

REAR ADMIRAL IRVIN J. STEPHENS,

U. S. COAST GUARD

Irvin Junior Stephens was born the son of Mr. and Mrs. Irvin E. and Emma B. Stephens on May 1, 1910, at Dayton, Ohio, where he graduated from Steele High School in 1928. While attending the Citizens' Military Training Camp at Fort Thomas, Kentucky, during the summer of 1927, he won a gold medal (known as the National Commander's Award) for being the best trained and disciplined of 1,800 boys gathered at that camp.

He entered the U. S. Coast Guard Academy, New London, Conn., with an appointment as Cadet on July 26, 1929, and was graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree and a commission as Ensign on May 16, 1932. At the Academy he was manager of the football team in 1931, secretary-treasurer of the Athletic Association for a year, and circulation manager of the Cadets' 1932 annual of "Tide Rips."

Advancing through the various officers' billets, he was appointed to rank as Lieutenant (jg), May 16, 1935; Lieutenant, November 16, 1938; Lieut. Commander, June 26, 1942; Commander, December 21, 1943; Captain, August 26, 1952; Rear Admiral, July 1, 1961.

After the Academy, he served his first assignment on board the Cutter TAHOE, stationed at Oakland, Calif. This was the homeport of two other vessels he served in during the following assignments--the Cutter SHOSHONE from September 1932 to April 1935, and the Cutter ARIADNE until April 1937. His next assignment as navigator in the Cutter NORTHLAND, based at Seattle, took him on patrols in Northern Pacific, Alaskan, and Arctic waters. A reassignment in October 1938, saw him as navigation instructor at the U. S. Maritime Training Station at Oakland, Calif.

In January 1943, he was designated Aide to Secretary of the Treasury Henry M. Morgenthau, Jr., in Washington, D. C. In June and July of 1943, during World War II, he acted as observer on board the Coast Guard Cutter MODOC on the Greenland Patrol, then reported for duty as Coast Guard liaison officer at the Navy Submarine Chaser Training Center, Miami, Fla.

From November 1943 to February 1945, he commanded the Destroyer Escort MERRILL (DE-392) on convoy escort operations in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. He was awarded the Navy Commendation Ribbon for "display of expert seamanship, outstanding professional skill, and excellent ship handling" involving the hazardous transfer of a badly injured seaman from a merchant ship under bad weather and sea conditions in the Atlantic on February 12, 1945. He received a Bronze Star in lieu of a second Commendation Ribbon for meritorious service while commanding the destroyer. A "V" attached to this Ribbon indicated combating attacks from enemy submarines on a convoy in the Mediterranean.

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From March to August of 1945, he served as Executive Officer of the troop transport USS FREEMAN (AP-143) in the Pacific theater of war.

After the war, he served as Chief, Administrative Management Division at Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D. C., from September 1945 to October 1950. There followed next his command of the Cutter WINNEBAGO out of Honolulu until April 1952, and an assignment in San Francisco as Planning and Readiness Officer on the staff of the Commander, Western Area, until August 1953. He then reported again to Coast Guard Headquarters to serve as Special Assistant to the Commandant.

In February 1959, he became Chief, Operations Division, at the 17th Coast Guard District Office in Juneau, Alaska. He became Chief of Staff of that district in May 1960. While at that post he was nominated by the President for the permanent rank of Rear Admiral on February 3, 1961. With the approval of the Senate this appointment became effective as of July 1, 1961, at which time he assumed the flagship post of Chief Office of Merchant Marine Safety at Coast Guard Headquarters. (He succeeded retiring RADM Henry T. Jewell, USCG.)

July 1962 saw him taking over the reigns of Commander, 7th Coast Guard District, Miami, Florida. While there he won the LEGION OF MERIT Award for the great tact and efficiency with which he directed Coast Guard operations connected with handling of the Cuban situation during the period from October 1962 to October 1964. Those operations included protection of merchant ships diverted from the Cuban quarantine zone, and coordination of Coast Guard aircraft flights with those of the Navy and Air Force on extended reconnaissance missions in and around this zone. It was pointed out in his citation that it was largely due to his administrative ability and resourceful analysis of the overall situations in his district that the Coast Guard was able to rapidly assemble the extra and effective forces needed to cope with the Cuban situation.

In January 1965, RADM Stephens assumed the dual post of Commander, Eastern Area, and Commander, Third Coast Guard District, New York.

In addition to the Navy Commendation Ribbon and Bronze Star, RADM Stephens' World War II campaign and Service medals include: American Defense, American Area, European-African-Middle Eastern Area, Asiatic-Pacific Area, and World War II Victory. He also has the United Nations Service Medal, Korean Service Medal, and National Defense Service Medal.

RADM Stephens is married to the former Mary Jane Park of his hometown, Dayton, Ohio. They have two daughters, Janita Kay and Christina Gail. The Admiral presently resides with his family in quarters at the Coast Guard Base, St. George, Staten Island, New York.