

# Wit And Wisdom From *Uncle Arleigh*

## ***Ships' Names***

*"The Secretary (of the Navy) proposed that they name a ship after me, and I said, no, I didn't want to, because there was a precedent that ships were named after people who were dead. And I didn't want to qualify."*

## ***Command***

*"The only way you can fight a battle is to let the man who is in the battle fight it and support him as much as you can. You cannot fight a battle by controlling from a long distance away from the scene."*

*"The audacious commander almost automatically has a superior force. The dash of the commander is transmitted to the forces; they become always ready and eager to go; they have a fighting edge. The conservative commander, whose tendency is to be sure before he strikes, breeds that same spirit in his force. His command rapidly reaches a point of reluctance to fight."*

*"The great captain must be able to project his personality so that his entire command feels they know him and follows him as an individual. The larger the command, the more flamboyant and theatrical the personality must be, to project the greater distance. We find examples of the truth of this in comparing Jeb Stuart and Jackson with Longstreet and Hill; Halsey with Spruance; Patton with Bradley."*

## ***Combat***

*"Non-battle orders: NONE. Corrections to this section will not be permitted." — Doctrine for DESRON 23 in World War II when commanded by CAPT Burke.*

## ***Destroyers***

*"Now you can't make a multipurpose ship supreme in everything, because you get a great big beast, and it's too expensive, too compli-*

*cated: but you can make it good in everything. Maybe it can't go up against a ship that's built for a special purpose . . . . But a destroyer can do damage. It can do it on a very cost-effective basis that few other types of ships can match."*

## ***Duty***

*"A seaman down by himself, in an emergency steering gear room, is important only in the grave emergency that the steering gear goes out on the bridge . . . . If he was looking out for himself, he'd go topside, and when the emergency came, there wouldn't be anybody there. They never do that. They are there."*

## ***Maintenance***

*"If the equipment doesn't work in battle, it doesn't make much difference how much else the officers know, the battle is lost."*

## ***Work***

*"The only man who ever had his work done by Friday was Robinson Crusoe."*

## ***Training***

*"This ship is built to fight — you had better know how."*

## ***Officers***

*"I sometimes think the difference between a good officer and a poor one is about 10 seconds."*

## ***Reality***

*"Reality is a very demanding mistress. And if you ignore something, and hope that it will go away, or don't want to tackle a problem because it is difficult and because it makes you unpopular, then you lose."*



*Editor's Note: As CNO, ADM Arleigh Burke would put down his thoughts on a variety of Navy topics and send them out to the fleet. These words of wisdom and fatherly advice were always signed "Uncle Arleigh."*