

## REAR ADMIRAL STEVAN MANDARICH, UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED

Stevan Mandarich was born in Phoenix, Arizona, on March 4, 1911, son of Samuel and Sofia (Basta) Mandarich, both natives of Serbia, now deceased. He attended Fresno (California) Technical High School (1925-1928) and Fresno State College (1929). During that period (1925-1929), he was a member of the California National Guard, advancing to the rank of Sergeant. He entered the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, on appointment from the State of California in 1929. While there, he participated in football, gymnastics, boxing and wrestling. He was graduated on June 1, 1933 and commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Naval Reserve, due to the existing law permitting only fifty per cent of the graduates to be commissioned in the U. S. Navy. A year later, he was commissioned Ensign, U. S. Navy and through periodic promotions attained the rank of Captain, to date from July 1, 1952. On November 1, 1959 he was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy and was advanced to the rank of Rear Admiral on the basis of combat awards.

After receiving his commission in the U. S. Navy in 1934, he served until May 1935 in the Engineering Division of the USS TUSCALOOSA, after which he duty as Gunnery Officer of the USS BRECKINRIDGE. From February to August 1937 he had flight training at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida and in November reported as First Lieutenant on board the USS BROOKS. He had a similar assignment in the USS DAVIS during the period August 1938 to May 1939, then continued service afloat in the Engineering Division of the USS CHICAGO. In November 1939 he joined the USS KILTY as Engineering Officer.

Returning to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola in September 1940, he completed flight training and in May 1941 was designated Naval Aviator. He was next assigned as Operations Officer of Fighting Squadron SEVENTY-TWO, which operated off the USS WASP and later the USS RANGER in the Atlantic area. Transferred to the West Coast, he reported in July 1942 as Executive Officer of Escort Scouting Squadron TWENTY-ONE. From February 1943 to March 1944 he served with Carrier Air Group THIRTY-FIVE, based on the USS CHENANGO, first as Squadron Commander and later as Air Group Commander. Participating in the Gilbert and Marshall Islands Campaigns, he was awarded Gold Stars in lieu of the Third and Fourth Air Medals for meritorious achievement in that assignment. He was also entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Navy Unit Commendation awarded the USS CHENANGO.

He commanded Carrier Air Group ONE HUNDRED from March 1944 until November 1945, organizing that replacement pilot training unit in the Hawaiian Islands and later commanding it in operations from numerous carriers in the Hawaiian area. In June 1945 he assumed command of Carrier Air Group NINETY-FOUR, based on the USS LEXINGTON, and participated in operations against the Japanese Mainland and Wake Island. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with Gold Star in lieu of a second similar award. The citations follow in part:

Air Medal: "For meritorious achievement...during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of Wake, Tokyo Plain, Hokkaido and Yokosuka from June 20 to July 18, 1945...(during which period as strike leader he) contributed materially to the success of his squadron and to the infliction of damage on enemy shipping, airfields and installations..."

Gold Star in lieu of the Second Air Medal: "...in aerial flight as Strike Leader of Air Group NINETY FOUR...during operations against enemy forces on the Japanese Homeland, July 15, 1945. When his group was forced back due to extremely poor weather conditions...(he) attacked an armed hostile merchant vessel on the return trip and, in the face of accurate enemy fire, scored two direct rocket hits on the violent maneuvering vessel, causing it to sink..."

Distinguishing Flying Cross: "For heroism and extraordinary achievement...at Kure Naval Base, Honshu, and on airfields in the Japanese Homeland from July 10 to August 10, 1945...(He) led one strike against the Naval base on July 24, and was Target Coordinator of the July 28th strike on the same target. As flight leader on other occasions, he destroyed two aircraft and damaged three more on the ground at Oi Airfield on July 30, destroyed three single-engined planes on the ground by strafing and bombing at Jimmachi Airfield on August 9 and one single-engined aircraft at Yamagato Airfield on August 10..."

Upon his return to the United States, he was assigned as Aviation Safety Officer at the Naval Air Training Command, Pensacola, from December 1945 until September 1948, after which he was a United Nations Military Observer at Palestine. During that period, he was stationed in Galilee and observed the Jewish-Arab Galilee Campaign for three months and was in Egypt for one month.

In February 1949 he reported as Executive Officer of the Naval Air Station, Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico and in May 1950 became Head of the Programs Branch, Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. He remained there until October 1952, when he was assigned as Senior Naval Representative at the Joint Operations Center, Korea. In August 1953 he was assigned to the Bureau of Aeronautics and in December 1955 became Chief of Staff and Aide to Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, USN (now deceased), Officer in Charge of the U. S. Antarctic Programs (Operations DEEP FREEZE). He continued duty in that capacity until December 1956, interspersed with an assignment from May to September 1956 as a Member of the Operations Coordination Board, Washington, D. C.

He next had a tour of duty at the National Security Agency, East George C. Meade, Maryland and in October 1958 was ordered to the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Department. In December of that year he was transferred to Headquarters, Potomac River Naval Command, Washington,

D. C., and while there had additional duty in the Office of Naval Research, Navy Department. On November 1, 1959 he was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy.

In addition to the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with three Gold Stars, the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon and the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, Rear Admiral Mandarich has the American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with four engagement stars; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia Clasp; National Defense Service Medal; Korean Service Medal; Antarctic Service Medal and the United Nations Service Medal.