

Contributed by Darryl Baker courtesy Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum



RADM SMALL BIDS "ALOHA" TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE PACIFIC SUBMARINE FORCE.

REAR ADMIRAL WALTER LOWRY SMALL, U. S. NAVY

Walter Lowry Small, son of the late Judge Walter Lowry Small and Mrs. Elizabeth White Small, was born October 31, 1916, at Elizabeth City, North Carolina. He attended Elizabeth City High School and graduated from Woodberry Forest School, Orange, Virginia, before his appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, in 1934. He was graduated from the Academy and commissioned Ensign in June 1938. He subsequently advanced through the grades and was promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral on August 10, 1965.

Upon graduation from the Naval Academy, Ensign Small served in USS PORTLAND until September 1940 when he reported to Submarine School, New London, Connecticut, for instruction. After graduation he reported for duty in USS R-3, the first WWI type submarine to be recommissioned.

In September 1941, as a Lieutenant (junior grade) he reported to USS FLYING FISH, the first submarine of the U. S. Navy commissioned after the beginning of World War II. FLYING FISH joined the Pacific Fleet in the spring of 1942 in time to participate in the Battle of Midway. Admiral Small served in her during eight highly successful war patrols, serving consecutively as First Lieutenant, Torpedo and Gunnery Officer, Navigator, and finally Executive Officer, being detached in February 1944.

For his service in FLYING FISH, Lieutenant (junior grade) Small received the Silver Star Medal and a Letter of Commendation for meritorious service during the second war patrol in which FLYING FISH damaged a Japanese battleship near Truk which was on its way to Guadalcanal to reinforce Japanese forces opposing our landings there. Lieutenant (junior grade) Small was cited for his actions in entering a trim tank to make repairs following a severe depth charge attack.

He received a second Letter of Commendation for the third war patrol of FLYING FISH, which was credited with the first enemy ship sunk by complete radar fire control. He received a Gold Star in lieu of a second Silver Star medal for FLYING FISH's fifth patrol in which 40,000 tons of enemy shipping was sunk or damaged off Northern Honshu.

In April 1944, Lieutenant Small served in USS ICEFISH as navigator and executive officer. He made one war patrol in ICEFISH receiving a third letter of commendation and authorization to wear the Commendation Ribbon for attacks on a Japanese convoy, including sinking a transport carrying reinforcements to Leyte.

From March 1945 to December 1945, Lieutenant Commander Small commanded USS BATFISH. In BATFISH he made one war patrol, earning a fourth Letter of Commendation with authorization to wear the Commendation Ribbon, for services which included bombardment of the Japanese shore and rescue of three Army aviators shot down on a raid over Japan.

- MORE -

October 1969



During World War II, Admiral Small made a total of 10 successful war patrols, with a Submarine Combat Award made for each patrol. A total of 25 enemy ships were torpedoed on these patrols, 17 of which were sunk.

During 1946, Commander Small was executive officer of the attack transport USS LAMAR. Later he was instructor in the Department of Ordnance and Gunnery at the Naval Academy. His next duty assignment was as Personal Aide to Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN, Chief of Naval Operations. He took command of USS CLAMAGORE, one of the first GUPPY snorkel submarines, in January 1948. During this time CLAMAGORE won the Battle Efficiency Pennant for fiscal year 1949, and Commander Small authored the first manual on "Tactics for Submarine Escape and Evasion."

From July 1949 to March 1950, Commander Small served as Force Training Officer on the Staff of Commander, Submarine Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet. From April 1950 until July 1952 he was head of the Tactical Department, Submarine School, New London, Connecticut. During that period he, with the aid of two assistants, authored the first complete text on "Submarine Approach and Attack Tactics." He was a student at the Armed Forces Staff College until February 1953, when he took command of the destroyer USS VAN VALKENBURGH (DD-656) until the ship was decommissioned in February 1954.

From February 1954 until April 1955, he was Commander, Submarine Division 61, consisting of four fast attack and one troop carrying submarine. During part of this period, he also served as Commander Submarine Division 62 which consisted of six radar picket submarines.

Commander Small served as Operational Planning Officer for Undersea Warfare, Amphibious Warfare, and Submarine Operations, during the period May 1955 through August 1957 on the staff of Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet. During this period he was promoted to the rank of Captain.

Captain Small attended the senior course in Naval Warfare at the Naval War College, Newport, R. I., and in July 1958 became Chief Staff Officer to Commander Submarine Flotilla One, San Diego, Calif. In July 1959 he took command of the submarine tender USS SPERRY. From June 1960 to June 1962 he served as Director of Science and Engineering at the Naval Academy.

From mid-1962 to mid-1963, he commanded Submarine Squadron TEN which included a division of nuclear attack submarines and a division of fast attack submarines. Captain Small served as Chief of Staff to Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, from June 1963 to June 1964. In mid-1964 he was transferred to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations as Head of Navy Plans Branch. For his work during that tour he was awarded the Legion of Merit, and while serving in that tour was promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral and became Assistant to the Chief of Naval Operations for War Gaming Matters.

During the last quarter of 1965, Admiral Small was Chairman of a Military Sub-Group convened in Paris with members from the armed services of six participating nations to examine the proposed Atlantic nuclear force as a possible solution to problems of NATO nuclear sharing.

REAR ADMIRAL SMALL - 3

In May 1967, Admiral Small became Commander Middle East Force. His flagship, USS VALCOUR (AGF-1), was based at Bahrain Island in the Persian Gulf. He was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of a Second Legion of Merit for his services in that duty.

Admiral Small assumed duties as Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, in June 1968.

In addition to the Silver Star Medal with Gold Star, the Legion of Merit with Gold Star, and the Commendation Medal with Star and Combat "V". Rear Admiral Small has the American Defense Medal with star; the American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three operation stars; the World War II Victory Medal; the National Defense Service Medal with bronze star; Philippine Liberation Ribbon; and the Submarine Combat Insignia with one silver and four bronze stars. He is the author of two significant publications concerning submarine operations, "The Submarine Escape and Evasion Manual" (1949) and "Submarine Approach and Attack Tactics" (1952).

He is married to the former Miss Jane Harris of Toledo, Ohio, daughter of the late Rear Admiral Robert W. Cary, USN (Ret.) He has two daughters, Elizabeth C. and Jane C.

END

