

Richard Barnes



THE
President of the United States of America.



To all who shall see these presents, greeting:

Know Ye, that reposing special Trust and Confidence, in the Patriotism, Valor, Fidelity
and Abilities of RICHARD FRANKLIN BARNES I do appoint him

Ensign

in the Naval Reserve of The United States Navy to rank from the
Seventeenth day of September 1942. He is therefore
carefully and diligently to discharge the duties of such office by doing and performing
all manner of things thereunto belonging.

And I do strictly charge and require all Officers, Seamen and Marines under
his Command to be obedient to his orders. And he is to observe and follow such
orders and directions from time to time, as he shall receive from me, or the future
President of The United States of America, or his Superior Officer, set over him,
according to the Rules and Discipline of the Navy.

This Commission to continue in force during the pleasure of the President of the
United States, for the time being.

Done at the City of Washington, this Twenty-First day of September
in the year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Forty-Two
and of the Independence of The United States of America the One Hundred and
Sixty-Seventh.

By the President:

Frank Knox
Secretary of the Navy

113707

May 1, 2007

John Hackney
Wilson, NC

Dear John;

By now you should have received the packet of information on my Uncle Bob Wilkins. Owing to the ineffectiveness of the U.S. Mails, it may have gone astray and I will be glad to send it again.

Here is the military record of my father. I do not have anything so exciting as an air mission or POW record, but he had an interesting service during WWII. His Navy record is like this:

Entered service November 1, 1942, commissioned as an Ensign in the U.S. Naval Reserve.

Attended Naval Communications School, Harvard University from November 1942 to March, 1943

Departed for overseas duty April 6, 1943 through Pearl Harbor and remained on station in the Pacific until September 1944. During this time he was on the Staff of LST Flotilla 5, first as Chief Warrant Officer and Assistant Operations Officer and then as Flotilla Communications Officer

Promoted to Lieutenant (jg) in 1944.

Transferred to become Instructor at the Communications School at Camp Bradford, Norfolk, VA

Transferred as Instructor to Advance Communications School, Naval Air Training Center, Memphis, Tennessee in August of 1945 and there at the end of the war until he was discharged November 1945. He was separated as a full Lieutenant.

He had been designated to return to the Pacific and LST Flotilla 5 for the preparations for the invasion of Japan, but the war ended before his transfer papers were cut.

During his service he received the Bronze Star Medal. "For distinguishing himself by meritorious achievement as Communications Office on the staff of the commander of a flotilla of United States ships during July, 1944. His efforts were largely responsible for the success of communications among ships of the flotilla and others assigned for combat operations. While under heavy fire, during the assault and capture of enemy held islands, he contributed in a large measure to the success of the operations by his cool and capable direction of communications. His conduct throughout distinguished him among those performing duties of the same character."

He was also commended for his actions during the following engagements:

At Guam, while aboard the U.S.S. Stembel (DD 644) offshore of Asan Beach while under heavy shelling attack 7/28/1944

At Guam during assault phase of attack, July 21, 1944

During attack by four Japanese torpedo planes on LST Flotilla, July 7, 1944

During the period June 25, 1943 to March 31, 1944, the following engagements:
Initial lands at Cape Torokina, Bougainville Island November 6-7, 1943 on board U.S.S. Eaton during a strafing attack
Empress Augusta Bay November 17, 1943 enemy torpedo attacks
Aboard LST 343 during dive bomb attack on November 17, 1943

He was responsible for formulating and drafting and establishing a training program to instruct enlisted personnel in flotilla communications during landing operations. For this, he was selected to train men stateside and was then transferred to Norfolk in September 1944, returning via ship to San Francisco.

He served mostly on LSTs (designation Landing Ship Tank or as they referred to them Large Slow Target). He crossed the equator and was inducted into the Order of Neptune aboard the LST 472 on his way out to the Solomon Islands in 1943. He was also serving during his duty on the LST Flotilla Staff on destroyers, including the U.S.S. Stembel.

