

MEMORANDUM ON SERVICE

Harold Stassen was in five major naval battles. He was on the U. S. S. Montpelier in the Battle of Bouganville in November 1943 when Admiral Merrill's task force out-fought a heavier Japanese force in a long night battle at close range. The Montpelier was hit and strafed in the air attack which concluded that battle.

He was on the U. S. S. South Dakota in the First battle of the Phillipine Sea on special assignment with the Fifth Flight preparing for Third Fleet operations. The South Dakota was hit by a bomb which just missed the superstructure in which the staff were working by about fifteen feet and a number of men were killed and wounded.

He was the officer in Charge of Admiral Halsey's combat information plot room on the USS New Jersey in the second battle of the Phillipine Sea when the Japanese Navy received its final decisive defeat.

He was on one of the first ships that entered Tokyo before the surrender to get our boys who were prisoners of the Japs, and had a principal part in the rapid rescue and release of thousands of suffering prisoners of war from Japan at the end of the war.

He was cited by Admiral Halscy, and decorated four times. Here are a few quotations from those citations:

One citation reads in part: "For exceptional meritorious conduct...while serving as Assistant Chief of Staff of Commander Third Fleet during a series of highly successful offensive missions against the enemy including attacks on the Nansi Shoto Islands, Formosa, Phillipines, Indo China, and Hong Kong... by exceptional administrative and organizational ability and by his tireless efforts he provided a smooth functioning Flag Combat Information Center

throughout the operations that has successfully channelled information from all sources to the various pilots and interested parties... and contributed to the overall marked success of the Third Fleet actions that resulted in heavy damage on Japanese aircraft, combatant ships, and shipping and ground installations."

Another one reads in part: "For distinguished service in the line as officer in Charge of Flag Combat Information Center on the Staff of Commander Third Fleet, while the forces of the third fleet were scouting for, engaging and finally pursuing the forces of the Japanese Fleet in the Second Battle of the Phillipine Sea, his tireless effort... alertness, skill, and aggressiveness were in keeping with the highest traditions of the naval service."

And another one reads in part: "For superb personal courage, disregard of danger in the interior of Japan, and unusual organizing ability in rapidly liberating, evacuating and extending medical care to thousands of United States and allied prisoners of war, and for conduct in keeping with the highest traditions of the Naval Service."



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