



**Charles E. Houston, Captain, USN**

Charles Edward. Houston was born in Park Rapids, Minnesota, on June 28, 1912, son of the late Dr. Charles A. Houston, and Mrs. Josephine (Fairchild.) Houston. He attended Park Rapids High School and before his appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, from his native state in 1932, he prepared at the Wertz Preparatory School, also located in Annapolis. Graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 4, 1936, he subsequently advanced in rank attaining that of Captain, to date from May 1, 1955.

Following graduation from the Naval Academy in 1936, he reported aboard the USS *Colorado*, and in May 1938 transferred to the USS *Boggs*. Detached, from that auxiliary vessel in January 1939, he was ordered to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, for flight training. Designated Naval Aviator on February 7, 1939, he remained at the Pensacola Air Station until March 1940, when he joined Scouting Squadron SEVENTY ONE, to serve with that unit until January 1941.

He was attached to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, when the United States entered World, War II, December 8, 1941, and in March 1943 was assigned to Bombing Squadron ONE HUNDRED FORTY as Executive Officer. "For heroism and extraordinary achievement in aerial flight as Division Leader in Bombing Squadron ONE HUNDRED FORTY in action against enemy Japanese forces in the Solomon Islands Area from September 15 to December 22, 1943..." he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. The citation continues in part:

"Leading his squadron in a special mine-laying operation on the night of November 16 and 17, (he) defied intense anti-aircraft fire, and subsequent aerial opposition to execute a low level run down the channel to the mine-release point and, despite adverse weather conditions, succeeded in mining a narrow, strongly defended waterway of vital importance to enemy shipping without the loss of a single plane. Subsequently carrying out a routine patrol on December 22, he launched an attack against a loaded enemy supply barge off Pinipel Island and, striking skillfully at his target, personally destroyed the hostile vessel. By his airmanship and courage on these and numerous other occasions, Commander Houston contributed to the infliction of extensive damage and destruction on enemy installations and shipping..."

He became Commanding Officer of Bombing Squadron ONE HUNDRED THIRTY EIGHT in June 1944, and in December of the same year, assumed command of Patrol Bombing Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY FOUR. He was awarded the Navy Cross for "heroism...as Patrol Plane Commander of a Navy search bomber over the East China Sea on June 26, 1945..." The citation further states in part: "He attacked a strong enemy convoy of five ships at low altitude, and despite intense accurate anti-aircraft fire, he scored a direct hit on a ten thousand ton transport..." In June 1945, while attached to Patrol Bombing Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY FOUR, he was taken a "Prisoner of War" by the Japanese.

Liberated in September 1945, following the cessation of hostilities in August of that year, he returned to the United States and during November and December 1945 had helicopter training at the U. S. Coast Guard Air Station, Brooklyn, New York. He next served as a member on the Joint Operations Review Board, Army and Navy Staff College, Washington, D. C., and from June 1946 until March 1947 had duty as Commanding and Executive Officer of Helicopter Development Squadron THREE (the Navy's first helicopter squadron). In May 1947 he assumed command of Fighting Squadron SIX-B, embarked in the USS *Coral Sea*, and in April 1943 assumed command of Helicopter Utility Squadron TWO.

In October 1949 he became Head of the Rotary Wing Design Branch in the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department and for a year, July 1951-July 1952 was Assistant Chief of Staff for Plans on the staff of Commander Fleet Air, Hawaii. Continuing duty in Hawaii, he was in command of the Naval Air Station, Pearl Harbor, until August 1957 when he reported as Executive Officer of the USS *Tarawa*. While attached to that aircraft carrier he participated in the "Round the World" Cruise, including a "Good-Will" cruise to Australia.

Detached from the *Tarawa* in October 1954, he served as Head of, the Aviation Ships Branch, Air Warfare Division in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, until May 1957, when he was ordered to duty as Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Station, Cubi Point, Subic Bay, Luzon, Philippine Islands.

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In addition to the Navy Cross and the Distinguished Flying Cross, Captain Houston has the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; the American Campaign Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with four engagement stars; the World War II Victory Medal; the Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia and Europe Clasps; the China Service Medal; the National Defense Service Medal; the Korea Service Medal; and the United Nations Service Medal.

He was married to the former Elizabeth Davis, an Army junior, and they had one son, Charles G. Houston.