

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN GEORGE NATHAN BARKER UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED

George Nathan Barker was born on March 6, 1886, in Littleton, Massachusetts. He was appointed to the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, from his native state in 1903. Graduated on June 6, 1907, and commissioned Ensign after two years at sea, then required by law, he subsequently advanced to the rank of Captain to date from June 30, 1945. On January 1, 1947, he was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy.

Following graduation from the Academy in 1907, he was assigned to the USS NEBRASKA until January 1908, when he transferred to the USS SOUTH DAKOTA. In September 1913, he returned to the U. S. Naval Academy, and remained on duty there until June 1915, when he was ordered to sea in the USS MICHIGAN. He was transferred to the USS NICHOLSON in December 1916, and upon detachment a year later, assumed command of the USS DRAYTON, his first command.

Relieved of command of the DRAYTON in June 1918, he reported to the Fore River Shipbuilding Company, Quincy, Massachusetts, to assist in fitting out the USS ISRAEL, and was assigned to that vessel from her commissioning in September 1918, until July 1919. For services as Commanding Officer of the USS DRAYTON, and later the USS ISRAEL, during World War I, he was awarded the Navy Cross and cited as follows:

NAVY CROSS: "For distinguished and meritorious service during the World War in the line of his profession and in a duty of great responsibility, first as Commanding Officer of the USS DRAYTON, engaged in the important, exacting and hazardous duty of patrolling waters infested with enemy submarines and mines, and escorting convoys through these waters, and later as Commanding Officer of the USS ISRAEL in the Eastern Mediterranean and as Senior United States representative at Spalato, when he was constantly called upon to deal with conditions requiring tact and diplomatic ability, all of which he manifested in a high degree, with the result that harmonious relations were maintained between the various Powers represented at Spalato, and good order preserved in a region where conditions were greatly disturbed."

He had a second tour of duty at the Naval Academy from August 1919 until June 1922, after which he reported as Radio Officer on the staff of Commander Destroyer Squadrons Atlantic Fleet (title changed to Destroyer Squadrons, Scouting Fleet). He served in that assignment for a year, then was assigned as Aide to Commander Destroyer Squadrons, Battle Fleet, with additional duty as Squadron Gunnery Officer. Between March 1924 and February 1925, he was assigned as Aide Commander Destroyer Squadrons, Battle Fleet, with additional duty as Squadrons Radio and Communications Officer.

Following duty as Officer in Charge of the Navy Recruiting Station, Boston, Massachusetts, with additional duty in connection with instruction and inspection of the Naval Reserve Units, Boston, Captain Barker assumed command of the USS MAHAN, in October 1927.

In May 1929 he returned to the United States, and the following month reported as Aide to the Commandant, Navy Yard, -Portsmouth, New Hampshire. In May 1932 he was ordered to the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation, Quincy, Massachusetts, to assist in connection with fitting out the USS PORTLAND. He joined that vessel as Executive Officer upon her commissioning, in February 1933, and served in that capacity until June 1934, when he was assigned to Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, for duty with the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit.

Captain Barker assumed command of the USS HOUSTON on July 16, 1937, and upon detachment on May 24, 1939, was ordered again to Harvard University while there he had commanded the Naval Training School until April 1944. Additional duties as Professor of Naval Science and Tactics, Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit; Commander, Naval Training Unit; Commander V-12 Unit, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts; Commander V-12 Unit, Andover Newton Theological School, New Center, Massachusetts; and Commander Navy V-12 Unit Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts. He had consecutive duty between April 1944 and October 1945, in the First Naval District Boston, Massachusetts, and the Third Naval District, New York, New York.

Reporting to Headquarters, First Naval District, in October 1945, Captain Barker served as Officer in Charge, Branch Hydrographic Office, until November 1946, when he was relieved of all active duty pending retirement. He was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy on January 1, 1947.

In addition to the Navy Cross, Captain Barker has the Victory Medal, Destroyer Clasp (World War I); the American Defense Service Medal; the American Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal.

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