

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

REAR ADMIRAL HARRY S. ETTER  
MEDICAL CORPS, U. S. NAVY

Harry Stough Etter was born in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, on October 15, 1915, son of Dr. Harry B. Etter and Mrs. Helen Augusta (Stough) Etter. He attended the Under Graduate School of Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, and in 1939 received the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the Medical School of that University. On January 1, 1940 he began his internship at Bellevue Hospital, New York, New York, and on July 2, 1940 was appointed an Acting Assistant Surgeon for intern training. Commissioned Assistant Surgeon, with the accompanying rank of Lieutenant (junior grade), in the U. S. Navy on March 20, 1941, he subsequently advanced in rank in the Medical Corps to that of Rear Admiral, to date from January 1, 1967.

After receiving his appointment in 1940, he interned at the Naval Hospital, Portsmouth, Virginia, until April 1941, after which he had instruction at the Naval Medical School, Washington, D. C. In July 1941 he joined the Staff of Commander Destroyer Division FOURTEEN as Division Medical Officer, and for a year, January 1942 to January 1943, served as Medical Officer of the USS MADISON (DD-425), which operated as a unit of Destroyer Division FOURTEEN performing convoy and patrol duty in North Atlantic waters during the early months of World War II.

Detached from the MADISON, he had postgraduate instruction at the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota, and in September 1943 reported as Chief of the Physical Medical and Rehabilitation Department at the U. S. Naval Hospital, Bethesda, Maryland. He remained there until September 1945, and the next month was assigned to the Physical Medical Division, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. He was an Instructor in Atomic, Biological and Chemical Defense at Treasure Island, San Francisco, California, between January 1948 and July 1951, when he returned to the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, for duty as Head of Atomic Defense. Twelve months later he became Head of the Bio-Chemical Defense Branch. He continued to serve in that capacity until May 1, 1954, when he assumed the duties of Director of the Special Weapons Defense Division.

In August 1955 he reported for instruction at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island and after completing the Naval Warfare and Senior Courses had duty from August 1956 until June 1959 on the Staff of the Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet. He next served as Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Liaison Officer to the Naval Radiological Defense Laboratory, Naval Base, San Francisco, California, and while there was also Assistant Director for Biomedical Research. In August 1961 he returned to the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, to head the Planning Division. In February 1965 he became Executive Officer of the Naval Hospital, Portsmouth, Virginia and in June 1966 assumed command of the Naval Hospital, Bethesda, Maryland. He reported in July 1967 as

Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery for Planning and Logistics, Navy Department and "for exceptionally meritorious conduct..." in that capacity was awarded the Legion of Merit. The citation further states: "...Responsible for fulfilling medical logistics for United States Armed Forces worldwide, (he) provided a thoroughly responsive medical support system ashore and afloat. Particularity notable were his efforts toward enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of medical department facilities in Vietnam..."

He became Deputy Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in February 1973.

In addition to the Legion of Merit, Rear Admiral Etter has the American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; and the National Defense Service Medal with bronze star.