

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

REAR ADMIRAL CLARENCE L. C. ATKESON, Jr.
UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED

Clarence Lee Conner Atkeson, Jr., was born on October 27, 1899, in Columbia, Alabama, son of Mrs. Annie May (Conner) Atkeson, and the late Dr. Clarence L. C. Atkeson. He attended Columbia High School and the Marion Institute, Marion, Alabama, before his appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland, from his native state in 1918. As a Midshipman, he won his class numerals in soccer. Graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 3, 1921, he subsequently attained the rank of Rear Admiral to date from January 1, 1951.

After graduation from the Naval Academy in 1921, he was ordered to report to the Commander Destroyer Squadrons, U. S. Atlantic Fleet, and was assigned to the USS SHARKEY. Detached from that vessel in December 1924, he had fitting out duty in the USS MEMPHIS, building at the William Cramp and Sons Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He joined the MEMPHIS upon her commissioning on February 4, 1925, and following her shakedown cruise, was assigned to the Light Cruiser Division. In June 1925 he reported aboard the USS OKLAHOMA, a unit of Division THREE, Battleship Divisions, Battle Fleet, and after short duty in the USS CHEWINK during January 1926, joined the USS RALEIGH operating consecutively with Light Cruiser Divisions THREE and TWO, Scouting Fleet; Naval Forces, Europe; and again with Light Cruiser Division THREE.

Between September 1929 and June 1931 he was assigned to the Navy Mine Depot, Yorktown, Virginia, after which he reported aboard the USS BREESE, serving as her Executive Officer from April 1932 to June 1934. Following duty in connection with the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, he joined the USS IDAHO in April 1936. He continued service in that battleship until June 1938, when he transferred to the USS MARBLEHEAD. He was aboard the latter as Engineer Officer until August 1939, when he assumed command of the USS POPE.

Relieved of command of the POPE in July 1940, he reported for duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. He remained there until May 1942, when he was assigned to Headquarters, Gulf Sea Frontier and Seventh Naval District, Key West, Florida. After duty with the Caribbean Sea Frontier, he reported in October 1942 to the Office of the Port Director at the Naval Operating Base, Trinidad, British West Indies. He again had duty with the Caribbean Sea Frontier until January 1943, when he assumed command of the USS PATOKA. Relieved of command of that oiler in June 1943, he transferred in the same capacity, to the newly-commissioned landing ship dock ASHLAND.

Following her shakedown cruise, the ASHLAND made her maiden voyage to Pearl Harbor, T. H., and first saw action on September 1, 1943 in the occupation of Baker Island. After that she participated in the assault landing at Tarawa Atoll; the assault on the two outer islands of Kwajalein and Kwajalein Atoll; and the assault and occupation of Eniwetok and Saipan.

Relieved of command of the ASHLAND in June 1944, he had temporary duty in various places until August of that year, when he assumed command of the USS OLMSTED, commanding her in the action at Lingayen Gulf and Okinawa Gunto. From February 1945 to March 1946 he served as Officer in Charge of Logistic Plans in the Planning Section, Logistics Division, on the staff of the Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas. "For meritorious conduct..." in this assignment, he received a Letter of Commendation, with authorization to wear the Commendation Ribbon from the Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet. The citation follows in part:

"...(He) displayed outstanding professional ability in his supervision and coordination of plans for logistic support of Fleet and land based forces for operations against the enemy. His keen perception and unremitting industry in coordinating the details of these plans which involved the joint operations of Army, Navy, and Marine Corps forces contributed materially toward the successful prosecution of the war against the Japanese Empire..."

In April 1946 he reported for duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., continuing service there until January 1948, when he assumed command of the USS ALBANY. Relieved of command of that vessel in April 1949, he was again assigned to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, where he served as Assistant Director of the Logistic Plans Division until February 1951, when he became Director of that division. He remained there until September 1951, when he reported as Commander Destroyer Flotilla ONE.

From January 1953 to January 1954 he was Commander Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, after which he served as Assistant Naval Inspector General, Navy Department. In July of that year his title was changed to Director, On-Site Surveys, Division and Senior Member On-Site Survey Party No. 2, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department. He assumed duty as Commandant of the Fifteenth Naval District, with headquarters in Fort Amador, Canal Zone, with additional duty as Commander Caribbean Sea Frontier, on June 21, 1956 and a year later, June 1, 1957, was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy.

In addition to the Commendation Ribbon, Rear Admiral Atkeson has the World War I Victory Medal; Second Nicaraguan Campaign Medal; China Service Medal; American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with four engagement stars; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Europe Clasp; National Defense Service Medal; the Korean Service Medal; United Nations Service Medal; and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon. He also has the Korean Presidential Unit Citation Badge.

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18 June 1957