

# NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

REAR ADMIRAL THOMAS E. BASS, III, UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED

Thomas Edward Bass, III, was born in Richmond, Virginia, on December 6, 1917, son of Thomas E. and Gertrude (Hazelwood) Bass. He graduated from New Bern (North Carolina) High School and in 1938 received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Physical Education from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. During the period 1938 to 1940 he was a Teacher and Coach at Fayetteville (North Carolina) High School, and from 1940 to 1942 was District Principal, Consolidated School District, Eastern North Carolina. On August 5, 1942 he was commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Naval Reserve and subsequently advanced in rank to that of Rear Admiral, to date from February 1, 1971, having transferred from the U. S. Naval Reserve to the U. S. Navy on October 7, 1946.

Ordered into active naval service, he reported in January 1943 on board the USS SC-676 to serve as Gunnery Officer and Executive Officer and in May 1944 assumed command of that sub-chaser. While on board the SC-676, he participated in the North African Campaign; invasions of Sicily at Gela; Salerno; Anzio; Southern France and operated with Yugoslav Partisans in the Adriatic Sea behind German lines in 1944. He was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V" and cited as follows: For "outstanding performance of duty as Commanding Officer of the USS SC-676 while engaged in offensive operations against the enemy in the Adriatic Sea from June 3 to July 12, 1944..." The citation continues:

"Displaying exceptional skill and fearless determination, you led your ship in covering the evacuation of Allied and Partisan forces from the Island of Brac, off the coast of Yugoslavia, and coolly repelled an enemy air attack on the beaches by well-directed anti-aircraft fire. Subsequently, with extraordinary courage and resourcefulness, you conducted numerous reconnaissance missions in dangerous and restricted waters, often within point-blank range of heavy coastal batteries. By your initiative and daring leadership you contributed materially to the success of Allied and Partisan Operations against enemy strong-holds on the islands off the Dalmatian coast..."

From January to September 1945 he was an Instructor in Seamanship at the Naval Reserve Midshipmen School, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, after which he had duty in connection with officer distribution and civil readjustment on the Staff of the Commandant of the Sixth Naval District, headquartered in Charleston, South Carolina.

In January 1947 he reported for training at the Naval Mine Warfare School, Yorktown, Virginia, and in April 1947 became Executive Officer of the USS TOWHEE (AM-388). He transferred in December 1947, in a similar capacity, to the USS GHERARDI (DMS-30) and during the period February 1950 to August 1951 commanded the USS PURSUIT (AM-108). In August 1951 he was assigned as an Instructor in Naval Weapons at the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and in June 1952 joined the Staff of Commander Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-TWO to serve as Senior Liaison and Staff Watch Officer until August 1952. Following instruction which extended to January 1954 at the Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Virginia, he was ordered to the Staff of Commander SIXTH Fleet, where he had duty as Fleet Antisubmarine Warfare Officer and Aide Flag Secretary.

In May 1956 he was assigned to the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., where he served as Fleet Staffs and Large Combatant Placement Officer until July 1958, after which he attended the Naval Warfare Course at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island. In July 1959 he assumed command of the USS HAROLD J. ELLISON (DD-864), which, under his command, received the Battle Efficiency "E" and two Engineering "Es". In September 1961 he became Executive Officer of the Naval Destroyer School, Newport, Rhode Island, where he remained until July 1963.

He had instruction at the NATO Defense College, Paris, France, from July 1963 to February 1964, then was Commander Destroyer Division ONE HUNDRED TWO until February 1965. Ordered to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, he headed the Joint Programs Section, Joint International Plans Branch, Strategic Division until April 1966, then was Head of the Allied and Support Objective Force, Plans Section, Strategic Plans Division. He remained there until December 1966, when he became Commander Destroyer Squadron TWENTY SIX. Ordered to the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Department, he served from March 1968 to June 1970 as Assistant Director for Surface and Sub-Surface Captain Assignment and later as Director, Officer Distribution Division. "For outstanding meritorious service..." in that capacity, he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal. The citation further states in part:

"...During this period, Captain Bass was initially responsible for assignment and career development of all surface and sub-surface captains, and later for the approximately 80,000 officers on active duty..."

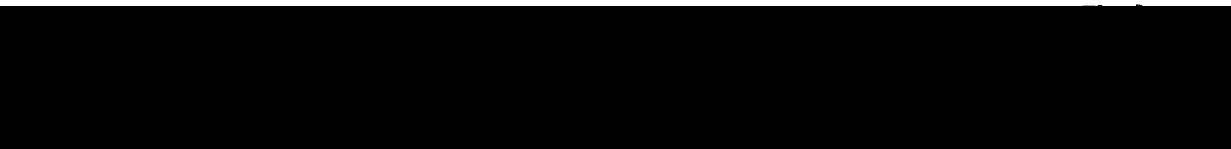
In July 1970 he became Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Flotilla NINE, Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Flotilla THREE and Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Group, U. S. SEVENTH Fleet. He was awarded the Legion of Merit and cited as follows:

"For exceptionally meritorious conduct...from July 1970 to November 1970 during combat operations. Responsible for the planning and prosecution of surface warfare in the Western Pacific Area, (he) consistently displayed outstanding professionalism, judgment and resourcefulness in carrying out this responsibility, maintaining the highest level of combat readiness and effectiveness. His superb ability to coordinate surface warfare planning was demonstrated repeatedly in operations against the enemy..."

He was relieved of two of his commands in November 1970, but continued to command Cruiser-Destroyer Flotilla NINE until July 1971, when he reported as Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations to the Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet. In November 1972 he became Commandant of the Thirteenth Naval District, headquartered in Seattle, Washington. "For exceptionally meritorious conduct..." in that capacity, he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Second Legion of Merit. The citation further states in part: "...During his tenure, Rear Admiral Bass discharged his demanding tasks in an exemplary and highly professional manner..."

On July 1, 1974 he was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy.

In addition to the Legion of Merit with Gold Star, the Meritorious Service Medal and the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V", Rear Admiral Bass has the American Campaign Medal; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Europe Clasp; National Defense Service Medal with bronze star and the Vietnam Service Medal.



He is a member of Beta Theta Pi (social fraternity). His hobbies are hunting and fishing.