

REAR ADMIRAL RALPH CLONTS ALEXANDER,  
UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED **NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION**

Rear Admiral Alexander was born on September 14, 1897, at Campbell, Texas. He was appointed to the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, from Ohio in 1914. Graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 28, 1917, with the Class of 1918, he advanced through the various grades to the rank of Captain to date from June 15, 1942. He was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy on June 1, 1948, and promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral.

Following graduation from the Academy in 1917, Rear Admiral Alexander had consecutive duty until 1922, aboard the USS VIRGINIA, and USS SALEM, assuming the duties of Gunnery Officer of the latter in 1920. From January 1922 until the summer of that year, he was assigned to the USS MARCUS, as Executive Officer, after which he served as Aide and Flag Lieutenant on the staff of Commander, Destroyer Squadrons, Pacific Fleet, USS CHARLESTON, flagship. Detached from that assignment late in 1922, he reported as Executive Officer aboard the USS MELVIN.

Returning to the United States in the summer of 1923, Rear Admiral Alexander had a two years tour of duty at the Naval Academy, followed by service in the USS TENNESSEE until October 1926. He had a year's duty as Aide and Communications Officer, staff of Commander, Battleship Divisions, Battle Fleet, USS WEST VIRGINIA, flagship, and upon detachment from that duty reported for duty in a like capacity on the staff of Commander in Chief, Battle Fleet, USS CALIFORNIA, flagship. From 1928 until the summer of 1930, he had a second tour of duty at the Naval Academy, following which he reported as Executive Officer of the USS DORSEY.

In April 1932, Rear Admiral Alexander reported as Aide and Flag Lieutenant on the staff of the Commander, Destroyers, Battle Force, USS DETROIT, flagship, serving in that duty until the summer of 1934, when he returned to the United States and was assigned to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, serving there until June 1937, when he reported as Commanding Officer of the USS CASSIN. From June 1940 until May of that year, he was under instruction at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, after which he began a three years tour of duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department. For his services in the above duty he received a Letter of Commendation, with authorization to wear the Commendation Ribbon, from the Secretary of the Navy, and commended as follows:

**LETTER OF COMMENDATION:**

"For outstanding performance of duty while attached to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, from December 1941, to June 1943. Displaying sound judgment and administrative ability in the administration of his duties, Captain Alexander rendered invaluable service in developing the military charac-

## LETTER OF COMMENDATION: (Cont'd)

teristics of Motor Torpedo Boats, their squadron organization, training, maintenance as mobile units with tenders and service facilities, and for effecting their early delivery to the Forward Areas prior to the Japanese attack in the Philippines. In addition, he initiated, planned and organized the delivery of the large type landing craft, from the interior of the United States to salt water by means of the inland Waterways. By his initiative, zealous efforts and unfaltering devotion to duty, Captain Alexander contributed to the successful prosecution of the war and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Relieved of duty in the Department in June 1943, Rear Admiral Alexander reported to the Bethlehem Steel Company, San Francisco, California, in connection with the fitting out of the USS RENO and assumed command of that vessel upon her commissioning on December 28, 1943, serving in her until February 1945. For his services aboard that cruiser from June 13 to 30, 1944, he received a Letter of Commendation, with authorization to wear the Commendation Ribbon. He was also awarded a Navy Cross and a Legion of Merit, and cited as follows:

## NAVY CROSS:

"For extraordinary heroism while serving as Commanding Officer of the USS RENO during operations against the enemy in the Pacific Area, from October 14 to 24, 1944. An inspiring and forceful leader throughout a heavy enemy air attack, Captain Alexander courageously fought his ship to shoot down six torpedo planes despite damage done to his vessel by a Japanese aircraft. Continuing his daring action, he directed his ship during rescue and salvage operations in connection with the USS PRINCETON, maneuvering his ship to repel and destroy attacking aircraft and maintaining the RENO in an effective position to aid the stricken carrier in spite of intense smoke and fire and the danger of major explosions. His outstanding ability, fearless leadership and courageous devotion to duty reflect the highest credit upon Captain Alexander and the United States Naval Service."

## LEGION OF MERIT: (With Combat "V")

"For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services to the Government of the United States as Commanding Officer of the USS RENO, during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Pacific War Area, from November 3 to 10, 1944. Quick to act when his ship was torpedoed by the enemy, Captain Alexander proceeded to salvage his vessel and, by his skillful seamanship and determined initiative in the face of adverse weather conditions

LEGION OF MERIT: (Cont'd)

and the possibility of further hostile attacks, succeeded in returning his seriously damaged craft to port. His inspiring leadership, untiring efforts and zealous devotion to duty throughout reflect the highest credit upon Captain Alexander and the United States Naval Service."

From April to October 1945, Rear Admiral Alexander served on the staff of the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, and upon detachment from that duty he was again ordered to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, for duty. From July 1, 1946, until the time he was relieved of all active duty pending retirement, he served as Chief of the Fleet Maintenance Division in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. On June 1, 1948 he was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy.

In addition to the Navy Cross, the Legion of Merit, and the Commendation Ribbon with Bronze Star, Rear Admiral Alexander has the Victory Medal, Atlantic Fleet Clasp (USS WEST VIRGINIA); the American Defense Service Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Area Campaign Medal; the American Area Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal. He also has the Legion of Honor awarded him by the French Government, for service while in command of the USS CASSIN.

10 December 1948.