



MARITIME PATROL AND RECONNAISSANCE FORCE HALL OF HONOR

RADM Thomas D. Davis

United States Navy (Ret.)

Rear Admiral Thomas D. Davies, United States Navy (Retired) was a decorated maritime Navy pilot who was a WWII combat pilot and set several aviation records. In addition, he was a commanding officer, a diplomat, and an expert and innovator in several scientific fields, including navigation and optics and was the founder and first president of The Foundation for the Promotion of the Art of Navigation. Most recently he received international attention for his exhaustive analysis of Admiral Robert E. Peary's claim to have reached the North Pole in April of 1909. His long professional involvement in the science and art of celestial navigation began as a Midshipman in Annapolis, where he recognized the problem the Navy was having with long range gun accuracy and developed an optical site that was utilized by all large caliber U.S. and eventually U.K. naval guns until their retirement from service. His optical site can still be seen on retired battleships. RADM Davies graduated from the Naval Academy in 1937, and was assigned to the U.S.S. Portland stationed in the Pacific, and then to the U.S.S. Wichita.

In 1942, Davies left the surface navy and entered the Navy flight training program and was subsequently assigned as a pilot to Patrol and Bombing Squadron 129 (VPB-129) as Executive Officer. This squadron, flying PV-1 Venturas, was fighting a little publicized antisubmarine war in the South Atlantic against German U-Boats. Flying from airfields in Brazil, VPB-129 was charged with the protection of coastal shipping along the coast of South America. On one antisubmarine surveillance mission, Aircraft Plane Commander Davies engaged the German Submarine U-604. His attack scored a direct hit. For his attack on the German submarine, Davies received the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism and superb airmanship contributing to the destruction of an important enemy vessel".

After the war as the Patrol Plane Contracting Officer in the USN Bureau of Aeronautics, he set the world distance record in heavy propeller-driven aircraft at 11,256 miles in a P2V. He was awarded a Gold Star on his DFC for this flight. He then went on to be the Commander of Task Group 68.7 where he piloted the first jet assisted carrier take-off of a P2V-2 Neptune. As a flag officer commanding Carrier Division 20 in the Mediterranean, he designed a surface surveillance/command and control system that was the key factor in locating all five Soviet submarines operating in the Mediterranean during this period.

After his retirement, he developed completed his development of star sighting reduction tables for celestial navigation that were so accurate they were incorporated into the U.S. and U.K. Nautical Almanacs.