

COMMANDER WILLIAM T. AMEN, U. S. NAVY, RETIRED

William Thomas Amen was born in Scotia, California, on November 8, 1919, son of William Frederick and Viola Rebecca (Thomas) Amen. He received his early education in California, and after a year at San Jose State College and two years (1937-1940) at Humboldt State College, was engaged in general office work. He was appointed Aviation Cadet in the Volunteer Reserve on May 1, 1941, and designated Naval Aviator on January 15, 1942, having been commissioned Ensign, U. S. Naval Reserve on October 8, 1941. By subsequent advancement and his transfer to the U. S. Navy in October 1945, he attained the rank of Commander, to date from January 1, 1954. He was retired in that rank on July 1, 1962.

Ordered to the Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi, Texas, for duty, he served as a Flight Instructor there from January 16, 1942, until November 15, 1943, then was assigned to Composite Squadron 82, based on the USS ANZIO (CVE-57) until April 15, 1945. He was awarded the Air Medal and a Gold Star in lieu of the Second Air Medal "For meritorious achievement in aerial flight as Pilot of a Fighter Plane, attached to the USS ANZIO during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of Volcano Islands..." during February and March 1945, when he participated in five missions each, in support of amphibious operations against Iwo Jima, and "contributed materially to the success of his squadron..."

He had bomber-fighter training with VBF-74, VF-39 and VF-81 from April 15 to November 15, 1945, followed by service as Executive Officer of Fighter Squadron 81, assigned to the Atlantic Fleet. From July 1946 until May 1947 he was a student at the U. S. Naval School, General Line, at Newport, Rhode Island, and from July to December 1947 served as Liaison with the Army Air Force at Headquarters, Flight Service, Air Transport Command. He next had a tour of duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., where he was Head of Aviation Research, in the Aviation Plans Division, until June 1949.

In July 1949 he reported to the USS PHILIPPINE SEA for duty as Executive Officer of Fighter Squadron 111, and from February 1950 until June 1951 served as Commanding Officer of that Squadron, which had combat service in the Korean Area from August 1950 until March 1951, when returned to the United States on board the USS VALLEY FORGE. He was detached from VF-111 at Fleet Air Detachment at the Naval Air Station, San Diego, California, in July 1951, then served until May 1953 as Assistant Experimental Officer at the U. S. Naval Ordnance Test Station, Inyokern, California.

Ordered to the Precommissioning Detail of the USS RANDOLPH (CVA-15), in June 1953, he served as Assistant Operations Officer and Air Operations Officer on board that aircraft carrier from July 1, 1953 until September 1954. He then became Air Tactics Officer on the Staff of Commander Operational Development Force and served in that capacity until August 1957. During the next five years he was stationed at Beeville, Texas, serving first as Assistant Officer in Charge of Advanced Training Unit 213, Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Chase Field, later as Officer in Charge, ATU 203, and Aircraft Maintenance Officer, Chase Field. On June 30, 1962, he was relieved for transfer to Retired List.

"For **extraordinary** heroism and meritorious achievement in aerial flight in operations against the enemy in the Korean Theater from 5 August, 1950 to 1 February 1951..." he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. The citation states that as Squadron Commander, he participated in 35 strike missions over enemy territory. Gold Stars in lieu of four additional Air Medals were also awarded him for participation in five missions each against North Korean and Chinese Communist forces in the Korean Area in 1950-1951.

In addition to the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal and Gold Stars in lieu of five additional awards of the Air Medal, Commander Amen has the American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; National Defense Service Medal; Korean Service Medal; and the United Nations Service Medal.

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