

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

REAR ADMIRAL WALTER M. ENGER, CIVIL ENGINEER CORPS,
UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED

Walter Melvin Enger was born in Urbana, Illinois, on May 1, 1914, son of Melvin L. and Mary A. (Crawford) Enger. He attended the University of Illinois at Urbana, from which he received the degree of Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering in 1935. He was subsequently employed as an Engineer with the Bureau of Reclamation (Department of Interior) at Denver, Colorado; Parker Dam and Shasta Dam, California. He was commissioned Lieutenant (junior grade) in the Civil Engineer Corps of the U. S. Naval Reserve on August 27, 1941. Advancing progressively in rank, he subsequently attained that of Rear Admiral, to date from August 10, 1965, having transferred from the Naval Reserve to the Regular Navy on March 17, 1943.

Ordered into active Naval service, he reported in September 1941, as Facilities Officer in the Office of the Inspector of Naval Material, Los Angeles, California. He remained there until June 1942, after which he served as Assistant Officer in Charge of Construction, Civil Works, San Pedro, California. He was Officer in Charge of Construction, Civil Works, San Diego, California, between January and October 1943, when he became Assistant Officer in Charge, Civil Works, San Francisco, California.

He had training at the Naval Construction Battalion Center, Davisville, Rhode Island, from May to September 1944, then served for a year as Executive Officer of the 59th Naval Construction Battalion. In September 1945 he transferred, in a similar capacity, to the 72nd Naval Construction Battalion and while attached to that unit also had duty as Acting Officer in Charge. He became Officer in Charge of the 31st Naval Construction Battalion in January 1946 and in June of that year reported as Assistant Superintending Civil Engineer of Area IV, with headquarters in New Orleans, Louisiana. Continuing duty in the New Orleans area, he served from July 1947 to August 1948 as Deputy District Public Works Officer in the Eighth Naval District.

In August 1948 he became an Instructor in the Department of Marine Engineering at the Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland. He remained there until May 1951, then served as Public Works Officer at the Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, California. Assigned in October 1953 to Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., he had duty in connection with CEC Detail until September 1956, when he joined the Staff of Commander Naval Construction Brigade 10, to serve as Operations Officer and Engineering Officer.

He was Deputy Chief of Staff to the Commander Naval Construction Forces, Pacific, during the period September 1956 to June 1959 and in September of that year reported as Public Works Officer and Resident Officer in Charge of Construction at the Naval Air Station, Point Mugu,

California, where he remained until July 1961. He next served as Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks for Military Readiness, Navy Department, and in March 1964 assumed duty as Area Public Works Officer, Area Public Works Office, Chesapeake, with headquarters at the U. S. Naval Station, Washington (D. C.) Navy Yard Annex. In March 1965 he became Director, Chesapeake Division, Bureau of Yards and Docks. "For meritorious service from March 1964 to October 1965..." he was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal. The citation further states in part:

"During this period, Captain Enger was responsible for the development of general military planning for major Naval complexes at the National Naval Medical Center and the Washington Navy Yard, and for the United States Marine Corps Headquarters and Washington area Marine Corps activities; for the development of master plans for the Naval Research Laboratory, the Bolling/Anacostia Military Cantonment, and the Defense Office Building, Bolling; and for executing an emergency project at the Naval Hospital Bethesda and an emergency survey of military housing sites in the greater Washington area, as well as for the implementation of all the Bureau of Yards and Docks programs assigned to the Chesapeake Division..."

He served as Deputy Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks/Deputy of Civil Engineers, Navy Department from November 1965 until the reorganization of the Navy Department, effective May 1, 1966, when he became Vice Commander of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command and Deputy Chief of Civil Engineers of the Navy. "For exceptionally meritorious service from November 1965 to August 1969..." he was awarded the Legion of Merit. The citation continues in part:

"During a period marked by expanding efforts in support of United States military operations in the Republic of Vietnam, major Navy reorganization, and the development of new management techniques, (he) applied exceptional leadership, managerial skill, and engineering proficiency in directing and coordinating the many functions of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command. He utilized his keen insight and perception to make major contributions to the concept of the total Navy Facilities System..."

In August 1969 he reported as Commander Naval Facilities Engineering Command and Chief of Civil Engineers of the Navy. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal "for exceptionally meritorious service..." in that assignment and was cited in part as follows: "...As a result of Rear Admiral Enger's brilliant leadership, dynamic managerial ability and professional competence, Southeast Asia Construction contracts worth over \$1.8 billion were completed and efficiently closed out, superbly capping a remarkable effort in support of the Free World Forces and the Vietnamization program..."

On July 1, 1973 he was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy.

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In addition to the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit and the Navy Commendation Medal, Rear Admiral Enger has the American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia Clasp; and the National Defense Service Medal with bronze star.

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