

CAPTAIN THOMAS FERWERDA  
MEDICAL CORPS, U. S. NAVY

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

Thomas Ferwerda was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on January 14, 1906, son of John and Minnie (Appel) Ferwerda. He attended Calvin College in Grand Rapids and received the degree of Doctor of Medicine from Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1932. Following his period of internship, he practiced Medicine in Grand Rapids, and was a member of the U. S. Army Reserve in 1934 and 1935, serving as Assistant Medical Officer at Vancouver Barracks, Washington, in 1935-36. Commissioned Lieutenant (jg) in the Medical Corps of the U. S. Navy on August 3, 1936, he advanced through subsequent promotions, to the rank of Captain, his date of rank January 1, 1952.

Reporting in August 1936 to the U. S. Naval Hospital, New York, New York, he served there as a Junior Medical Officer, Surgical Services, for a year, after which he had graduate work at the Naval Medical School, Washington, D. C. In 1938, after a course at the Army's School of Aviation Medicine, Randolph Field, Texas, he was designated Flight Surgeon and ordered to the USS SARATOGA as Junior Medical Officer. A year later he reported as a student at the Naval School of Aviation Medicine and upon completion of the course, was designated Naval Flight Surgeon.

From November 1, 1939 to April 1, 1941 he was attached to SS-3, Fleet Marine Force, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, and upon his return to the United States was assigned as Senior Medical Officer at the Naval Air Station, Anacostia, D. C. While there he developed an Antiblackout Suit and Mechanical Equipment for Aviators during the first year of World War II. When detached in December 1942, he was ordered to report to Commander Fleet Air Wings, South Pacific, as Staff Medical Officer. Late in 1943 he returned to the United States for brief duty at the Naval Air Station, Patuxent River, Maryland, assigned to the Physiology Test Division.

He served as Senior Medical Officer of the USS SARATOGA in 1944-45, and during the next year he was Senior Medical Officer at the Naval Air Station, Glenview, Illinois. From July 1946 until June 1947 he was a graduate student in Ophthalmology at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, and during the three years after graduation served as Chief, Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Division, of the Naval Hospital, Dublin, Georgia, and later the Naval Hospital, Mare Island, California.

During the period 1950-52 he served as Medical Officer in the Office of Naval Officer Procurement, Detroit, Michigan, after which he had duty as Senior Medical Officer at the Marine Corps Air Station, Miami, Florida. Under orders of April 29, 1953, he reported to the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Department, where he served first as Head, Medical Military Specialties Branch and Aviation Medicine Research Division, and currently serves as Deputy Director, Research Division.

Captain Ferwerda has the American Defense Service Medal with star; the American Campaign Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with one engagement star; the World War II Victory Medal; and the National Defense Service Medal. He also holds the Expert Pistol Shot's Medal.

He is a member of the American Board of Preventive Medicine.