

REAR ADMIRAL DUNCAN S. BAKER
U. S. NAVAL RESERVE

Duncan Scott Baker was born in Manchester, Massachusetts, on January 13, 1904, son of John Davis and Hulda Lauretta (Burns) Baker. He attended public schools in Manchester and Massachusetts Nautical School, graduating from the latter in September 1923. He was commissioned Lieutenant (jg) in the U. S. Naval Reserve on October 11, 1929, and subsequently advanced to the rank of Captain, to date from January 17, 1949, having served in that rank (temporary) from October 13, 1944. On October 31, 1955 his selection for the rank of Rear Admiral, USNR, was approved by the President, his nomination later confirmed by the Senate to date from April 1, 1955.

In December 1923, after graduation from the Massachusetts Nautical School, he joined the SS TEXAN of the American Hawaiian Steam Ship Company, and served on board as Quartermaster until February 1924. He was then transferred to the SS PANAMAN for duty as Junior Third Mate, and left that vessel as Second Mate in February 1928, to become Mate of the SS VIRGINIAN. He served as Mate on several ships of American Hawaiian Steam Ship Company in the years to follow, and from January 1935 to September 1937 was Master of the SS WILKENO.

He joined the Federal Atlantic Coast Pilots in March 1938, and continued coast piloting in South Atlantic ports between Port Everglades, Florida, and Baltimore, until called to active duty with the Naval Reserve in March 1941. For two months he had indoctrination at the Merchant Marine Reserve Training Center, USS SEATTLE at the Navy Yard, Brooklyn, New York, after which he had brief duty on the staff of the Commandant, First Naval District. From June 1941 until August 1942 he was assigned to the USS AI-GORAB (AKA 8), being on board that attack cargo ship in the rank of Lieutenant, when the United States entered World War II, and being promoted to Lieutenant Commander, while still so assigned.

From August 22, 1942, the date she was commissioned as a Navy ship, to January 22, 1944, he served as Commanding Officer of the USS JUPITER (AK 43), and received his promotion to Commander during that period.

During his period of command, the JUPITER carried cargo and military personnel to the Pacific (Samoa, New Caledonia, Noumea); New Zealand; Guadalcanal, Gilbert Islands (Tarawa); and return to San Francisco, several times.


For two months he was assigned to the staff of the Commandant, Twelfth Naval District, Headquarters at San Francisco, California, and assumed command of the USS GENERAL S. D. STURGIS (AP 137), at her commissioning in Portland, Oregon, after conversion from a merchant vessel, in July 1944.

Under his command, that troop transport completed her shake-down and training period and proceeded to Ulithi Atoll, West Carolines, in the Pacific, with sailor replacements for the THIRD Fleet. She returned to the United States with war-tired Navy men on leave, and after a six weeks' overhaul returned to the Pacific (Manila, Philippine Islands, and Hollandia, New Guinea), with Army replacements. Her next long voyage, after returning to the West Coast, was via the Panama Canal to Marseilles, France, return to Panama, thence again to Hollandia and Manila. When hostilities ended she was in Manila, and on August 31, 1945 entered Tokyo Bay to anchor between the USS MISSOURI and USS SOUTH DAKOTA. Early the next morning the STURGIS moved to a dock in Yokohama, one of the first four United States ships to dock at any pier in the harbor since the war began. On October 8, 1945 she arrived at Seattle, Washington with military personnel.

Admiral Baker received a Letter of Commendation with Ribbon and Metal Pendant, from the Chief of Naval Operations, as follows: "As Commanding Officer of the USS GENERAL S. D. STURGIS (AP 137) from her commissioning on 10 July 1944 until the vessel was decommissioned on 24 May 1946. Captain Baker displayed conspicuous ability and leadership in the organization, administration of a large United States Navy transport...The GENERAL STURGIS made several extensive voyages to the advance bases in the Pacific, transporting capacity loads of troops (and) after the collapse of Germany participated in the redeployment of troops from France to the Philippine Islands....selected for the high honor of transporting several signatories of Allied Governments from Manila to Tokyo Bay for the historic signing of the surrender terms...(she) made genuine contributions to the war effort of this Nation. As Commanding Officer of the ship, Captain Baker served his country with distinction, displaying professional skill of a high order..."

Detached from the GENERAL S. D. STURGIS when she was decommissioned in May 1946, he was released to inactive duty status in September 1946. He had a period of active duty from September 19 to November 6, 1952, attached to the Office of Commander Military Sea Transportation Service, Atlantic Area.

In addition to the Commendation Ribbon, Rear Admiral Baker has the Naval Reserve Medal with Bronze Star (20 years' service); the American Defense Service Medal with Bronze "A"; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; the American Campaign Medal; the World War II Victory Medal; and the Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia Clasp; and the National Defense Service Medal.



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