

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN ROBERT P. FOREMAN, UNITED STATES NAVY

Robert Payton Foreman was born in Pineville, Kentucky, on May 5, 1921, son of Francis G. and Rose Helen (Osborne) Foreman. He attended Hazard (Kentucky) High School and Berea College, Berea, Kentucky, prior to his appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, in 1940. He was graduated with the Class of 1944 and commissioned Ensign on June 9, 1943 (accelerated course due to wartime emergency), and through subsequent advancement attained the rank of Captain, to date from September 1, 1963.

After graduation from the Naval Academy in 1943, he was assigned to the Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida, for elimination flight training, and in September joined the USS SOUTH DAKOTA (BB-57). He served as a junior officer on board that battleship during the latter period of World War II, except from June to September 1945, when he was assigned to the Staff of Commander Operational Development Force. In the SOUTH DAKOTA he participated in the Gilbert and Marshall Islands operations, Asiatic-Pacific raids, the Hollandia and Marianas (including the Battle of the Philippine Sea) operations, and assaults on the Philippine Islands, Leyte (including the Battle of Surigao Strait), Luzon, Iwo Jima and Okinawa Gunto operations. During that time the SOUTH DAKOTA was known as "Battleship X" and operated with the THIRD and FIFTH Fleets, to the confusion of enemy Japanese forces.

Detached from Staff duty in September 1945, he returned to the United States for six months' instruction at the Naval Air Station, Dallas, Texas, then rejoined the Staff of Commander Operational Development Force in March 1946. In June 1948 he was transferred to the USS STEINAKER (DD-863), participating in two cruises to the Mediterranean. In June 1950 he entered the Naval Postgraduate School, Annapolis, Maryland, for instruction. The School was transferred to Monterey, California, in December 1951, and he completed the course in ordnance engineering there in June of 1952. He next had two months' instruction at the University of Minnesota at Duluth, and a year at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, from which he received the degree of Master of Science.

In June 1953 he assumed command of the USS REDSTART (MSF-378). That fleet minesweeper, under his command, cruised to the Western Pacific and participated in minesweeping operations in Korea and Balabac Strait, Philippine Islands. When detached in May 1955, he assumed command of the USS GEORGE A. JOHNSON (DE-583), a Naval Reserve Training Vessel, based at San Francisco, California. In August 1956 he was assigned to the Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., where he served as "Terrier" Missile Project Officer until September 1959.

In October 1959 he took command of the USS VOGELGESANG (DD-862). That destroyer made a cruise to the Mediterranean in 1959-60. He was commended by Commander SIXTH Fleet for duty in connection with work done by his ship to relieve conditions in Frejus, France, after a dam broke. Cruising to the South Atlantic in 1960-61, the VOGELGESANG participated in the Navy's efforts to remove passengers from the SS SANTA MARIA, which had been taken over by a group of dissidents under Galvoa. For this service he was commended by the State Department and the Portuguese Navy. He was also commended by Commander South Atlantic for the people-to-people work during that South Atlantic Cruise. In April 1961 the VOGELGESANG fired the highest score ever fired at Culebra Shore Bombardment Range to qualify as gunfire support ship.

Detached from command of the VOGELGESANG in September 1961, he reported the next month as "Terrier" Weapon Systems Project Officer in the Bureau of Naval Weapons, Navy Department, and in May 1964 was ordered detached for duty as Prospective Commanding Officer of the USS WAINWRIGHT (DLG-28), building at the Bath (Maine) Iron Works Corporation.

The first Eagle Scout in Lonesome Pine Council, Captain Foreman is still active in Boy Scout work. He is a member of Sigma Psi (honorary scientific society), U. S. Naval Institute, American Ordnance Society and the National Beagle Club.

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