I heard him rarely talk about his service, but he did mention a strafing attack and a near miss bombing attack while they were unloading aviation gasoline. Ships from their flotilla were lost (one cut in two by a submarine torpedo) and he was involved in the actions in the Solomons and the Mariannas. He bonded with many of the officers in his flotilla and they had reunions and traveled to visit one another, exchanged letters and Christmas cards his whole life. I wrote to everyone of them still alive when he died September 2, 1995, ironically the 50th anniversary of the signing of the articles of surrender on board the U.S.S. Missouri. Some of their letters back were very moving; one said that it did not take the President's commission as an officer to make my father a gentleman and another said that "after reading it I couldn't keep the tears from my eyes." The friendships forged during the days of their service remained strong for a lifetime.

I applaud your work and preserving the memory of the brave men who served this country so well. It is a pity that those in Congress now do not have the same determination and courage as did the greatest generation. Had these men been in Congress then, they would have sued for peace after Bataan, Wake Island and the Battles in the Solomons. The losses at Tarawa and Iwo Jima would have been declared disasters and justification for a withdrawal from the Pacific. They might have supported the Pacific War since we were attacked by Japan, but not the European theatre because we were only trying to save Britain and "nation build" and what had Hitler done to us and who cared if he was aiming to build "weapons of mass destruction." I know my Father would have been livid to see what passes for government and courage today.

Cordially,

Richard F. Barnes, Jr.
11205 Crestmont Drive
Raleigh, NC 27613
(919) 848-1737 (home) (919) 789-2385 (office)

Enclosed:

A page from the Daily Times during the war with Daddy, his brothers Jimmy and H.F.

His ID card

His commission

His commendation with the Bronze Star

In the name of the President of the United States and by direction of the Secretary of the Navy and the Commander In Chief, United States Pacific Fleet, the Commander Amphibious Forces, United States Pacific Fleet, takes pleasure in presenting the BRONZE STAR MEDAL to

LIEUTENANT (JUNIOR GRADE) RICHARD FRANKLIN BARNES,
UNITED STATES NAVAL RESERVE

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

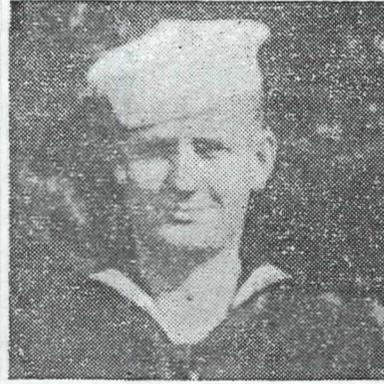
"For distinguishing himself by meritorious achievement as Communication Officer on the staff of the commander of a flotilla of United States ships during July, 1944. His efforts were largely responsible for the success of communications among ships of the flotilla and others assigned for combat operations. While under heavy fire, during the assault and capture of enemy held islands, he contributed in a large measure to the success of the operations by his cool and capable direction of communications. His conduct throughout distinguished him among those performing duties of the same character."

R. K. TURNER
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy.

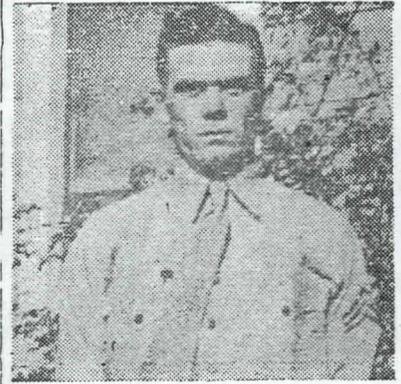
Temporary Citation



LT. (JG) RICHARD F. BARNES, son of Mrs. H. F. Barnes and the late Mr. Barnes, went overseas in 1943. He has been overseas for the past 18 months.



JACK G. MILLARD, Coxswain, entered the Navy a year ago and is now in the Pacific area. He left for overseas duty in July 1944. He is married and his wife resides here at 410 Herring Ave.



SGT. SAMMIE S. SASSER, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Sasser of Shamrock, Fla., is in the Marine Corps. He entered the service in August 1938 and was sent overseas in April 1942 where he served on Guadalcanal for about a year. He is now stationed at Camp Pendleton, Calif. He is married to the former Dorothy Etheridge of Wilson.

