Monday Maritime Matters

Description

Required reading: Fred Fryâ€™s Maritime Monday 104, Eagle1â€™s first person report of being captured by modern day pirates and now, CDR Salamander opens fire on the new Maritime Strategy document. Toss in Eagle1â€™s Sunday Ship History: Aerial Mining post, too (with an old post of mine related to the subject, because it discusses one Navy admiralâ€™s view on the minings in Vietnam). BT
Last week, I reported on Father Oâ€™Callahan, one of the Medal of Honor awardees aboard USS FRANKLIN. There is background information there, and links to other references about the attack on the FRANKLIN, which support this post as well. Consider it pre-reading to frame the writing below.

Born in July 23rd, 1903, Donald Gary enlisted in the Navy in 1919.

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Serving in the enlisted ranks, he eventually was commissioned in 1943 to Lieutenant (Junior Grade) in 1943. His assignments, prior to the one that is the subject of this weekâ€™s story were: Third Naval District, New York City; the Office of Assistant Inspector of Machinery, B&W Company, Ohio; the staff of Commander Submarine Group ONE, New York; and the Naval Disciplinary Barracks, Terminal Island, California. His sea duty tours included ELCANO (PG 38), HANNIBAL (AG 1), SWAN (AM 34), IDAHO (BB 42), and INDIANAPOLIS (CA 35) for two tours.In 1944, LTJG Gary was assigned to the USS FRANKLIN (CV-13) in the Engineering department.Aboard the FRANKLIN on March 19th, 1945, he survived the attack by the lone Japanese dive bomber, and was instrumental in saving the

FRANKLIN. Not only did he save 250-300 men trapped below, and organizing firefighting on the hanger deck, he found his way to below to one of the boiler rooms and got one boiler on line, thus providing a source of power for the ship.



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For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as an Engineering Officer attached to the U.S.S. Franklin when that vessel was fiercely attacked by enemy aircraft during the operations against the Japanese Home Islands near Kobe, Japan, 19 March 1945. Stationed on the third deck when the ship was rocked by a series of violent explosions set off in her own ready bombs, rockets and ammunition by the hostile attack, Lieutenant Gary unhesitatingly risked his life to assist several hundred men trapped in a messing compartment filled with smoke, and with no apparent egress. As the imperiled men below decks became increasingly panic-stricken under the raging fury of incessant explosions, he confidently assured them he would find a means of affecting their release and, groping through the dark, debris-filled corridors, untimately discovered an escapeway. Staunchly determined, he struggled back to the messing compartment three times despite menacing flames, flooding water and the ominous threat of sudden additional explosions, on each occasion calmly leading his men through the blanketing pall of smoke until the last one had been saved. Selfless in his concern for his ship and his fellows, he constantly rallied others about him, repeatedly organized and led fire-fighting parties into the blazing inferno on the flight deck and, when firerooms 1 and 2 were found to be inoperable, entered the No. 3 fireroom and directed the raising of steam in one boiler in the face of extreme difficulty and hazard. An inspiring and courageous leader, Lieutenant Gary rendered self-sacrificing service under the most perilous conditions and, by his heroic initiative, fortitude and valor, was responsible for the saving of several hundred lives. His conduct throughout reflects the highest credit upon himself and upon the United States Naval Service.

From the WW2DB, this bit on the later part of CDR Garyâ€™s career:

Gary was subsequently promoted to the ranks of lieutenant and lieutenant commander. After the war, he remained with the ship until she was decommissioned in Feb 1947. He was then assigned to the Naval Disciplinary Barracks at Terminal Island, California, United

States, where he served until retirement in Jun 1950. He was promoted to the rank of commander while on the retirement list. He passed away in *[April 9th,]*

1977. He now rests at the Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery in San Diego, California, United States.

Around the web, there is little information about Donald Gary. The Naval Archives does have his collection of his personal papers,

but they are not published.



On November 17th, 1984, the USS GARY (FFG-51) was commissioned to honor CDR Donald Gary, USN. GARY is part of the OLIVER HAZARD PERRY guided missile frigate class and remains in active service today, stationed at Naval Station San Diego, CA, having spent much of her service time forward deployed to the Naval Station at Yokuska, Japan.One of the GARYâ€™s historical missions was to be the first US warship to visit Cambodia since the Vietnam War. She made a port visit to Sihanoukville in February, 2007.

Category

1. Navy

Date Created
March 31, 2008
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