

NAVAL

REAR ADMIRAL WILLIAM BRYAN COLEMAN
U.S. NAVY, RETIRED

William Bryan Coleman was born in Rochelle, Illinois on December 18, 1897, son of John and Helen Sullivan Coleman. He was graduated from Rochelle High School, attended the University of Illinois at Champaign for two years and entered the U.S. Naval Reserve Force in the rank of Ensign on April 30, 1918. He transferred to the U.S. Navy in that rank on November 26, 1921, and subsequently advanced to the rank of Captain to date from June 17, 1942. He was transferred to the Retired List on June 30, 1949 in the rank of Rear Admiral, advanced on the basis of combat awards.

Following his call to active duty in the Navy and a year at the Great Lakes, Illinois, Naval Training Station, during which time hostilities ceased, he reported for duty with Transport Northern Pacific, and was assigned to the destroyer USS JACOB JONES. He then had duty consecutively aboard the destroyers BADGER, BABBITT, and WOOD, serving successively in the latter as Gunnery Officer, Navigator, and Executive Officer.

The years 1926-1928, he had duty at the Twelfth Naval District Headquarters, San Francisco, California, followed by duty aboard the USS CALIFORNIA as No. 3 Turret and Division Officer. For three years from 1931-1934 he was Aide to the Commandant, Fifteenth Naval District, Balboa, Canal Zone, and then was ordered to the cruiser RICHMOND, in which he served one year as Communication Officer and Navigator. Detached from the RICHMOND in 1935, he assumed command of the USS KING of Destroyers, Scouting Force, on the West Coast, and served in that command until 1937.

Again ordered to duty ashore, he served as Maintenance Officer at the Naval Training Station, San Diego, California, until 1939. He then had orders to the USS BUSHNELL as Commanding Officer. In 1940 he was transferred to the cruiser PORTLAND as Executive Officer and served in that capacity until 1942. He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat Distinguishing Device "V" and cited for "meritorious achievement as Executive Officer of the USS PORTLAND, in operations against enemy Japanese forces, during the Battle of the Coral Sea, on May 8, 1942. When the USS LEXINGTON sustained fatal hits during enemy attacks and was forced to be abandoned, Captain (then Commander) Coleman supervised and directed the taking on board and the care of approximately seven hundred and twenty survivors of the crippled carrier, many of whom were picked up in hours of darkness. His untiring efforts in saving many lives and his tenacious devotion to duty reflect the highest credit upon Captain Coleman and the United States Naval Service."

Detached from the PORTLAND late in 1942, he was ordered to the Naval Training Center, Sampson, New York, for duty as Executive Officer and Assistant Commandant, serving there until 1944. He then was ordered to command the USS TRENTON, operating with Task Force 92 in the Aleutian Islands Area, continuing in that command until July 1945. He was awarded the Legion of Merit with Combat "V" and cited for "exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services....as Commanding Officer of the USS TRENTON, operating in Northern Pacific waters during the period from September 22, 1944 to July 24, 1945. Navigating dangerous and incompletely charted seas under adverse weather conditions and without aircraft cover, Captain Coleman skillfully maneuvered his ship on three anti-shipping sweeps of the Okhotsk Sea and during five bombardments of enemy territory..."

Relieved of command of the TRENTON, he was ordered in the summer of 1945 to the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Washington, where he served as Administrative Officer until relieved of active duty pending his retirement on June 30, 1949.

In addition to the Legion of Merit and Bronze Star Medal, both with Combat "V", Rear Admiral Coleman has received a Letter of Commendation with Ribbon from the Secretary of the Navy. He also has the World War I Victory Medal; the American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three engagement stars; and World War II Victory Medal.

1 July 1950