

Heroes of the Washington Area



COMDR. WILLIAM C. BUTLER, JR., U. S. N.

It will take Comdr. Butler a long time to tell his 6-year-old son Warner about all the fighting he has come through in this war from the South Pacific to the Mediterranean. The helmet the youngster wears is one of the trophies Comdr. Butler brought back from the Italian theater after he had helped keep the Yanks ashore at Salerno by directing the deadly fire of the famous cruiser Boise as its chief gunnery officer in those few days of inferno.

But it was back in those critical earlier days in the Solomons that Comdr. Butler won the Navy Cross for his cool and courageous share in the sharpshooting of the Boise which is credited with sinking four out of six Jap warships sunk and probably hitting the other two. It was on the black night of October 11, 1942 that as assistant gunnery officer, he helped direct from the bridge control a streaming blast of steel, more than 1,000 rounds, from the cruiser's 5 and 6-inch guns. The Boise took

it, too, in that 27-minute fight—an 8-inch shell hit that blazed her forward part and caused the other Yank ships to leave her for lost. But the tough Boise lived to pour it on the Nazis at Salerno—and Comdr. Butler again was the man behind her guns.

Central High School classmates of Comdr. Butler's 1925 graduating class recall him as the captain of its E Cadet Company that year. After graduating from the Naval Academy in 1930, Comdr. Butler saw seven years of service in the China station and the Pacific and then took an ordnance post-graduate course at Annapolis before being assigned to the Boise in 1939. He recently had a reunion with his wife and son here at the home of his father and mother, 3917 Kansas avenue N.W., on his return from the Mediterranean for Bureau of Ordnance duty.

This is one of a series of portraits of decorated war heroes by Newman Sudduth of The Star's art staff.