

REAR ADMIRAL GEORGE W. DICKINSON
MEDICAL CORPS, U. S. NAVY, RETIRED

George Wallace Dickinson was born in Horatio, Arkansas, on October 12, 1902, son of George Louis and Florence (Poole) Dickinson. He attended Horatio High School, the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville (1922-1925), and received the degrees of Bachelor of Science (Medical) and Doctor of Medicine in 1926 and 1929, respectively, from the University of Arkansas School of Medicine at Little Rock. On June 28, 1929 he was appointed Lieutenant (jg) in the Medical Corps of the U. S. Navy and subsequently advanced in rank, attaining that of Captain, to date from November 10, 1945. On January 1, 1953 he was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy and was advanced to the rank of Rear Admiral on the basis of a combat award.

Upon receiving his appointment in 1929, he served his internship at the Naval Hospital, Mare Island, California, and in August 1930 joined the USS NEW YORK as Junior Medical Officer. From June 1932 to May 1933 he had similar duty at the Marine Corps Base, San Diego, California. Following service with the Civilian Conservation Corps, Boise, Idaho, he was assigned in July 1934 to the Naval Hospital, San Diego, California.

In April 1935 he joined the staff of Commander Fourteenth Destroyer Division, Asiatic Fleet, as Division Medical Officer, and while serving in that capacity assisted in the rescue of passengers and crew of the SS SILVER HAZEL, shipwrecked in San Bernardino Straits, Philippine Islands, in November 1936. For heroic conduct during this rescue, he received a Letter of Thanks from the English Shipping Board and a Letter of Commendation from the Navy Department. He reported in April 1937 as Junior Ward Officer at the Naval Hospital, Canacao, Philippine Islands, where he remained until August of that year, after which he was assigned two months' duty at the Regimental Hospital, Fourth Marines, Shanghai, China. He was so serving during the Japanese attack in 1937.

Returning to the United States in November 1937, he became Junior Medical Officer in the Officers Sick Quarters, Bancroft Hall, U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland. He continued duty there until August 1940, when he joined the USS DETROIT as Senior Medical Officer. Detached from that cruiser in March 1941, he next attended a post-graduate course in aviation medicine at the School of Aviation Medicine, Pensacola, Florida.

Designated Flight Surgeon on August 1, 1941, he was ordered to the Naval Air Station, Punene, Maui, Territory of Hawaii, where he served as Senior Medical Officer until December 5, 1941. On December 7, 1941, the day the Japanese attacked the Naval Base at Pearl Harbor, T. H., he was present awaiting to sail the next day for Wake. He was assigned for two days to the Naval Hospital, Pearl Harbor, and on December 20, his orders to Wake were cancelled, and he became Executive Officer of the Dispensary at the Naval Hospital, Pearl Harbor.

He had brief duty during October 1942 at the Naval Air Station, Pasco, Washington, and in November of that year transferred to the Naval Air Station, Patuxent River, Maryland, to serve until March 1944 as Senior Medical Officer. He had duty in connection with the pre-commissioning detail of the USS TICONDERGA, and when that aircraft carrier was commissioned, May 8, 1944, he joined her as Senior Medical Officer. While he was aboard the TICONDEROGA, she participated in action against the Japanese at Leyte Gulf, Samar, Luzon, Formosa, and for twelve days in the China Sea where strikes were made against Saigon, Hainan and Hong Kong.

On January 21, 1945 while engaged in strikes against Formosa, the TICONDEROGA was struck by a Japanese suicide plane just aft of the forward elevator. The plane went through the flight deck and exploded on the hangar deck. Immediately the hangar deck was aflame making all battle dressing stations untenable. The only dressing station left in action was his in the Main Sick Bay. Minutes later a second suicide plane struck the TICONDEROGA just above the bridge. The ship burned for five hours before all fires were brought under control and she retired from action.

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity as Senior Medical Officer on board the USS TICONDEROGA in action against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of Formosa Island on January 21, 1945....." he was awarded the Silver Star Medal. The citation continues in part: "When his ship was hit by two Japanese suicide planes, (he) administered first aid to several wounded men on the hangar deck despite billowing flames and exploding ammunition, rockets and gasoline tanks. For more than twenty-four hours, he operated and attended to the more critically wounded, thereby contributing to the saving of many lives

Detached from the TICONDEROGA in April 1945, he returned to the United States and until July of that year had brief duty at the Naval Air Base, Thirteenth Naval District, Seattle, Washington; the Naval Supply Depot and Naval Hospital, Oakland, California, successively. He next served as Senior Medical Officer of the Naval Receiving Station, Brooklyn, New York, and during August and September 1946 was Executive Officer of a Joint Army-Navy Board, New York. In October of that year he became Senior Medical Officer at the Naval Air Technical Training Center Dispensary, Jacksonville, Florida. He remained there until October 1947 and the next month reported in a similar capacity to the Naval Air Station, Lakehurst, New Jersey. Between June 1950 and June 1952 he was assigned to the Naval Air Station, Kodiak, Alaska, after which he had duty at the Naval Shipyard, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. On August 14, 1952 he was assigned to the Naval Hospital, Philadelphia, for treatment, and on January 1, 1953 was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy.

In addition to the Silver Star Medal, Rear Admiral Dickinson has the China Service Medal; the American Defense Service Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three engagement stars; the American Campaign Medal; the World War II Victory Medal; and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon with one star.

