

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN EARL F. GODFREY, UNITED STATES NAVY

Earl Francis Godfrey was born in Cozad, Nebraska, on August 9, 1924, son of Earl Lawrence (now deceased) and Frances M. (Tuthill) Godfrey. He attended Nebraska State Teachers College at Kearney, and the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. He enlisted in the U. S. Naval Reserve on September 17, 1942 as an Aviation Cadet and had flight training at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. He was commissioned Ensign, USNR, and designated Naval Aviator on July 19, 1944 and subsequently advanced in rank to that of Captain, to date from July 1, 1965, having transferred from the Naval Reserve to the U. S. Navy in August 1947.

Following his commissioning and a month's instruction at the Operational Training Command, Daytona Beach, Florida, he joined Fighter Squadron EIGHTY-EIGHT, attached to the USS YORKTOWN, in October 1944. He received the Air Medal and a Gold Star in lieu of the Second Air Medal and was cited in part as follows:

Air Medal: "For meritorious achievement...in operations against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of the Japanese Homeland from July 10 to August 13, 1945. Participated in five missions carried out under hostile anti-aircraft fire near strategic airfields and installations and in heavily guarded sea lanes, Ensign Godfrey bombed a small enemy vessel in adjacent waters and penetrated anti-aircraft fire to blow up a locomotive and strafe revetments and grounded aircraft, thereby contributing materially to the infliction of extensive damage on the enemy..."

Gold Star in lieu of the Second Air Medal: "For meritorious achievement during operations against enemy forces over the Japanese Homeland, July 10, 1945. Obtaining excellent photographic coverage of six important airfields in the face of intense anti-aircraft fire (he) contributed materially to the success of his squadron in this area..."

He is also entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Presidential Unit Citation awarded the USS YORKTOWN.

After a period of inactive duty, January to August 1947, he had further instruction at the Naval Air Training Command, Pensacola, Florida, and in July 1948 joined Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWELVE, based on the USS PHILIPPINE SEA. For completing twenty missions over the Korean Area during the period August 6, 1950 to January 26, 1951, while attached to that squadron, he received Gold Stars in lieu of the Third and Fourth Air Medals. He also is entitled to the Ribbon for and a facsimile of the Navy Unit Commendation awarded the USS PHILIPPINE SEA.

From June 1951 to December 1952 he was Project Pilot and Project Officer of Air Development Squadron THREE, then reported for instruction at the General Line School, Monterey, California. In August 1953 he became an Instructor in jet transitional training at the Advanced Training Command, Kingsville, Texas, and during the period August 1954 to July 1955 was a student at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island. He joined the USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14), deployed with the SIXTH Fleet, as Assistant Air Operations Officer, and remained in that capacity until January 1957, when he transferred to Fighter Squadron THIRTY-THREE to serve as Operations Officer and Executive Officer. In that assignment, he participated in Operation Strikeback in the fall of that year.

Assigned in July 1958 to the Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Maryland, he had test pilot training until February 1959 and remained there for duty until June 1961. In July 1961 he reported for prospective commanding officer training with Attack Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-FIVE and in February 1962 transferred to Attack Squadron FIFTY-FIVE to serve as Commanding Officer. Under his command, that squadron participated in a South American cruise in 1962 and in a tour in the Western Pacific on board the USS TICONDEROGA in 1962-1963. In June 1963 he returned to Attack Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-FIVE, which he commanded until September 1964. The next month he became Executive Officer of the USS TICONDEROGA.

He served as Program Analyst in the Office of Program Appraisal, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., from January 1966 to July 1967, after which he had instruction at the National War College, Washington, D. C. In July 1968 he assumed command of the USS NECHES 9a0-47) and in November 1969 assumed command of the USS KITTY HAWK (CVA-43). Under his command, that attack aircraft carrier was deployed with the SEVENTH Fleet in the Western Pacific and participated in a combat tour off Southeast Asia. He was awarded the Legion of Merit for his performance of duty as Commanding Officer of that vessel. In July 1971 he reported for instruction at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and in February 1972 became Chief of Staff to Commander SEVENTH Fleet.

In addition to the Legion of Merit, the Air Medal with three Gold Stars, the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon with one star and the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, Captain Godfrey has the American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Medal with star; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal; National Defense Service Medal with bronze star; Korean Service Medal with three stars; the United Nations Service Medal; and the Vietnam Service Medal. He also has the Korean Presidential Unit Citation Badge and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.