



**Thomas P. Jeter, Rear Admiral, USN**

Thomas Powers Jeter was born on August 25, 1898, in Florence, Alabama, son of Richard Cullen and Mary Lee (Powers) Jeter. He attended Aiken Institute, in Aiken, South Carolina, before his appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy from the Second District of South Carolina in 1915. As a Midshipman he was Captain of the Inter-collegiate Champion Fencing Team. champion in foils, sabers, and canes. Graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 6, 1918, a member of the Class of 1919, he subsequently advanced to the rank of Commodore, on October 20, 1944. He was transferred to the Retired List of the Navy on February 1, 1949, and promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral on the basis of combat citations.

After graduation from the Naval Academy in 1918, he had a brief assignment with Cruiser Force, Atlantic Fleet, on board the USS *Plattsburg*. He reported on August 18, that year, for duty in the USS *Jenkins*, operating with the Destroyer Flotilla out of Queenstown, Ireland, remaining-aboard that destroyer until after the Armistice. He continued sea duty for more than two years after reporting to the USS *New York*, a battleship assigned as Flagship of Battleship Squadron 4 (and Division 8), U. S. Pacific Fleet.

Detached from the *New York* in July 1921, he was ordered to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, for flight-training. He was designated Naval Aviator on December 20, 1921, and assigned to Aircraft Squadrons, Pacific Fleet, based at San Diego, California. In November 1923 he was transferred to Aircraft Squadrons, Scouting Fleet, on the East Coast. Between January 1924 and June 1926 he was attached to the

Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., where he served in the Plans Division, and had collateral duty during that period as Liaison Officer for the Racing Detachment, Aide to the White House, and as a member of the American Olympic Team (1924).

He completed a course of instruction in Aeronautical Engineering at the Army Air Service Engineering School, McCook Field, Dayton, Ohio, and in July 1927 was detached with orders to Aircraft Squadrons, Battle Fleet. In that assignment he served with fighting and bombing squadrons based on the USS *Saratoga*. He next had duty as Aide and Flag Lieutenant on the staff of Commander Aircraft Squadrons, Battle Fleet, in 1929, and for three years thereafter served as a member of the Board of Inspection and Survey, Navy Department. In the latter duty he demonstrated new Navy aircraft of that period.

Returning to Aircraft Squadrons, Battle Fleet in July 1933, he commanded Fighting Squadron 2, based on the USS *Lexington*, for two years, and later served as Operations Officer on the staff of Commander Aircraft, Battle Force, from June 1935 until June 1936. Completing the course in Strategy and Tactics at the Naval War College, Newport Rhode Island, in June 1937, he was assigned duty as Inspector of Naval Aircraft at Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio, and at Wichita, Kansas, serving until November of the same year. For the next two years he served as Advisor to the Argentine Ministry of Marine, in Buenos Aires. After short periods of duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations and the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, he joined the USS *Enterprise*, in which he served first as Navigator, later as Executive Officer, during the period June 1940 until April 1942,

He is entitled to the Ribbon for and a facsimile of the Presidential Unit Citation awarded the USS *Enterprise* "For consistently outstanding performance and distinguished achievement during repeated action against enemy Japanese forces in the Pacific war area, December 7, 1941, to November 15, 1942..." The citation continues in part: "Participating in nearly every major carrier engagement in the first year of the war, the *Enterprise* and her Air Group...did sink or damage on her own a total of 35 Japanese vessels and shoot down a total of 185 Japanese aircraft..."

After six months' duty at Headquarters, U. S. Fleet, he served from November 1942 to December 1943 on the staff of the Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet. He commanded the new aircraft carrier) USS *Bunker Hill*, from February until July 1944, and "For exceptionally meritorious conduct...as Commanding Officer (of that aircraft carrier), Flagship of a Task Group during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Pacific Theater from March 5 to June 28, 1944..." he was awarded the Legion of Merit with Combat "V." The citation continues:

"In command of a vital unit of our surface forces operating in the most forward areas, Captain Jeter consistently maintained his command in a state of high combat

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efficiency enabling his ship and embarked air groups to strike relentlessly at Japanese shore Installations, aircraft and forces afloat... (contributing) materially to the infliction of extensive damage upon enemy military and naval forces throughout a critical period of operations. His professional skill and inspiring leadership were important factors in the defeat of the Japanese Empire..."

Reporting as Chief of Staff and Aide to Commander Battleships, Pacific Fleet, in July 1944, he was advanced to Commodore while serving in that assignment in October of the same year. Detached in April 1945, he reported to the Secretary of State for temporary duty as Technical Expert to the United States Delegation at the United National Conference on International Organization, at San Francisco, California. He returned to the Navy Department in July 1945, and served until October of that year with the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air).

From November 1945 to January 1947 he served as Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Station, Ottumwa, Iowa, after which he had command of the Naval Pre-flight School at Pensacola, Florida, until September 1948. His last assignment before his retirement in February 1949 was with Commander Fleet Air, West Coast.

In addition to the Legion of Merit with Combat "V," and the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon, Rear Admiral Jeter has the World War I Victory Medal, Destroyer Clasp; the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; the American Campaign Medal, the World War II Victory Medal.

Rear Admiral Jeter and his wife, the former Miss Josephine Augusta Duckett of Hyattsville, Maryland had a son, Thomas P. Jeter, Jr.