

Etheridge Grant, R. Adm., U.S.N. (Ret.) died May 21, 1988, at his home in Belvedere, California at the age of 85 after a long illness.

He was born in Chicago, Illinois June 17, 1902, the son of John MacGregor Grant and Fanny Sarah Etheridge Grant. He was christened James Henry Etheridge Grant after his grandfather, was listed in Navy records as Etheridge Grant and was commonly called Jimmie.

He attended The Lawrenceville School in Lawrenceville, New Jersey and was graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1926. He earned his wings at Pensacola in 1930.

He was married to Margaret Elizabeth Babb of Homer, Illinois on May 3, 1927, in New York City. They had one child, Margaret Babb Grant, born January 25, 1931, in Los Angeles, California.

He attended graduate school at Annapolis and was awarded a Masters degree in aeronautical engineering by the University of Michigan in 1936.

On December 8, 1941 (December 7 in the United States), he was in the Philippines in command of the U.S.S. William B. Preston which, with the U.S.S. Langley, were the first Navy ships attacked by the Japanese west of Pearl Harbor.

The ship, a part of Pat Wing 10, was driven down through the Dutch East Indies to Australia by the Japanese and the crew frequently resorted to camouflaging the entire ship with palm trees to hide her from the enemy. When the Preston limped into Darwin harbor in March, 1942, she constituted the first American Military presence in Australia in World War II.

When the Japanese attacked Darwin several weeks later he was ashore in the town of Darwin. He commanded a small boat and was attempting to return to his ship when he was strafed and the boat was sunk. He survived by clinging to a buoy in the center of the harbor for several hours, where he watched his ship steam out of the harbor without him. He repeatedly dived deeply into the water when he was fired on by enemy planes or as ships were exploding around him. After the attack he swam to shore where he was found and taken to a hospital. During the next several days doctors removed a great many pieces of shrapnel from his body. When he was able to return to the Preston to resume command he learned that the crew had thought he was dead and was about to sell his clothes.

Before leaving Australia in May, 1943, he spent several weeks, disguised as a pearl trader, exploring the then-unmapped and unexplored northwest coast of Australia looking for signs of Japanese infiltration. He spent some nights sleeping in trees to escape the high tides and was greeted as a god by aborigines, for he was the first white man they had ever seen.

He returned to the Pacific in October, 1944, in command of the U.S.S. Cumberland Sound and took the ship into Tokyo Bay, the seventh United States ship to go in to accept the Japanese surrender. He was on the deck of the U.S.S. Missouri during the surrender ceremonies.

When the Korean war began he had command of the U.S. Naval Air Station at Agana, Guam. He subsequently took command of Fleet Air Wing I, based on Okinawa, and served during that time as well as the first United States liaison to the Chiang Kai-shek government on Formosa.

At the time of his retirement in 1956 he was Chief of Staff of the Office of Foreign Military Affairs in Washington, D.C.

He received three Legions of Merit, two in World War II and one during the Korean conflict, and numerous other medals, commendations and awards.

Following his divorce from his first wife he married Marcia ~~Umsden~~ ^{Umbesen} of Santa Barbara, California on October 27, 1957, in Lone Pine, California.

After his retirement from the Navy he lived for many years in Ojai, California and, more recently, in Belvedere, California.

His ashes will be scattered in the South Pacific from the U.S.S. Enterprise as she returns to the United States in July and passes through the area where he spent the most important part of his distinguished naval career.

He is survived by his wife, Marcia U. Grant, of Belvedere, his daughter, Mrs. Stephen Cassin Young, of Sacramento, California and three grandchildren, Mrs. William L. Gugeler of Sacramento, Eleanor M. Young of San Francisco and James Grant Young of Los Angeles.

Margaret Grant Young
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May 27, 1988