

# NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN HOWARD M. AVERY, UNITED STATES NAVY

Howard Malcolm Avery was born in King Ferry, New York, on September 15, 1908, son of Horace W. and Edith Plested Avery, both now deceased. He attended San Diego (California) State College in 1926-1929, and was graduated from Stanford University, with the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Economics, in 1930. He subsequently worked as a Landscape Architect. He enlisted in the U. S. Naval on November 13, 1935; was appointed Aviation Cadet on January 3, 1936; and after flight training at the Naval Reserve Aviation Base, Long Beach, California, and the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, was designated Naval Aviator on January 14, 1937. Commissioned Ensign on April 1, 1937, he advanced in rank ultimately, attaining that of Captain, his date of rank, July 1, 1955.

Detached from the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, in February 1937, he joined the USS SALT LAKE CITY the next month, to serve as a pilot with the aviation unit of that cruiser (Scouting Squadron 4), and as Division Officer, AA Battery. He returned to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, in June 1940, and served as an Instrument Instructor there until September 1942, during which time the United States entered World War II and he transferred from the Naval Reserve to the U. S. Navy.

In October 1942 he reported to the Naval Air Station, Seattle, Washington, where Composite Squadron 25 was fitting out, and served as Executive Officer of that squadron, based on board the USS BLOCK ISLAND, until July 1943. A month later he assumed command of composite Squadron 9, for anti-submarine warfare in the Atlantic on board the USS CARD, and later based successively on the USS MISSION BAY and the USS SOLOMONS. For service in that command, he is entitled to the Ribbon for and a facsimile of the Presidential Unit Citation awarded the USS CARD, and was personally awarded the Legion of Merit with Combat "V," the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Navy Cross. The citations which accompanied his medals follow in part:

Legion of Merit: "For exceptionally meritorious conduct...as Commanding Officer of Composite Squadron NINE, in operations against the enemy, from September 24 to November 10, 1943. A skilled and inspiring leader, (he) not only thoroughly indoctrinated and trained the personnel (of his squadron) but also ably directed and led them in numerous operations which resulted in the destruction of a large number of submarines...(contributing) directly to the success of his Task Group in achieving an illustrious record..."

Distinguished Flying Cross: "For heroism and extraordinary achievement in aerial flight as Pilot of a Torpedo Bomber attached to the USS CARD Air Group during offensive action against an enemy submarine in the Atlantic Area on October 13, 1943. Sighting the hostile U-boat fully surfaced in heavy seas while flying an anti-submarine patrol, (he) immediately closed range and prepared to launch a mine attack. Forced to change tactics at 500 yards when the vessel failed to submerge, he plunged in a vigorous strafing attack, raked her deck with his guns and circled astern in daring defiance of her heavy anti-aircraft fire until arrival of a supporting plane. Skillfully timing his second attack in coordination with the assisting bomber, he succeeded in scoring a direct hit, probably sinking the hostile undersea craft within fifteen seconds of her submergence...(and) contributed essentially to the probable destruction of an important enemy vessel..."

Navy Cross: "For extraordinary heroism as a Pilot of a United States Navy Torpedo Bomber and as Officer in Tactical Command during an anti-submarine patrol flight in the South Atlantic Area, on June 15, 1944. Determinedly seeking out squadron survivors in an area known to be patrolled by an enemy submarine. Commander (then Lieutenant Commander) Avery sighted a U-boat before sunset and, losing no time in making contact report to his carrier base, circled the fully surfaced submarine and maintained his threatening position until assistance arrived. Planning and directing the well-coordinated attack, he personally made two effective strafing runs against the hostile ship in the face of enemy anti-aircraft fire, and...contributed materially to the ultimate destruction of the submarine..."

In September and October 1944 he was at Quonset Point, Rhode Island, where Night Torpedo Bombing Squadron 91 was being formed. He commanded Air Group (Night) 91, based on board the USS BON HOMME RICHARD throughout the remaining months of the war. He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal "For meritorious achievement as Commander of Air Group (Night) NINETY ONE, attached to the USS BON HOMME RICHARD, during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Pacific War Area from October 5, 1944 to August 15, 1945..." The citation states that he "steadily improved the tactics of night harassment employed by his planes in keeping the enemy alerted and on the defensive during the periods of darkness...(and) contributed materially to the progress made in night carrier operations..."

"For heroism and extraordinary achievement (in command of that Night Air Group) during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of Honshu, Japan, from July 17 to 29, 1945..." he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Second Distinguished Flying Cross. The citation continues: "Flying a heckler mission against hostile airfields in the Chosi-Mito area of Honshu on the night of July 17, Commander Avery boldly pressed home his attack and, although faced with hazardous weather conditions, remained over the target for almost two hours, making three circuits of the clouds. On the night of July 29, he piloted a night torpedo plane with a spotter aboard to spot for a night bombardment of Hamamatsu and braved enemy anti-aircraft fire while spotting and assessing damage..."

From December 1945 until May 1946 he served as Assistant Operations Officer on the staff of Commander Air Force, Pacific. After his return to the United States, he was a student at the General Line School, Newport, Rhode Island, and upon graduation in May 1947 was ordered to the Navy Department, Washington, D. C. There, for more than two years he served as Aviation Electronics Requirements Officer in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. In October 1949 he assumed command of Operational Development Squadron 3. When detached in June 1951 he was ordered to the Naval Ordnance Test Station, Inyokern, California, where he served for two years as Assistant Experimental Officer.

During the next year he served as Executive Officer of the USS BENNINGTON, in which he participated in Operation "Mariner." The BENNINGTON subsequently operated with the SIXTH Fleet in the Mediterranean. He was Commanding Officer of the Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Chase Field, Beeville, Texas, from August 1954 until July 1956 and the next month reported for instruction at the

National War College, Washington, D. C. In June 1957 he joined the staff of Commander Naval Air Force, Atlantic and in March 1959 transferred to the staff of the Commander in Chief, Naval Forces, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean. He remained in the area until December 1960, serving from March 1960 on the staff of the Commander in Chief, U. S. Naval Forces, Europe. In February 1961 he became Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Station, Lemoore, California, and in April 1963 was ordered to duty on the Joint Staff, Commander in Chief U. S. European Command. In April 1964 he was designated Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic Representative in Europe.

In addition to the Navy Cross, Legion of Merit with Combat "V," Distinguished Flying Cross with Gold Star, the Bronze Star Medal, and the Ribbon for the Presidential Unit Citation to the USS CARD, Captain Avery has the American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia Clasp; and the National Defense Service Medal.

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