



DEPARTMENT of PUBLIC INFORMATION

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For release in AM's, Sunday, March 24th:

Notre Dame, Ind., Mar. 23 -- Admiral George W. Anderson, Jr., Chief of Naval Operations, will receive the University of Notre Dame's Laetare Medal for 1963, it was announced here tonight (Saturday) by Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., University president.

The Laetare Medal has been awarded annually since 1883 to an outstanding American Catholic layman. President Kennedy was the recipient in 1961. Admiral Anderson, a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is the second naval figure to receive the medal. An earlier Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral William Shepherd Benson, was similarly honored in 1917.

Father Hesburgh, in naming the four-star admiral for this year's award, paid tribute to Anderson "for his more than thirty-five years of courageous and brilliant service to the nation. Throughout his notable career, in war and in peace, whether combatting the enemy in the far Pacific or forging the blockade of nearby Cuba, Admiral Anderson has exemplified the highest ideals of the naval service and his Christian faith. Like the celebrated Captain John Barry, the Navy's first officer, he personifies a virile devotion to God and country worthy of emulation by his fellow-Americans. For these and other reasons," Father Hesburgh said, "the University of Notre Dame is proud to award Admiral Anderson the highest honor within its power to bestow, The Laetare Medal."

Admiral Anderson is the 81st recipient of The Laetare Medal which is generally regarded as the most significant annual award conferred on Catholic laymen in the United States. Recent recipients have included psychiatrist Francis J. Braceland, educator George N. Shuster, diplomat Robert D. Murphy, industrialist Frank M. Folsom and author Clare Boothe Luce.

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Notre Dame's Laetare Medal is so named because the recipient is announced each year on Laetare Sunday, the fourth Sunday of Lent and an occasion of joy in the liturgy of the Church. The actual presentation of the medal is arranged for a time and place convenient to the recipient.

Prior to being appointed Chief of Naval Operations on August 1, 1961, Admiral Anderson served for two years as commander of the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean. A naval aviator for more than thirty years, he had been commander of Carrier Division Six during 1958-59. Earlier he was Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief, Pacific and held important staff assignments for top commands in the Pacific, the Atlantic, Europe and the Pentagon.

Admiral Anderson was born in Brooklyn, N. Y., December 15, 1906. He was graduated from the U. S. Naval Academy and commissioned an ensign in 1927. He began flight training at Pensacola in 1930 and was designated a naval aviator in October of that year. His early flight duty prior to World War II was aboard the aircraft carriers Lexington and Yorktown. At the outset of the war, Anderson was assigned to the plans division of the Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics in Washington, helping formulate the American aircraft program for the world-wide conflict.

In 1943, Anderson became navigator and tactical officer of the new USS Yorktown whose officers and men were to be cited for "extraordinary heroism in action against enemy Japanese forces in the air, at sea and on shore in the Pacific war area..." He personally was awarded the Legion of Merit "for exceptionally meritorious conduct" as head of the Plans Division of the Staff of the Commander Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet, during late 1943 and early 1944.

After staff assignments in the Pacific and at the Pentagon, Admiral Anderson served for a year as commanding officer of the USS Mindoro until August, 1949, when he entered the National War College in Washington. His next assignments were as fleet operations officer of the Sixth Fleet and senior plans and operations officer at General Eisenhower's SHAPE headquarters near Paris.

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In July, 1952, Anderson began a year's tour as commanding officer of the aircraft carrier Franklin D. Roosevelt. For a two-year period beginning in July, 1953, he served as special assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon. Anderson assumed command of the Formosa Patrol Force in 1955. He was Chief of Staff, Joint Staff, Commander in Chief, Pacific from July, 1956, to May, 1957, when he became Chief of Staff and Aide to the Commander in Chief, Pacific. Then followed his assignments as commander of Carrier Division Six and Commander of the Sixth Fleet.

Admiral Anderson, in addition to the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star and several commendation ribbons, has been awarded the Order of the British Empire, rank of Honorary Officer, from the government of Great Britain. He is married to the former Mary Lee Sample of Pensacola, Fla. His first wife, the former Muriel Buttling, died in 1947. He has two sons, Lt. George W. Anderson, III, USN, and Thomas Patrick Anderson; a daughter, Mrs. Daniel Coughlin; and a step-daughter, Mrs. David M. Abshire.

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