

CAPTAIN ROBERT H. CALDWELL, JR.  
UNITED STATES NAVY

Robert Hugh Caldwell, Jr., was born in Atlanta, Georgia, on August 16, 1913, son of Robert Hugh and Susie Hardwick (Mills) Caldwell. He received his early education from Joseph E. Brown Junior High School, Boys High School and Georgia Institute of Technology, all in Atlanta. Enlisting in the U. S. Naval Reserve on November 2, 1931, he was honorably discharged on July 31, 1932 to accept an appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland. He was graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 4, 1936, and through subsequent promotions, attained the rank of Captain, to date from June 1, 1955.

Following graduation from the Naval Academy in June 1936, he had sea duty until December 1938, serving first in the USS TENNESSEE, flagship of Battleship Division 2, Battle Force, and the last six months of that period in the USS MELVILLE, tender for Destroyer Flotilla 2, Battle Force. In January 1939 he reported to the Submarine School, New London, Connecticut, where he completed instruction in submarines in June of that year. He was then assigned to the USS S-47, a unit of Submarine Squadron 3, Atlantic Fleet, and was aboard that submarine, after the United States entered World War II in December 1941 until September 1942, participating in the capture and defense of Guadalcanal and the Biak Island operation.

He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," for "heroic service as Assistant Approach Officer of the USS S-47, in action against enemy Japanese forces in the Pacific War Area during her Third War Patrol, from August 25 to September 22, 1942..." The citation states that he was of "invaluable assistance to his commanding officer in conducting successful attacks which resulted in the sinking of an enemy cruiser of 7,100 tons...and contributed directly to the success of his vessel in evading severe hostile countermeasures..."

From September 1942 until March 1944 he commanded the USS S-45. During that period the S-45 received her major yard overhaul and made her Fifth and Sixth War Patrols in the Pacific under his command. The next three months were spent on board the USS SANDLANCE, on one war patrol, during which five ships were sunk. In July 1944 he assumed command of the USS PETO. He was awarded the Navy Cross and the Silver Star Medal with citations which follow in part:

Navy Cross: "For extraordinary heroism as Commanding Officer of the USS PETO, during the Seventh War Patrol of that vessel in enemy Japanese controlled waters in the Pacific Ocean Area, from October 23 to December 6, 1944...(He) penetrated strong

enemy escort screens to launch repeated strikes against enemy shipping and...contributed materially to the success of the PETO in sinking more than 28,000 tons of enemy shipping and in evading severe hostile countermeasures..."

Silver Star Medal: "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action as Commanding Officer of the USS PETO during the Tenth War Patrol of that vessel in the enemy Japanese-controlled waters near the south and east coasts of Honshu from July 14 to August 30, 1945. Patrolling on lifeguard duty, Commander Caldwell saved twelve downed aviators in four separate rescues. After a spectacular run through shallow, mined waters while being subjected to an accurate shelling from coastal batteries, he reached a downed aviator, scooped him up, and made good his escape. On another occasion when a hostile plane made a suicide run on the PETO, (he) maneuvered his ship skillfully to evade the plane until it was shot down by Allied air cover within 300 yards of the submarine..."

Detached from the PETO in February 1946, he assumed command of the USS SABLEFISH, continuing as Commanding Officer of that submarine until April 1948. In May of that year he reported to the American Embassy, Guatemala City, Guatemala, as U. S. Naval Attache and U. S. Naval Attache for Air. After seven months in that assignment, he was transferred to the American Embassy, Mexico City, Mexico, where he served for ten months as Assistant U. S. Naval Attache and Assistant U. S. Naval Attache for Air, and for nine months thereafter as the U. S. Naval Attache there.

Returning to the United States in August 1950, he had a two-year tour of duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. In September 1952 he reported for duty with Allied Naval Forces, Southern Europe, and from 1954 to 1956 had command of the USS TALUGA (AO-62). He was a student at George Washington University, Washington, D. C. 1956-1957, and on March 12, 1957, was ordered to the Caribbean Sea Frontier as Inspector General/Member Puerto Rico Area, Joint Committee.

In addition to the Navy Cross, Silver Star Medal, and the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," Captain Caldwell was also awarded the British combat award "Mentioned in Despatches." He has the American Defense Service Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; the American Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal.

Married in 1938 to Miss Teresa Carleton Hanger of Atlanta, Georgia, Captain Caldwell has two children:

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