



**Rico Botta, Rear Admiral, USN**

Rico Botta was born in Melbourne, Australia, on November 2, 1890, son of Enrico and Lily Bagley Botta. He was educated in Melbourne public schools, St. John's Preparatory School, and Melbourne School of Engineering. Entering the United States in 1908 he enlisted in the U. S. Naval Reserve Force as a Petty Officer, second class, in December 1917. He was appointed Ensign in June 1918, was promoted to Lieutenant (jg) October 1, 1918, and Lieutenant, April 1, 1919. Transferred to the U. S. Navy in the latter rank in November 1921, he subsequently attained the rank of Rear Admiral on January 11, 1946, to date from June 30, 1943. He was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy on December 1, 1952.

Following his enlistment in the Naval Reserve Force in December 1917, during World War I, he had duty at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, until August 1918, when he reported as Officer in Charge of Instruction in Engines, Naval Aviation Detail, First Naval District, Boston, Massachusetts. In January 1919 he was assigned to the Wright Aeronautical Corporation, and the following June returned to the Pensacola Air Station where he was designated Naval Aviator on June 3, 1919, before his release from active duty later that month.

Recalled to active duty in his former rank of Lieutenant in August 1920, he again reported to the Naval, Air Station, Pensacola, where he was an instructor until April 1922. He was then assigned to the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. He served in the Material Division of that Bureau organized in 1921, until October 1924. Ordered to duty with Aircraft Squadrons, Battle Fleet, he joined Scouting Squadron 2, attached to the aircraft tender *Aroostook*, and later served with Torpedo Bombing

Squadron 2, and Scouting Squadron 1, based on the aircraft carrier *Langley*. He was transferred in September 1926 to the *Langley* and had duty aboard that carrier until December 1927.

Between January 1928 and August 1930, he again had duty at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. He next joined Patrol Squadron 9, attached to the *Aroostook*, and later the USS *Argonne*, and as Executive Officer of that Squadron until June, 1931 when he assumed command of Patrol Squadron 7, also of the *Argonne*. In June 1932 he became Commanding Officer of Patrol Squadron 2, based on Coco Solo, Canal Zone. Three years later he assumed command of Observation Squadron 1, aviation unit of the battleship *Texas*, and in February 1936 was transferred to command of Observation Squadron 4, aviation unit of the battleship *West Virginia*. He remained in the latter assignment until December 1936.

He returned to the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, for duty from January 1937 until December 1942, first in the Engineering Division Material Branch, and later as Head of the Power Plant Design Section. For this service he received a Letter of Commendation with authorization to wear the Commendation Ribbon from the Secretary of Navy as follows: "Charged with the responsibility for the design and development of power plants of maximum effectiveness for fleet aircraft you performed your duties in a position of great responsibility with outstanding competence, technical skill, and aggressive leadership. It was largely through your keen foresight and vigorous intelligent direction of the aircraft engines program that Naval Aviation entered the war with the best aircraft engines in the world..."

In December 1942 he reported for duty as Assembly and Repair Officer at the Naval Air Station, San Diego, California. "For exceptionally meritorious conduct (in that capacity) from December 31, 1942 to August 14, 1945..." he was awarded the Legion of Merit. The citation states in part: "...By his outstanding technical knowledge and skill, (he) enabled his department to meet the ever increasing demands of the Fleet Air Commands for combat aircraft of the latest type and with the latest combat-improved changes installed..."

In February 1946, he became Fleet Air and Maintenance Officer on the Staff of Commander Air Force, Atlantic Fleet. He remained in that assignment until April 1949, when he reported as Assistant Chief of Naval Material and Director of the Production Policy Division, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. He continued serving there until June 1950, and on July 1, he assumed command of the Naval Air Material Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. On December 1, 1952 he was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy.

In addition to the Legion of Merit and Commendation Ribbon, Rear Admiral Botta has the World War I Victory Medal; the American Defense Service Medal; the American Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal.

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Married to the former Miss Elsa C. Ricks of New Orleans, Louisiana, he had a daughter, Phyllis R. Botta.