

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN WILLIAM VINCENT ASTOR, U.S. NAVAL RESERVE

Captain William Vincent Astor was born November 15, 1891 in New York, N.Y., the son of the late John Jacob and Ava Willing Astor. He attended St. George's School and Harvard University.

Captain Astor enlisted in the U.S. Navy on May 1, 1916; as seaman in the Second Battalion, Naval Militia of New York. Eleven days later he was commissioned ensign in the Naval Militia of New York. He was called to active duty on April 7, 1917, in the National Naval Volunteers. He reported to the Commandant, Navy Yard, New York, for duty in connection with fitting out the USS NOMA, patrol vessel. The NOMA was a converted yacht belonging to Captain Astor which he had leased to the Navy. He was detached from the USS NOMA on November 6, 1917, and assigned duty with the U.S. Naval Port Officer, Bordeaux, France. He became Naval Port Officer at Royan, France, on February 14, 1918, and while stationed there was temporarily commissioned Lieutenant (junior grade) in the National Naval Volunteers. On July 1, 1918 he was transferred to the U.S. Naval Reserve Force.

From November 1918 until March 1919 he had service in the converted yacht USS APHRODITE. He was promoted to Lieutenant in the U.S. Naval Reserve on December 30, 1918. After a short tour of duty in the USS U. 117 he reported to the Commandant, Third Naval District and was relieved of all active duty on May 24, 1919.

Captain Astor remained in the Naval Reserve and received promotions to Lieutenant, U.S.N.R.F., on December 11, 1924; Lieutenant Commander, U.S.N.R., on July 13, 1926, and Commander, U.S.N.R., on July 2, 1940.

He was recalled to active duty on December 15, 1941, at Headquarters, Third Naval District, New York, N.Y. From April 21, 1942, until he was relieved of all active duty June 23, 1945, he was stationed at Headquarters, Eastern Sea Frontier. He was promoted to Captain, U.S.N.R. on May 25, 1943. For service as Observation Craft Officer, Staff, Commander Eastern Sea Frontier, Captain Astor was awarded a Letter of Commendation as follows:

"For meritorious performance of duty as Observation Craft Officer, Staff, Commander Eastern Sea Frontier. By his initiative, unflagging energy and devotion to duty in the organization and administration of the Confidential Fishing Vessel Observers, Captain Astor won the wholehearted cooperation of the Fishing Fleet and contributed materially to the successful prosecution of Anti-Submarine Warfare along the Atlantic Coast. His efficient service was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

In addition to a Letter of Commendation, Captain Astor has the Victory Medal, World War I; the American Area Campaign Medal and the Victory Medal for World War II.

Again in World War II a yacht belonging to Captain Astor was used by the U.S. Navy. The NOURMAHAL, built in 1928, at Kiel, Germany, was chartered by the Navy on March 3, 1942, and purchased June 25, 1943. On December 29, 1943, the NOURMAHAL was transferred to the U.S. Coast Guard. The NOURMAHAL is now to be decommissioned and disposed of by the Coast Guard.

4-22-46

See: Who's Who in America, Volume 23, 1944-45
for general information regarding Captain Astor.