

Richard Stanislaus Edwards
18 February 1885 - 2 June 1956



Richard Stanislaus Edwards, the son of Richard S. Edwards and Mrs. (Lucy Brooke Neilson) Edwards, was born on 18 February 1885, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He attended Episcopal Academy at Philadelphia prior to his appointment to the US Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, from his native state in 1903. Graduated on 12 September 1906, with the class of 1907, he served the two years at sea, then required by law, and was commissioned Ensign on 13 September 1908. Through subsequent advancement he attained the rank of Admiral, to date from 13 April 1945, and was transferred to the Retired List of the US Navy in that rank on 1 July 1947.

Following graduation from the Naval Academy in 1906, he joined the USS Missouri, a unit of the Atlantic Fleet. He served in that battleship until August 1907, then had consecutive duty until May 1910 in the USS Stewart, USS Hopkins, and USS Pennsylvania, all operating in the Pacific. Assigned next to the USS Wheeling, he remained aboard that gunboat, based at the Navy Yard, Puget Sound, Washington, until November 1910. He then reported for fitting out duty in the USS Burrows, one of the earlier oil-burning, turbine driven destroyers, at the New York Shipbuilding Company, Camden, New Jersey, and upon her commissioning on 21 February 1911, went aboard to serve until October 1912.

When detached from the Burrows, he had submarine instruction on board the USS Castine until January 1913, when he assumed command of the USS C-3. He commanded that submarine for two months, after which he became Commander First Group, Submarine Flotilla, Atlantic Fleet, the first submarine division to be assigned the vital task of defending the Panama Canal. In January 1914 he reported as Executive Officer and Navigator of the USS Tallahassee. From August 1914 to April 1917 he was an instructor in the Department of Electrical Engineering at the Naval Academy and while there participated in the Midshipmen's practice cruises in the summers of 1914 and 1915, on board the USS Missouri and USS Wisconsin, respectively.

A day after the United States entered World War I, on 6 April 1917, he was detached from duty at the Naval Academy for duty as Engineer Officer of the USS Kentucky, operating in the Atlantic. He served in that battleship until January 1918, then had duty in the North Sea as Gunnery Officer of the USS Kansas. Transferred, in a similar capacity to the USS Arkansas, assigned to the British Grand Fleet, he remained aboard until July 1919.

On 15 July 1919, he reported as Aide and Squadron Gunnery Officer on the Staff of Commander Battleship Squadron ONE, Pacific Fleet, and from June 1920 to February 1921 had duty as Aide and Squadron Gunnery Officer on the Staff of Commander Battleship

Squadron ONE and Division EIGHT. Continuing staff duty, he next served as Aide and Force Gunnery Officer on the staff of Commander Battleship Force, Pacific Fleet.

In September 1921 he reported as Naval Inspector in Charge at the Naval Ammunition Depot, Kuahua, Territory of Hawaii, and in August 1924, assumed command of the USS Wood, a unit of Division THIRTY FOUR, Destroyer Squadron TWELVE, Battle Fleet. Relieved of that command in June 1926, he again had duty until November 1928 as Naval Inspector in Charge at the Kuahua Ammunition Depot. He served as Executive Officer in the USS New Mexico until May 1930, then reported as Aide on the staff of the Commander in Chief, Battle Fleet. On 1 April 1931, that force was redesignated Battle Force, US Fleet, and he continued to serve as Aide until September 1931, with additional duty as Force Gunnery Officer.

Following service on the staff of the Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, he had instruction at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island from June 1934 until May 1935. He then became Commander Submarine Squadron SIX, with additional duty in command of Submarine Division TWELVE. In June 1937 he assumed command of the Submarine Base, New London, Connecticut, with additional duty in command of submarines and attending craft based there (title changed in October 1938 to Commander Submarine Squadron TWO). There he also served as Inspector of Ordnance in Charge, Naval Mine Depot, New London. While in that command, he participated in the successful salvage of the USS Squalus and the rescue of part of her crew when that submarine sank in approximately two hundred and forty feet of water off the Isles of Shoals, New Hampshire coast, in 1939. On this service he was awarded the Navy Cross. The citation follows in part:

"For distinguished service...as Aide and later as Senior Aide on the Staff of the Commander of the USS Squalus Rescue and Salvage Unit. At the first indication of trouble (he) dispatched the USS Falcon of his command and proceeded himself from New London, Connecticut in a destroyer to the scene of the disaster, arriving the following day, May 24, 1939...His advice and cooperation were of inestimable value and conducted greatly to the rescue operations and final successful salvage of the USS Squalus."

On 5 June 1940 he assumed command of the USS Colorado, and in October of that year was relieved for duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, DC. He remained there two months, after which he reported as Commander Submarines, Patrol Force. In February 1941 he transferred to command of Submarines, Atlantic Fleet, and from December 1941 until August 1942, served as Deputy Chief of Staff and Aide to the Commander in Chief, US Fleet. In October 1944 he was appointed Deputy Commander in Chief, US Fleet, and Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, a new post created due to the expansion of Naval activities in the early period of World War Two.

He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and cited "For exceptionally meritorious service...as Deputy Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief, United States Fleet, from January to September 1942; as Chief of Staff and Aide to the Commander in Chief, United States Fleet, from September 1942 to October 1944; and as Deputy Commander in Chief, United States Fleet, and Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, from October 1944 to August 1945. By the exercise of great foresight and brilliant military judgment, (he) provided wise and complete counsel on which to base operations of the United States Fleet...The qualities of leadership which Admiral Edwards displayed earned from his subordinates a loyalty and devotion to duty which were reflected throughout the entire naval service..."

In accordance with the reorganization of the Navy resulting from Executive Order 9635 of 29 September 1945, his title was changed to Vice Chief of Naval Operations, effective on 10 October 1945. In January 1946 he was designated Commander Western Sea Frontier, a command which embraced a huge sea area off the United States West Coast, extending northward almost to Alaska, westward almost to Hawaii and southward almost to South America.

On 1 January 1947, the operating forces of the Navy were reorganized to the processes of streamlining the Navy, reducing command overhead, and simplifying fleet organization in the light of war experience. All numbered fleets were abolished except for one task fleet in each ocean, and Admiral Edwards was placed in command of the Pacific Reserve Fleet, composed of ships in the Pacific, in and out of commission. He was so serving when relieved of all active duty, pending his transfer to the Retired List of the US Navy, on 1 July 1947.

In addition to the Navy Cross and the Distinguished Service Medal, Admiral Edwards had the World War I Victory Medal, Grand Fleet Clasp (USS Arkansas); the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp (Submarines, Atlantic Fleet); the American Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal. Admiral Edwards had also been awarded the Legion of Honor, grade of Commander, the Croix de Guerre with Palm, by the Government of France, "For exceptional services of war rendered in the course of operations for the liberation of France." The Government of Poland made him a Knight of the Order of the Rebirth of Poland, thus conferring upon him the medal of the Order of the Commander's Cross with Star. He was an Honorary Knight Commander of the Military Division of the Order of the British Empire, and was awarded the Order of Yun Hui (Grand Cordon) by the Chinese Empire.

Admiral Edwards died on 2 June 1956 at the Naval Hospital, Oakland, California. Interment was at the Arlington National Cemetery. He was survived by his wife, the former Hallie Ninan Snyder of Arcola, Illinois.

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