

CDR Don Cruse USN – RET

CDR Don Cruse was born December 18, 1920 in El Paso, TX. Don joined the Navy on July 13, 1938, on a minority cruise, received boot training at NTC San Diego, CA and was discharged on December 18, 1941. He attended Group II Communications School then a long string of shipboard assignments began. He successfully competed and was selected to attend a Naval Academy Preparatory Class at the Naval Operating Base, Norfolk, VA. Because of poor vision, he was dropped from the class and returned to the fleet. During the fall of 1940, he was selected to attend the Primary Aerographer School, Class 4020 from November 01, 1940 to January 24, 1941. After graduation he was advanced to Petty Officer 3rd Class. It was back to sea with assignments on the USS Ranger (CV-4) and the USS Wasp (CV-7). He was serving onboard the USS Wasp when it was sunk in September 1942. Don went through rehab and was issued a new sea bag and was assigned to Fleet Air Wing 8 at NAS Alameda, CA. During September 1943, he received orders to the USS Liscome Bay (CVE-56) and it was sunk in November 1943. Another sea bag was issued at the Receiving Station on Yerba Buena (Goat) Island, San Francisco, CA and orders kept him in the Bay area for his next three assignments. Don advanced to Chief Petty Officer in December 1944 and was ordered back to sea. He was serving onboard the USS Intrepid (CV-11) when it was hit by Kamikaze aircraft. Don transferred from the USS Intrepid in Tokyo Bay during October 1945 and was discharged in November 1945 at the Receiving Station San Diego, CA. He worked as a Junior Meteorologist for Pan American Airways until February 1946, when he reenlisted in the Navy. Orders were to the Receiving Station, San Pedro, CA then to Fleet Air Wing 14 at NAS North Island. During June 1946, he was transferred to Clinton, OK to decommission the station and from there onto NAF Annapolis, MD where married Marge in September 1947. From there in January 1948, he was ordered to Lakehurst, NJ to attend AERM School - Class C-4. After graduating, he was assigned to Fleet Air Wing -1 onboard NAS Agana, Guam. Don was serving at NAS Anacostia, Washington DC when he was commissioned as a Limited Duty Officer, Ensign (ENS) - Aviation Operations. In July 1952, his next assignment was to London, England along with an advancement to Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG) – Aerology. From June 1954 to June 1961, his assignments were in Navy Security along with advancements to Lieutenant (LT) and Lieutenant Commander (LCDR) in the Washington DC area and London, England. From June 1961 through June 1964 assignments were at FWF Yokosuka and NAS Atsugi, Japan. His last tour on active duty was at the Head Quarters Naval Weather Service, Washington Navy Yard DC, from June 1964 until his retirement, as a Commander (CDR), after 30 years active duty in November 1968.