



Francis E. Nuessle, Rear Admiral, USN

Francis Edward Nuessle was born in Washburn, North Dakota, on January 23, 1911, son of William L. and Emma Nuessle. He attended the University of North Dakota for one term and entered the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, on appointment from his native state. Graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 2, 1932, he subsequently advanced, attaining the rank of Captain, to date from January 1, 1951. In July 1960 his selection for the rank of Rear Admiral was approved by the President.

Following graduation from the Naval Academy, he served for two years in the USS *Saratoga*, performing various divisional duties as a junior officer on board that aircraft carrier. He was then ordered to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, where he completed flight training and was designated a Naval Aviator in November 1935.

During the next four years, from November 1935 until August 1939, he served in various fighter bomber and bomber squadrons operating from the aircraft carriers *Ranger*, *Lexington* and *Saratoga*. Thereafter, during the period September 1939 to June 1941 while attached to the Naval Aircraft Factory, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, he participated in developmental and flight test, operation as a test pilot and project engineer. In July 1941 he took command of the seaplane tender USS *Gannet* (AVP-8), which participated in operations of the U. S. Naval Support Forces in the North Atlantic, Newfoundland and Greenland prior to the outbreak of World War II in December 1941. At the time of Pearl Harbor, *Gannet* was operating from Bermuda, tending seaplanes engaged in anti-submarine warfare, ocean patrol and rescue operations. He continued in command until the ship was sunk by an enemy submarine in the North Atlantic in June 1942.

"For heroic achievement as Commanding Officer of the USS *Gannet* when that vessel was torpedoed and sunk by an enemy submarine in the vicinity of Bermuda on June 7, 1942....." he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. The cita-

tion further states: "Realizing that his ship was sinking too rapidly to transmit a radio message or lower the lifeboats to the water Lieutenant Nuessle directed abandon ship operations with exceptional skill, instructing survivors to cling together on three rafts which had been thrown clear and, by his prompt action and sound judgment, was instrumental in saving the lives of sixty-two of his seventy-seven crew members. His initiative and courage, throughout, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the U. S. Naval Service. The Combat 'V' was authorized.

For the next two years he commanded seaplane Patrol Squadron THIRTY-ONE, during the anti-submarine offensive in the North Atlantic, and Bomber Squadron ONE HUNDRED FIVE and Patrol Air Group ONE operating from the British Isles during the anti-submarine offensive in the Western Approaches and the Bay of Biscay. Prior to the Normandy Invasion in June 1944, he was assigned to the Staff of the Commander, U. S. Naval Task Force taking part in "Operation Overlord." His duties there were Assistant Air Officer for the coordination of invasion operations of the Allied Tactical Air Forces with those of the Naval Task Force.

For service in World War II he was also awarded the Air Medal with citation in part as follows: "For meritorious achievement in aerial flight as pilot of PB4Y-1 Bomber in Patrol Bombing Squadron ONE HUNDRED FIVE, he engaged in anti-submarine patrol in the Bay of Biscay and English Channel Areas, from October 1943 to May 1944. A skilled and intrepid airman, Commander Nuessle participated in numerous vital missions over enemy-infested waters, andwas responsible in large measure for the outstanding record of his gallant crew whose combined efforts aided in bringing about the defeat of the U-boat in the Battle of the Atlantic....."

In 1945, after commanding a Liberator Training Unit at Chincoteague, Virginia, Admiral Nuessle served the first of three tours of duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. He was assigned to the Aviation Plans Division

until 1947 when he became Executive Officer of the aircraft carrier USS *Princeton* for two years.

Upon graduating from the Air War College in 1949, Admiral Nuessle returned to the Aviation Plans Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations from another two year tour of duty.

In July 1952 he was assigned as Air Officer of the Naval Operational Development Force, and then attended the National War College. From July 1955 to June 1957 he was Chief of Staff, U.S. Naval Striking Force, Southern Europe, followed by a year's duty as Commanding Officer of the aircraft carrier USS *Midway*, operating in the Pacific.

Admiral Nuessle returned to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations in July 1958 for duty in the Strategic Plans Division. Subsequently he served as Chief of Staff, Carrier Division TWO, and then as Commander Carrier Division FOURTEEN, operating in the Atlantic and Mediterranean.

Prior to coming to the Naval War College as Chief of Staff on April 20, 1964, Admiral Nuessle was Commander in Chief Pacific Representative to the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff for two years at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska.

Admiral Nuessle holds the Bronze Star with Combat "V"; Air Medal with Star, in addition to various campaign medals for the Mediterranean and European areas of combat, Captain Nuessle has the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; American Campaign Medal.; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal; China Service Medal (extended), and; the National. Defense Service.

He was married to the former Elizabeth Hoover, of Chevy Chase, Maryland. They had four children, Warren, William P. , Francis E., Jr., and Virginia D. Nuessle.