Theodore C. Lonnquest, Rear Admiral, USN

Theodore Clayton Lonnquest was born in Lynn, Massachusetts, on April 10, 1894, son of David E. T. and Carrie Belle (Thurston) Lonnquest. He received his education in the public schools of his native city and Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, where he was graduated as a Phi Beta Kappa scholar with a Bachelor of Science degree in June 1917. Shortly after graduation he enrolled on July 30, 1917 in the U. S. Naval Reserve Force, and on October 1 of that year was commissioned Ensign in the USNRF. He was promoted successively to Lieutenant (jg), and Lieutenant during the war period. Transferred to the Regular Navy on November 30, 1921, he subsequently progressed in rank, attaining that of Rear Admiral, to date from July 4, 1943. On May 1, 1956 he was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy.

Called to active duty with the Naval Reserve Force in July 1917, he served throughout World War I at the Naval Air Station, Chatham, Massachusetts, He was attached to the Naval Air Station, Akron, Ohio, in August and September 1919, when he was transferred to the-Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. He is one of the few Naval officers to receive designations as a Naval Aviator for both LTA (dirigibles) and HTA (airplanes). In June 1922 he reported for instruction in aeronautical engineering at the Postgraduate School, Annapolis, Maryland, and from July 1923 until May 1924 continued the course at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge from which he received the degree of Master of Science in 1924.

During October and November 1924 he served in the USS *Langley* and in December joined Observation Squadron TWO. In March 1925 he reported as Senior Aviator with Observation Squadron ONE) attached to the USS *Pennsylvania*, and in September 1926 assumed further duty in connection with engineering with that squadron. After his return to the United States in July 1927, he served for three years in the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., first in the Scientific Section, later in the Design Section of the Material Division, in charge of instrument and propeller development. He was responsible for the Navy's program to develop flight instruments of greatly improved versatility and reliability, standardized with those of the Army and replacing the aircraft instruments of World War I. The program included the use of molded phenolic material for instrument cases, one of the Navy's early service utilization of plastics which was to become so common a generation later,

In July 1930 he returned to sea as Executive Officer of Torpedo Squadron TWO-B. based on the USS *Saratoga*, flagship of Aircraft Squadrons, Battle Fleet. During the period July 1931-November 1932 he was Force Engineering Officer on the staff of Commander Aircraft, Battle Force, and for five months thereafter was in command of Scouting Squadron TWO-B, still based on the *Saratoga*. He was then called to Washington, D. C., to become Director of the Power Plant Design Section, Bureau of Aeronautics, where during a four-year tour of duty, he pioneered in the Navy's program to perfect the two row radical aircraft engine and the mechanically driven multistage supercharger. Both of these developments subsequently proved their merit as the foundation of the Navy's combat aircraft engine program of World War II.

Between March 1937 and February 1941, he had duty as Assembly and Repair Officer at the Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia, Designated for Aeronautical Engineering Duty Only, by Act of June 25, 1940; he returned to the Bureau of Aeronautics to serve throughout World War II as Deputy Director and later as Director of Engineering. This assignment included service in the Pacific Area, in connection with the introduction of new aircraft developed under his direction.

He was awarded the Legion of Merit and cited in part as follows: "For exceptionally meritorious conduct...as Assistant Director, and later Director of the Engineering Division, Bureau of Aeronautics from February 1941 to October 1945. Responsible for the engineering of combat aircraft and equipage of constantly improved quality, Captain Lonnquest was instrumental in the revolutionary advances which have made this nation the greatest naval air power in the world. Displaying extraordinary understanding of the problems involved, he supervised the widely divergent programs which provided aircraft with increased firepower, higher performance engines, additional armor protection, new electronic weapons and other improvements resulting in greater combat efficiency and safety in flight...(His) foresight, sound administrative policies and devotion to duty were major factors in the effective functioning of naval airpower and materially contributed to the successful prosecution of the war." - Continued -

He is entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of, the Navy Unit Commendation awarded the USS *Wasp*, for service from May 19, 1944 to August 15, 1945.

In January 1946 he was designated Special Assistant to the Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics. As such, he was the representative of that Bureau on the staff of the Commander, Joint Task Force ONE, during Operation CROSSROADS - the atomic bomb test at Bikini Atoll. He received a Letter of Commendation with Ribbon, from the Secretary of the Navy for outstanding performance of duty as Officer-in-Charge of the Bureau of Aeronautics Group on the staff of the Director of Ship Material, Joint Task Force ONE, during Operation CROSSROADS from January 21 to October 14, 1946. (He) had complete charge of all planning, preparation and inspection in connection with aircraft and other Bureau of Aeronautics equipment and materials exposed for the two atomic bomb tests. In addition, he supervised several Bureau of Aeronautics projects, the most important of which was the Navy Drone program and further, rendered outstanding service as Head of an Initial Boarding Team which boarded target vessels for inspections immediately after the two explosions...obtaining extremely important test information and contributing materially to the success of the history-making operation.

Upon his return from Bikini, he had duty in connection with aviation applications of atomic energy, in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department. In January 1947 he was transferred to the Office of the Secretary of the Navy for duty with the Atomic-Energy Commission. In that assignment he was a Member of the Military Liaison Committee and the Atomic Energy Sub-Committee of the Joint Research and Development Board. He became Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics for Research and Development in June 1947, with additional duty as Technical Assistant to the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air). The same month, he was appointed by the President to be a member of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics and in 1948 received from the National Air Council the Navy award for outstanding achievement in aviation research and experiment during that year,

In April 1949 he became Deputy Chief and Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, and continued to serve in that capacity until September 1952. On October 28, he reported as Bureau of Aeronautics General Representative, Central District, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio, and was later assigned additional duty on the staff of the Commander Eastern Sea Frontier and was Interim Deputy Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics under the Catastrophe Plan. He was relieved of all active duty pending his retirement effective May 1, 1956.

In addition to the Legion of Merit, the Commendation Ribbon, and the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, Rear Admiral Lonnquest has the Victory Medal (World War I); the American Defense Service Medal; the American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; and the National Defense Service Medal. He also has the Expert Pistol Shot Medal.

In 2923 he married Miss Marie Alice Born of Pensacola, Florida. They had two children, son, Lieutenant T. 0. Lonnquest, Jr., USN (USNA, Class of 1945), and a daughter, Mrs. Dorothy Elaine Rickard.

He was a Member of Phi Beta Kappa and Lambda Chi Alpha fraternities, the Cosmos Club, Washington, D. C., and Masonic orders. He' was a Fellow of the Institute of Aeronautical Sciences, Past President and Honorary Member of the American Society of Naval Engineers, and American Delegate to the Federation Aeronautique Internationale. In 1952 he received the Distinguished Citizen's Award awarded by the City of Lynn, Massachusetts.