

VICE ADMIRAL FRANCIS ELIOT MAYNARD WHITING
UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED

Francis Eliot Maynard Whiting was born in New York City, February 10, 1891, and entered the United States Naval Academy from New York in 1908. Graduated and commissioned Ensign in June, 1912, he was promoted at regular intervals until advanced to the rank of Rear Admiral to date from May 16, 1942. His retirement became effective on August 1, 1947, when he was advanced to Vice Admiral on the basis of combat citations.

His first assignment after graduation was in the USS DELAWARE, and when detached in June, 1916 he had six weeks' instruction in submarines in the USS FULTON at New London, Connecticut. In August 1916 he reported for duty as Aide on the staff of the Commander, Train, Atlantic Fleet, USS VESTAL, flagship. For service in that duty during the World War, he received a special letter of commendation as follows: "He rendered highly meritorious service as Flag Secretary on the Staff of the Commander, Train, U.S. Atlantic Fleet."

In March, 1919, he joined the USS COLHOUN as her Executive Officer, and served until December of that year. He then joined the USS SATTERLEE for similar duty, and served until March 15, 1920. After a year at the Navy Recruiting Bureau, New York, he was appointed Aide to the Commandant, Third Naval District, New York. He had duty in connection with the General Board, Navy Department, during the Washington Limitation of Arms Conference in 1921-1922, and following that duty he reported to the Navy Yard, Philadelphia, where the USS PITTSBURGH was refitting. He joined her when she was recommissioned on August 22, 1923, as flagship of the U.S. Naval Forces in European Waters, and served as her First Lieutenant, later as her Engineer Officer. Detached from the PITTSBURGH in September, 1924, the year that followed he served consecutively as Executive Officer in the USS EDSALL, the USS HANNIBAL, and in command of the USS BULMER.

In August 1925, he transferred to command of the USS SYLPH, the yacht assigned for use of the Secretary of the Navy. In February 1926, he was given additional duty as Aide to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Honorable Theodore Douglas Robinson). Subsequently that duty became his major assignment, with command of the SYLPH as additional duty. His next duty was in command of the USS GOFF, from June 1928 until January 1931, and from that time until September 1933, he had consecutive duty at the Naval Recruiting Station, Newark, New Jersey, and as Officer in Charge, Naval Recruiting Station, Brooklyn, New York.

He joined the USS AUGUSTA, flagship of the Asiatic Station, in October 1933, and had successive duty aboard as her First Lieutenant and Damage Control Officer, and Executive Officer. His next duty was Officer in Charge, Navy Recruiting Bureau, New York, New York, from January 1936 until September 1938, with additional duty as Recruiting Inspector, Northeastern Recruiting Division. He was Commander, Destroyer Division Eight, USS DUNLAP, from September 1938 until May 1940.

He served from June 1940 until March 1942 as Director

of Recruiting, Bureau of Navigation (later Bureau of Naval Personnel) Navy Department, Washington, D.C. Upon detachment from that duty he was commended as follows by the Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, in a letter sent to the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation regarding the organization of the Seabees: ". . . Upon Captain Whiting's detachment, I wish to express my personal appreciation and that of the Bureau of Yards and Docks for the excellent cooperation which he and his entire Division and Service has rendered this Bureau in the organization of the naval construction regiments. . . "

In March, 1942, he reported to the Bethlehem Steel Corporation plant, Quincy, Massachusetts, to assist with fitting out the USS MASSACHUSETTS. He commanded her from her commissioning, May 12, 1942 until December of that year. For his services during the assault on and occupation of French Morocco from November 8-11, 1942, he was awarded a Letter of Commendation by the Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet, and authorized to wear the Commendation Ribbon.

