

CAPTAIN HARRY F. FISCHER, JR., U. S. NAVY

Harry Frederick Fischer, Jr., was born in Honesdale, Pennsylvania, on November 14, 1916, son of Harry F. and Helene Bishop Fischer. He attended Technical High School in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and enlisted in the U. S. Navy as an Apprentice Seaman on May 15, 1935. He served on board the USS VEGA and USS RANGER and took examinations for the U. S. Naval Academy while in the latter vessel. Receiving a special order discharge, he entered the Naval Academy on July 7, 1936. As a Midshipman he was a member of the Wrestling Team. He was graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 6, 1940, and subsequently advanced in rank to that of Captain, to date from July 1, 1959.

After graduation from the Naval Academy in June 1940, he was assigned to the USS SAN FRANCISCO (CA-38), and was serving as Signal Officer on board that vessel at Pearl Harbor, T. H., when the Japanese attacked the Fleet there on December 7, 1941. Before his detachment in September 1942, he participated in air action off Bougainville, the Salamaua-Lae raid and the Guadalcanal-Tulagi landings. He then returned to the United States for submarine instruction at the U. S. Naval Submarine School, New London, Connecticut.

Detached from the Submarine School in December 1942, he joined the USS THRESHER (SS-200) in January 1943, and served as Engineer and Diving Officer of that submarine in operations in the Pacific Area. "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity as Diving Officer in the USS THRESHER during the ELEVENTH War Patrol of that vessel in enemy Japanese controlled waters, from December 30, 1943, to February 18, 1944..." he was awarded the Silver Star Medal. The citation further states:

"Expertly controlling depth, Lieutenant Fischer rendered invaluable assistance to his commanding officer in delivering torpedo attacks to sink five enemy ships totaling over 26,000 tons and damage another of over 9,000 tons, and in conducting effective evasive tactics during enemy counterattacks. His skill and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the U. S. Naval Service."

Of the eight Submarine War Patrols in which he participated, some were in the USS SPIKEFISH during the latter period of the war. He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," for "heroic service as Assistant Approach Officer of the USS SPIKEFISH during the Fourth War Patrol of that vessel in the enemy Japanese-controlled waters of the Nanpo Shoto, Yellow Sea and East China Sea Areas from July 8 to August 31, 1945..." The citation continues:

"Exercising an extensive knowledge of attack problems during this period, Lieutenant Commander Fischer rendered valuable assistance to his commanding officer in carrying out successful attacks which resulted in the sinking of two hostile ships, totaling 1,750 tons. In addition, he contributed materially to the success of his vessel in evading severe enemy countermeasures..."

He was also awarded a Letter of Commendation, with Ribbon and "V," as follows: "For meritorious conduct in action in the performance of his duties in the USS THRESHER during the Ninth War Patrol of that vessel in the Makassar-Philippines Area from 19 June to 30 July 1943. As Officer of the Deck, his skillful navigation of his ship and keenness in detecting enemy vessels assisted his commanding officer considerably in conducting successful attacks which resulted in the sinking of 20,000 tons of enemy shipping and in damaging 18,850 tons..."

Detached from the USS SPIKEFISH in September 1946, after serving for some time as her Executive Officer, he returned to the Submarine School to serve until April 1949 as Head of the Submarine Department. In May of that year he became Executive Officer of the USS CARP (SS-338), and in January 1950 he was transferred to the USS RONQUIL (SS-396) as Commanding Officer. In that command he participated in Korean operations until May 1952. Reporting to the Navy Department, Washington, D. C., in June, he served as Head, Policy Coordination Section, in the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

Completing his tour of shore duty in June 1955, he reported to Commander Destroyers, Pacific Fleet, as a prospective commanding officer. In September he assumed command of the USS ROGERS (DDR-876), and two years later was detached for instruction at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island. Graduated in June 1958, he reported for duty on the Staff of the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, serving a year each as Undersea Warfare Officer and Fleet Readiness and Training Officer. He next commanded Submarine Division 71, and in September 1961 assumed command of the USS POLLUX (AKS-4).

He was assigned in September 1962 to the Joint Staff, Commander U. S. Forces, Japan and in August 1964 was ordered detached for duty at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

In addition to the Silver Star Medal, Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," and the Commendation Ribbon, also with Combat "V," Captain Fischer has the American Defense Service Medal with bronze star; the American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with one silver and three bronze stars (eight operations); World War II Victory Medal; National Defense Service Medal; Korean Service Medal; and the United Nations Service Medal.