

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

REAR ADMIRAL THOMAS M. DYKERS, U. S. NAVY, RETIRED

Thomas Michael Dykers was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, on December 3, 1905, son of Reginald and Phoebe Alberta Hall Dykers. He attended Boys High School and had a year at Tulane University before entering the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, from his native state on July 3, 1923. As a Midshipman he participated in Class baseball and boxing. Graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 2, 1927, he subsequently attained the rank of Captain, to date from March 20, 1945. On September 1, 1949, he was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy and advanced to the rank of Rear Admiral on the basis of citations received for combat.

After graduation from the Naval Academy in June 1927, he served as a junior officer on board the USS MEMPHIS, a light cruiser, and the USS BULMER, a destroyer, both units of the Asiatic Fleet. He returned to the United States in December 1930, and after three months' service in the USS CHESTER, a new light cruiser which was operating with Light Cruiser Division 5, Scouting Fleet, he reported in July 1931 to the Submarine Base, New London, Connecticut, for instruction in submarines. Completing the course in December 1931, he served from January 1932 until April 1935 on board the USS S-15, based in the Canal Zone area, then decommissioned that submarine at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

From June 1935 until June 1937 he was Assistant Professor of Naval Strategy and Tactics at the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit at Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia, then went to sea again as First Lieutenant of the USS S-25, a unit of the Submarine Force based at Pearl Harbor, T. H. Remaining in that area, he had successive command of the USS S-24 and USS S-35 during the period April 1938 until September 1941, before the outbreak of World War II in December of that year.

An instructor at the Submarine School, New London, the next year, he placed in commission at the Electric Boat Company, New London, the USS JACK (SS-259) in January 1943. Under his command, that submarine made two successful war patrols in the Tokyo Area and two in the South China Sea, and was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for heroic service in her First, Third, and Fifth Patrols. Admiral Dykers was personally awarded the Navy Cross for the First War Patrol, a Gold Star in lieu of the Second Navy Cross for the Third, and the Silver Star Medal for the Fourth. The citations follow, in part:

Presidential Unit Citation - USS JACK: "For extraordinary heroism in action during her First War Patrol south of Honshu, the Third in the South China Sea, and the Fifth in the Area off the West Coast of Luzon. In bold defiance of hostile anti-submarine measures, the USS JACK sought her prey over wide areas and penetrated heavy escort screens in order to make contact with her targets and strike fiercely at strongly protected convoys. Severely bombed during her First War Patrol...she returned to the attack...to sink 6,700 ton freighter, and again escaped destruction under the pounding of vicious counterattacks. Continuously harassed by severe depth chargings throughout the Third and Fifth Patrols, the JACK fought with indomitable will

to destroy, blasting at the enemy from all sides and sending to the bottom of the Pacific 102,800 tons of vital enemy shipping with an additional 18,000 tons damaged. A seaworthy, fighting ship, the JACK dealt smashing blows at the enemy's life line of supply and, by her illustrious record in combat, achieved through the superb handling of her courageous and daring ship's company, sustained and enhanced the finest traditions of the U. S. Naval Service."

Navy Cross: "For extraordinary heroism as Commanding Officer of a submarine on patrol in enemy Japanese-controlled waters. Skillfully maneuvering his ship into striking position, Commander Dykers attacked the enemy with aggressive determination and outstanding courage and succeeded in sinking or damaging a large amount of hostile shipping. Despite fierce enemy opposition, he employed skillful evasive tactics and brought his ship safely back to port ..."

Gold Star in lieu of Second Navy Cross: "For extraordinary heroism as Commanding Officer of the USS JACK, during operations against enemy Japanese shipping in the Pacific War Area, from January 16, to March 13, 1944...Commander Dykers expertly maneuvered into striking position immediately upon contact with the enemy, swiftly launched a powerful attack and succeeded in sinking a total of seven Japanese ships, including four large tankers. Then, employing brilliant evasive tactics, he withdrew the gallant JACK from the combat area without damage despite strong hostile countermeasures..."

Silver Star Medal: "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity as Commanding Officer of the USS JACK, during the Fourth War Patrol of that vessel in enemy Japanese-controlled waters during 1944...Commander Dykers launched three bold attacks during the night against a heavily-escorted enemy convoy to damage severely five Japanese freighters, probably sinking four of them. Patrolling the eastern approaches to Balintang Channel, he gallantly fought his ship to destroy a Japanese trawler by gunfire, capturing two passengers and, the next day, destroyed another trawler..."

Detached from command of the JACK in May 1944, he returned to New London for brief duty on the Staff of Commander Submarines, Atlantic Fleet, and in July assumed command of Submarine Division 282, his pennant in the USS APOLLO (AS-25) at Guam. He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal and cited "For meritorious service...from July 1, 1944 to May 2, 1945. Responsible for the training and general readiness of the submarines assigned to his division, Captain Dykers contributed materially to the success of thirteen war patrols which resulted in the destruction of approximately 66,000 tons of enemy shipping and the damaging of an additional 10,000 tons..."

From May through August 1945 he served on the Staff of Commander Second Carrier Task Force (TF-38), Vice Admiral John S. McCain, participating in the Okinawa Gunto Campaign and in the final carrier raids on the home islands of the Japanese. After the cessation of hostilities he was a Unit Commander in the Occupation Force, commanding the Transport Group which landed the first troops in Japan (at Fatsu Suki) on August 29, 1945. He was then in charge of demilitarization of all Japanese ships at the Yokosuka Naval Base, entering the Harbor in the USS BEGOR (APD-127), the first American ship to enter.

From September through November 1945 he successively commanded Submarine Divisions 104 and 74, during the reorganization of the Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, and in February 1946 joined the Staff of Commander Submarine Force, Atlantic Fleet, as Planning Officer. He was detached from Staff duty in July 1947, and the next month was designated Commander Submarine Squadron FIVE and Commander, Task Group 17.4, at Pearl Harbor. After a year in that command, he was a student at the National War College during the 1948-1949 school year, then served until his retirement on September 1, 1949, in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C.

In addition to the Navy Cross with Gold Star, the Silver Star Medal, Bronze Star Medal, and Ribbon for the Presidential Unit Citation, Rear Admiral Dykers received a Letter of Commendation, with Ribbon, from the Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet, for outstanding performance of duty as Head of the Electrical Department of the Submarine School from January to September 1942. He also has the Yangtze Service Medal; the American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with one operation star; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia Clasp; and the Submarine Combat Insignia.

Admiral Dykers
is a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity (Louisiana Tau Upsilon Chapter).

Since its premiere in New York on April 9, 1957, Admiral Dykers has been narrator of "The Silent Service," a television film series based on the dramatic adventures of officers and men aboard U. S. Navy submarines during World War II. The series was conceived by Admiral Dykers, who is also the executive producer and writer, having long ago realized that submarine service records contained almost limitless exciting story material. It was produced with cooperation of the Department of Defense and the Navy Department, and was endorsed by the Navy League. It incorporates combat film footage from actual files of the Naval Photographic Center, including captured films from all combat theaters of World War II and Korea. Many of the heroes of the episodes shown in the 39 programs of the series are close associates of Admiral Dykers.

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