SGT. JAC son of Mi of 407 B ed the ser was sent After tak Keesler F ley Field China and with Ge 14th Air Good Con with the



LT. (JG) JAMES T. BARNES, son of Mrs. H. F. Barnes and the late Mr. Barnes, went overseas in 1943. He has been overseas for the past 18 months.



LYNN C. COOPER, S 2/c, son of Mrs. Alma O. Cooper and the late L. C. "Bud" Cooper, is stationed at the United States Naval Air Station in Miami, Fla. He has been in training since April 1944.



VAN ETHERIDGE, S 1/2 Class, son of Mrs. Lucille Etheridge and the late Mr. W. H. Etheridge, is in the Seabees. He entered the service August 1943 and went overseas in July 1944. He is now somewhere in the South Pacific.

PVT. LIND Mrs. Nanni entered the 1942. He Camp Walte Calif., Fort Pickett, Va Pa., Elkins, N. J. His ou in August, awarded the and also the ing.



SGT. H. F. BARNES, son of Mrs. H. F. Barnes and the late Mr. Barnes, went overseas in January 1942. He has been awarded the Presidential citation with Oak Leaf Cluster. He is married to the former Carolyn Whitley.



PFC. LOUIS E. NICHOLS, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Nichols, of Bailey, is now serving with the 5th Army in Italy. He received his training at Fort Bragg and has been in the service since November 1940. He went overseas in December 1943 and was sent first to North Africa, then to Italy.



CPL. WILLIAM THOMAS ETHERIDGE, son of Mrs. Lucille Etheridge and the late W. H. Etheridge, is in the Parachute troops and entered the service January 1942. He is now stationed at Fort Benning, Ga. He is married to the former Betty Jane Meyers



Richard F. Barnes

April 30, 2007

Mr. John Hackney
Wilson, NC

Dear John,

Mother indicated you would like some information on my Uncle Bob Wilkins. I was privileged to interview him a month or so before his death about his wartime experiences and I was able to photocopy this information on a subsequent visit to Aunt Ada's house.

I will put together some of my Father's military papers too. Daddy served in the Pacific and I have all of this military papers and records, some photographs, but he rarely talked about the war and what few stories I hear were conversations overhead with other men of his generation who were in the service.

My Uncle Bob, Captain Robert Sherwood Wilkins, was among the earliest crews in the 8th Air Force and he was a bombardier on B-17's during the first raids on France and Germany by the Mighty 8th. The information I have included consists of the following:

1. His POW camp record from Luft Stalag 1, Barth, Germany (on the Baltic Sea), "liberated" from the Camp Office after the Germans had fled
2. A notice taken from a bulletin board at the Stalag.
3. A writeup a the mission of July 4, 1943
4. The flight log kept by Uncle Bob of the mission of July 4, 1943
5. The News & Observer article of July 14, 1943 about the July 4 mission
6. A hand written account of the mission in November, 1943 when Bob was shot down and the crew of the July 4 mission.

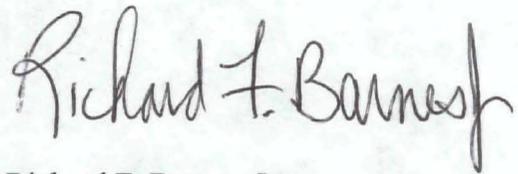
Bob was liberated from his camp in May of 1945. He said a drunken Russian officer driving a jeep showed up at the camp, from which the German guards had already fled, to "liberate them". By that time, the prisoners had taken over the camp, posted guards in the towers to discourage roaming German soldiers and civilians from looting what was left of the camp. The prisoners were taken to a camp in France to recover and gain weight (which he said was as much of a prison as the German camp) and then to England briefly and then to America.

The notice taken from the bulletin board is amusing and an interesting footnote of the war. The POWs taunted their guards in much the way that it is portrayed in the movies and TV, but the implications of punishment are real and sinister. Bob said the worst thing about the camps was the constant hunger and boredom. He said the soil was so sandy that it made tunneling nearly impossible.

Life in this camp is chronicled in two works:

Prisoner of War: My Secret Journal Squadron Leader B. Arct
Zemke's Stalag: Hubert Zemke as told to Roger A. Freeman

I hope you can use this information and I will prepare something for my Father and mail it this week.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard F. Barnes, Jr." The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

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