

CAPTAIN FORREST CLOSE
UNITED STATES NAVY

Forrest Close was born in Waynesboro, Georgia, on January 4, 1904, son of Mrs. Mary Louise (McElmurray) Close and the late Nathaniel Bedford Forrest Close, of Savannah, Georgia. He was graduated from Savannah (Georgia) High School and was appointed to the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, from his native state in 1920. Graduated and commissioned Ensign on June 5, 1924, he subsequently attained the rank of Captain to date from June 1, 1943.

Upon graduation from the Naval Academy in June 1924, he was assigned to the USS WEST VIRGINIA, and after two years' service as a junior officer in that battleship, was transferred to the USS MARBLEHEAD. During his four year period of duty as Watch and Division Officer aboard the latter, that light cruiser was assigned variously to the Atlantic, Pacific, and Asiatic Fleets, and to Special Service Squadron, and participated in the Second Nicaraguan and Yangtze Valley Campaigns.

He returned to Annapolis in 1930 for instruction in Communications Engineering at the Naval Postgraduate School, and, continuing the course at Harvard University Graduate School, received the degree of Master of Science in June 1932. For a year thereafter, he served as Communication Officer of the USS LOUISVILLE, a unit of Cruiser Division 5; Scouting Force, and during a second year (1933-34), he was Radio Officer on the Staff of Commander, Battleship Division ONE. In 1934-35 he served as Aide and Flag Lieutenant to Commander Battleships, Battle Force, attached to the USS WEST VIRGINIA, flagship.

In the summer of 1935 he was ordered to the Navy Department, Washington, D. C., where he served for three years in the Office of the Judge Advocate General of the Navy. While so assigned, he studied Law, his specialty Patent Law, at George Washington University, from which he received the degree of Bachelor of Laws in 1938. He was admitted to the Bar, U. S. District Court for the District of Columbia, the same year.

Service afloat in destroyers from 1938 to 1941, included duty as Executive Officer of the USS HULL; command of the USS McLANAHAN on Neutrality Patrol until turned over to the Royal Navy by Lease-Lend agreement; and command of the USS GREER, also on Neutrality Patrol, and later assigned to Atlantic escort operations to Greenland and Newfoundland. For a brief time in 1941 he served as Navigator of the USS BROOKLYN, in Neutrality operations from Bermuda to Newfoundland.

On December 4, 1941, he assumed command of the USS HAMBLETON. In 1942 he commanded a group of destroyers on cruise to the West and East Coasts of South America. Under his command, the HAMBLETON engaged in anti-submarine operations on the Atlantic Coast, and in the Caribbean, escort of convoys to England, and northern

convoy operations with the British Fleet. The HAMBLETON, participating in the North African Campaign in November 1942, received torpedo hits causing extensive personnel casualties and structural damage, but after being repaired at Casablanca, was returned to service.

He attended the command course at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, in 1943, and remained there for a school year as a lecturer and instructor in tactics on the staff. In 1944-45 he served as Chief of Staff and Aide to Commander Service Squadron, South Pacific, staging Army and Navy forces for the Iwo Jima and Okinawa Campaigns. "For exceptionally meritorious conduct... as Chief of Staff to the Commander Service Squadron, South Pacific Force, during operations against enemy Japanese forces from January to September 1945..." he was awarded the Legion of Merit, The citation continues:

"Demonstrating professional ability and sound judgment, Captain Close directed numerous and complex staff functions and, by his precise planning, rendered invaluable assistance to the command in the support of major forces staging for amphibious operations and in the redeployment of forces and equipment in the South Pacific to forward areas..."

Late in 1945 he served briefly as Chief of Staff and Aide to Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Forces, after which he was assigned (on detached service) to the Department of State, Office of the Foreign Liquidation Commissioner, engaged in disposing of all United States surplus property in foreign areas. While in that assignment in 1946 and 1947, he served as Assistant Central Field Commissioner, Pacific and China Areas; Field Commissioner, Marianas and Micronesia Areas; and Central Field Commissioner, Philippines, South Pacific Areas.

Under orders of October 15, 1947 he assumed command of the USS PRAIRIE, flagship of Commander Service Squadron 3, at Tsingtao, China, and returned her to American waters when she was relieved by the USS PIEDMONT on March 4, 1948. Detached from the PRAIRIE in October of that year, he reported to the Navy Department for a tour of duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. On March 28, 1950 he was ordered to duty as Commander, Destroyer Squadron 8.

When detached from destroyer duty in 1951, he reported as Inspector General Naval Forces, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean. On November 16, 1951, he was designated Assistant Chief of Staff (Logistics) to Commander Naval Forces, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean, and early in 1952 became Commanding Officer, Headquarters Support Activities, Naples, Italy. On September 29, 1952 he was reassigned as Commander, Subordinate Command, Naval Forces, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean. He is now under orders of July 8, 1953, to duty as Liaison Officer, Joint Staff, U. S. Commander in Chief, Europe, with Headquarters at Paris, France.

In addition to the Legion of Merit, Captain Close has the Second Nicaraguan Campaign Medal; the Yangtze Service Medal; the American Defense Service Medal with Bronze "A"; the American Campaign Medal; European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, one engagement star; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; the China Service Medal; the Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia Clasp; the British decoration "Mentioned in Dispatches"; the World War II Victory Medal; and the National Defense Service Medal.

Captain Close is a member of Kappa Alpha Fraternity (South), University of Georgia; the Chevy Chase Club, Chevy Chase, Maryland; and the Army and Navy Country Club, Arlington, Virginia.