

Heroes of the Washington Area



LT. COMDR. MERRILL K. CLEMENTSON, U. S. N.

One of that comparatively unsung company of American heroes who are fighting the war undersea, where it hits the Jap the hardest, is Lt. Comdr. Clementson, submarine skipper whose ships have taken a fat toll of dwindling enemy tonnage. Their score adds up to more than 30,000 tons of enemy shipping sunk, including a destroyer, and 5,000 tons damaged.

It was before he had advanced to ship command that Comdr. Clementson won his first decoration last fall—the Silver Star for gallantry while executive officer of a submarine in the South Pacific. Moving up to skipper of another sub, he won the Gold Star in lieu of a second Silver Star for "aggressiveness, skill and courage in action" which resulted in the sinking of more than 10,000 tons of enemy shipping, including the destroyer.

A third award, the Navy Cross, came to Comdr. Clementson last month for a second patrol under his command in which he upped his

score by an additional three ships of 20,000 tons sunk and one of 5,000 tons damaged. That decoration he received at the Groton, Conn., base as he prepared to take command of a newly commissioned submarine with prospects of even bigger and better hunting along the Jap shipping lanes.

Son of Mrs. Clyde Kelly, 3700 Massachusetts avenue N.W., and a resident of Washington since early childhood, Comdr. Clementson attended Potomac School and Devitt Preparatory School before graduating from the Naval Academy in 1933. In preparation for his undersea command he went on submarine duty in 1936 for two years of fleet training. Comdr. Clementson's wife, the former Jane Tewkesbury of Chevy Chase, Md., and their two small sons have been living near the Groton base with him as he readied his new ship.

This is one of a series of portraits of our decorated fighting men by Newman Sudduth of The Star's art staff.