Relieved of command of the MASSACHUSETTS on December 11, 1942, he assumed duty on December 23d, as Commander, Southeast Pacific Force. When relieved of that duty in October, 1943, he reported for duty as Commander, Alaskan Sector, under the Commandant, Thirteenth Naval District, Seattle, Washington. He was the first Commandant of the Seventeenth Naval District, which includes Alaska and the Aleutian Islands, with headquarters at Adak, established April 15, 1944, when that district was separated from the Thirteenth Naval District. The award of the Legion of Merit was authorized by Commander, North Pacific Force, and was accompanied by the following citation:

"For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service from October, 1943 to August, 1944, as Deputy Commander, North Pacific Force; Commander of a Task Force, and Commandant, Seventeenth Naval District. He not only gave valuable direct assistance to the Commander, North Pacific Force, but he also organized the Seventeenth Naval District and commanded the forces for escort and supply in the Alaskan Sea Frontier with such outstanding leadership that his work was a conspicuous contribution to the success of our operations against the enemy in the North Pacific. . . "

In August, 1944, he assumed command of Cruiser Division FOURTEEN Pacific Fleet, and served in that command until May 3, 1945. He was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of a third Legion of Merit with combat distinguishing device "V", the Bronze Star Medal, and a Gold Star in lieu of a second Bronze Star Medal, each with Combat "V", by Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., USN, Commander Third Fleet. The citations in part follow:

Gold Star in lieu of Third Legion of Merit: "For exceptionally meritorious conduct . . . as Commander Cruiser Division FOURTEEN, in action against enemy Japanese forces in the Western Pacific Ocean Areas, from August 1944, to February, 1945. . . . the ships of his division operated with a Fast Carrier Task Group to provide support for air strikes against the Philippine Islands and again during the invasion of Luzon, thereby contributing materially to the success of these operations."

Bronze Star Medal: "For heroic service as Commander of the Light Forces of Task Group THIRTY FOUR POINT FIVE, in action against a Japanese Fleet Unit off San Bernardino Straits, Philippine Islands, October 26, 1944. Exercising sound tactical judgment in a night engagement, (he) aggressively closed the hostile warship to 1700 yards and directed the ships of his command in a devastating gun action in which the enemy vessel was sunk before any return fire was observed.

Gold Star in lieu of Second Bronze Star Medal: "For meritorious achievement as Commander Cruiser Division FOURTEEN, operating as part of a Fast Carrier Task Group, from February 10, 1945. On March 1, 1945, while conducting operations in support of the landings at Iwo Jima and Okinawa and strikes against Kyushu, Tokyo, and the Kure area of the Japanese mainland, three cruisers and seven destroyers under (his) immediate command bombarded Okino Daito Jima . . . Seaplanes of the cruisers under his command rendered outstanding services in rescuing downed pilots and aircrewmembers despite the most hazardous conditions. His ships courageously shot down many enemy planes during attacks and performed outstandingly in the defense of the Task Group."

On May 15, 1945, he was designated Island Commander, Saipan, and Commandant, Naval Operating Base, Saipan. He accepted the surrender of the Japanese garrison at Marcus Island, August 31, 1945, the ceremony taking place on the forecastle of the destroyer BAGLEY. He was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the second Legion of Merit for ". . . outstanding services to the Government of the United States during operations against enemy Japanese forces from May 15 to December 15, 1945. As Island Commander, Saipan (he) coordinated the units under his command into a cohesive force to plan, construct and develop airfields, modern hospitals, assembly and supply depots and general Island improvements. As Commandant of the Naval Operating Base, Saipan, he efficiently directed the construction and development of facilities for the accommodation of ships of the Fleet . . . (developing Saipan) into a base of major military importance . . ."

Returning to the United States in January, 1946, he served as Administrative Officer of the Navy Department, from January 24 until March 15, 1946, when he was transferred to duty as Commandant, U.S. Naval Base, New York, New York. He served in that assignment until relieved of all active duty pending his retirement on August 1, 1947.

In addition to the Legion of Merit and two Gold Stars with Combat "V", the Bronze Star Medal and Gold Star with Combat "V", and the Commendation Ribbon, Vice Admiral Whiting has the Mexican Service Medal, the Victory Medal with Atlantic Fleet Clasp; the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; the American Campaign Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, the Philippine Liberation Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal.

Vice Admiral Whiting's official address is [REDACTED]