

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER RALPH G. BELLES
UNITED STATES NAVY

Ralph Glenn Belles was born on May 9, 1917, in Ottumwa, Iowa, son of Mrs. C. G. (Alice E. Phillips) Belles and the late Mr. Belles. He attended Iowa Wesleyan College for three years, and on July 30, 1940, enlisted in the U. S. Naval Reserve. On December 17, that year, he was appointed Midshipman, and on March 14, 1941 was commissioned Ensign, USNR. Through subsequent advancement, and his transfer to the U. S. Navy from the Naval Reserve, he attained the rank of Lieutenant Commander, USN, in August 1947, to date from July 20, 1945.


He began his officer service in March 1941 on board the USS PENSACOLA, as Anti-aircraft Gunnery Officer with additional duty as Deck Officer. In December 1941 he was detached with orders to the Armed Guard Center, Treasure Island, San Francisco, California, where he served from January 1942 until March 1943 as Gunnery and Communications Officer. While serving as an Armed Guard Officer during the early period of World War II, two of the vessels on which he served were torpedoed and sunk.

In May 1943 he reported to the Submarine Chaser Training Center, Miami, Florida, where he had instruction for several months, and at her commissioning in September of the same year, he joined the USS WATERMAN (DE 740) as Gunnery Officer. As such he participated in the Marianas operation (capture and occupation of Saipan and Guam, and the Third Bonins raids; the capture and occupation of Tinian; the Western Carolines operation; Leyte operation, including Battle of Surigao Strait and Luzon and Formosa attacks; Luzon operation (attacks on Luzon, Formosa and China Coast); Nansei Shoto attack; and the Iwo Jima and Okinawa Gunto operations.

From September to December 1945 he had duty as Loading Officer at the Naval Ammunition Depot, Port Chicago, Illinois, and for six months thereafter was Officer in Charge of Test Facilities, at the David W. Taylor Model Basin, Carderock, Maryland. He completed the course at the General Line School, Newport, Rhode Island, in May 1947, at which time he was assigned to the USS MOUNT OLYMPUS, (AGC 8), as First Lieutenant. He served in that capacity until July 1949, and during the next fourteen months was Ordnance Officer of Sub Group ONE, Philadelphia Group, Atlantic Reserve Fleet.

In September 1950 he became Executive Officer of the USS NIOBRARA (AO 72), continuing duty afloat until detached in December 1952 when he was ordered to the U. S. Naval Training Center, Aurora, Illinois. There he served as Commanding Officer until August 1955. Since September of that year he has been assigned to the staff of Commander Carrier Division 18, and is currently on duty as Surf Operations Officer.

Lieutenant Commander Belles has the American Defense Service Medal with star; the American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with one silver and three bronze stars (eight operations); European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; the National Defense Service Medal; and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon.



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