Commander Charles A. Darrah, skipper of the *BRISTOL*, has the distinction of being the youngest commanding officer in Destroyer Division 122. He was only 31 years old when he assumed command of the DD 857 in September, 1951, just a few days before we sailed on this cruise. He previously had served for over a year on board the *U.S.S. PURDY* (DD 734) as Executive Officer, having been graduated from the General Line School, Newport, R.I., in May 1950.

Commander Darrah came on active duty November 22, 1940, having completed two years at Vanderbilt University where he majored in physics. He attended the Reserve Midshipman's school in New York, and following a one month's cruise in the Atlantic, received his commission as ensign on February 28, 1941. He then reported aboard the *JOHN D. FORD* (DD 228) as Assistant Communications officer. He was in Manila on December 10th when the Japanese bombed it for the first time. The *FORD* convoyed ships from Manila to the Netherlands East Indies and served admirably in the battles of the Badoeng and Macassar Straits in the Java Sea.

Nearly a year later, in February of 1943, Commander Darrah was ordered to the Naval Academy where he took a post graduate course in Applied Communications. Upon completion of this course he was assigned to the staff of Commander Amphibious Group 5 for the Palau and Okinawa invasions. In July of 1945 he was appointed Communications Officer on the staff of Commander Underwater Demolition Teams, Pacific Fleet, in preparation for the invasion and occupation of Japan.

In 1946, Commander Darrah was appointed Personnel Officer on the staff of The Commander Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet. In 1947 he reported to the office of Chief of Naval operations for duty in the Operational Readiness Section. In 1948 he returned to Vanderbilt University under a Navy program and was graduated a year later with a B.A. degree in physics.

Commander Darrah's home is in Decatur, Alabama where his wife, Janie, and two boys, Charles Jr. and Thomas Emmett, now reside.

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