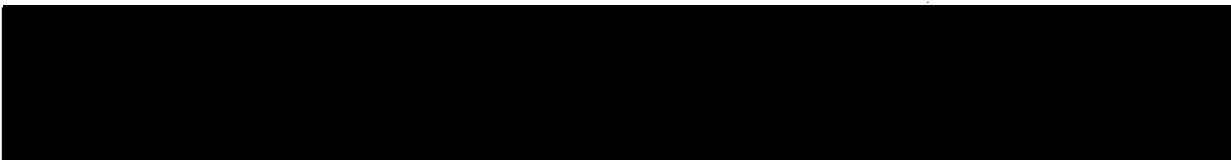
sea, (he) rescued two survivors from one of our aircraft carriers who had been adrift in a rubber life raft for five days. Again, on June 12, he repeated this hazardous performance, picking up two other survivors and taking off from the surface of the sea under perilously difficult conditions. Both of these operations were safely negotiated despite the long flying hours which (he) had maintained preceding, during and following the Battle of Midway..."

He was assigned, in April 1943, as Flight Officer of Patrol Squadron FIFTEEN, operating in the Atlantic area (Panama, Nicaragua) and in November 1944 reported as Instrument Training Officer, Multi-engine, on the Staff of the Chief of Naval Air Training, with headquarters at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. He remained there until June 1947, after which he attended the General Line School, Newport, Rhode Island. In April 1948 he joined Experimental Squadron ONE as Operations Officer and during the period June 1950 until June 1952 headed the Land-Plane Section, VP Design Branch in the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, Washington, D. C.

He commanded Patrol Squadron TWENTY-ONE in the Mediterranean area until January 1954, and following duty afloat as Navigator of the USS VALLEY FORGE, reported in April 1955, as Chief of the Requirements and Allocations Branch in the Office of the General Representative, Central District, with headquarters at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio. In December 1957 he was assigned as Executive Officer of the Naval Air Station, Cubi Point, Luzon, Philippine Islands, and from June 1958 to June 1960 was in command of that air station.

Following duty, which extended to June 1963, as Professor of Naval Science at the University of Missouri, Columbia, he became Commander Naval Activities, Spain, with headquarters in Rota. In July 1965 he reported as Assistant Technical Director at the Naval Ordnance Laboratory, White Oak, Maryland, and in March 1968 was assigned as Inspector General, Eighth Naval District, headquartered in New Orleans, Louisiana.

In addition to the Air Medal with two Gold Stars and the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon, Captain Barthes has the American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Europe Clasp; National Defense Service Medal with bronze star; and the Philippine Defense Ribbon.



Navy Office of Information
Internal Relations Division (OI-430)
16 May 1968