

REAR ADMIRAL ARTHUR A. AGETON
UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED

DIED: 23 APRIL 1971

Arthur Ainsley Ageton was born October 25, 1900, in Fromberg, Montana, son of the late Peter B. Ageton and Minnie Drummond Ageton, of Norwegian and Scotch descent. He received his early education in the Pullman, Washington, public schools and the State College of Washington, also at Pullman. On August 25, 1919, he entered the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, on appointment from the State of Washington, and during the four years there participated in Class football and track. Graduated on June 7, 1923, he progressively advanced to the rank of Captain, to date from November 10, 1945. He was retired on December 1, 1947, in the rank of Rear Admiral.

Following graduation from the Naval Academy in June 1923, he had seven years' sea duty, serving successively aboard the USS PENNSYLVANIA, first operating with Division 4, later as Flagship of Division 3, Battleship Divisions, Battle Fleet (1923 to 1927); the USS SANDS, a unit of Division 42, Squadron 14, Scouting Fleet (1927-1928); and as turret officer of the USS IDAHO (1928-1930). He returned to Annapolis, Maryland, in June 1930 for the General Line course at the Postgraduate School, and upon graduation in June 1931, reported to the Navy Department, Washington, D. C., for duty in the Planning Division of the Bureau of Navigation. While in that assignment, he acted as Naval Aide to the White House. In 1931 he received a letter from the Secretary of the Navy commending him for developing a new method of navigation, which later became H. O. 211.

Again ordered to duty afloat, he joined the USS PRUITT, and served as Gunnery Officer in 1932 and 1933, while that destroyer operated as a unit of Destroyers, Battle Force. He had successive service from 1933 to 1935 as Navigator of the USS SALINAS, auxiliary oiler of the Naval Transportation Service, and Engineer Officer of the USS RELIEF, hospital ship, after which he again returned to the Naval Academy to serve from 1935 to 1937 as an instructor in Navigation. He made a cruise to Europe with the Midshipmen as Navigation instructor in the summer of 1936.

Following duty from July 1937 until October 1938 as Assistant Gunnery Officer of the USS HOUSTON, operating with Cruiser Division 4, Scouting Fleet, he was ordered to China Station where he served consecutively as Executive Officer of the auxiliary oiler PECOS; in command of the destroyer escort PILLSBURY, from July 1939 to September 1940; and then as navigator of the USS AUGUSTA. During the summers his ships based in Chefoo and Tsingtao, North China, and he visited Shanghai and Peking when that area was under occupation by the Japanese Army. For two winters he based in the Philippines, visiting Singapore, Borneo, the Dutch East Indies and Japan.

He returned to the United States aboard the AUGUSTA in November 1940, and continued to serve as her Navigator until the summer of 1941, when he again returned to the Naval Academy. He served first as instructor

in Navigation and then as Head of the Navigation Division and Executive Officer of the Department of Seamanship and Navigation. In that assignment, he supervised a series of training films in Navigation, thereby gaining experience in writing scripts, supervising production, recording descriptive sound track, coordinating sound and photographic film, editing films, etc.

As Executive Officer of the battleship WASHINGTON from July 1943 until April 1944, he participated in the assault on the Gilbert and Marshall Islands and the bombardment of Nauru. He next served as Commander, LST Flotilla Three from August 1944 until June 1945, participating in the amphibious assault on Leyte (Dulag), Lingayen, Okinawa (Northern Hagushi), Ie Shima, and Iheya Shima. For meritorious services during his command of LST Flotilla Three, he was awarded a Legion of Merit and Bronze Star Medal, each with Combat "V." The citations follow:

Legion of Merit: "For exceptionally meritorious conduct...as Commander of LST Flotilla Three, during the assault and reinforcement of Leyte and Lingayen Gulf, and the assault on Okinawa, Ie Shima and Iheya Shima, from August 1944 to June 1945. Under hostile aerial bombardment, Captain (then Commander) Ageton expertly maneuvered his flotilla through heavy seas to the combat zone and, maintaining his ships in this forward area for extended periods of time, efficiently organized and directed the landings of troops on heavily defended enemy-held beaches. Defying enemy mortar and artillery fire, he personally supervised the beaching and unloading of his ships at the designated objectives. His devotion to duty throughout was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Bronze Star Medal: "For meritorious service as Commander of a Flotilla of LSTs in action against enemy Japanese forces during landing operations on Leyte Island, Philippine Islands, from October 20 to October 24, 1944. Charged with the command of a newly formed LST Flotilla, Captain (then Commander) Ageton skillfully and quickly organized his command into a highly efficient unit. While under direct enemy mortar and sniper fire on the beaches, he personally directed the beaching and expeditious unloading of his ships, thereby contributing materially to the success of the entire operation. His professional skill, executive ability and tireless devotion to duty reflect the highest credit upon Captain Ageton and the United States Naval Service."

Serving on the staff of Commander Amphibious Forces, Pacific, Rear Admiral (then Captain) Ageton was in Manila Bay, making plans for the invasion of Japan, when the war ended in August 1945. After his return to the United States, he was ordered on January 4, 1946, to duty as District Director of Naval Reserve, Eighth Naval District, New Orleans, Louisiana. There he was in charge of the establishment of the Eighth Naval District post-war Naval Reserve with important collateral duty in public relations.

In April 1947, he was ordered to the Office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., for duty with the Chief of Logistic Plans. At his own request, he was transferred to the Retired List of the Navy on December 1, 1947, and was advanced to the rank of Rear Admiral for meritorious performance of duty in actual combat with the enemy.

In addition to the Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star Medal, Rear Admiral Ageton has the China Service Medal; the American Defense Service Medal with star; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with six stars; the American Campaign Medal; the World War II Victory Medal; and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon.

After retirement, Rear Admiral Ageton worked for seven years as a journeyman writer, author and lecturer. In June 1953, he took his Master of Arts degree in writing at Johns Hopkins University. In July 1954, he was appointed by President Eisenhower to be the American Ambassador to the Republic of Paraguay and so served until May 10, 1957. From 1957 to 1961, he was associated with the prominent New York export-import firm of Charles A. Koons and Company, in charge of the Washington Office and was also director of International Products Corporation. He retired from business in November 1962.

Rear Admiral Ageton is the author of D. R. Altitude and Azimuth Tables (H. O. 211), 1931; Manual of Celestial Navigation (Van Nostrand), 1942 (Second Edition, 1960); Naval Officers Guide (Whittlesey House, 1943 (Fifth and Sixth Editions, U. S. Naval Institute, 1960 and 1964); Naval Leadership and the American Bluejacket (Whittlesey House), 1944; Mary Jo and Little Liu (juvenile) (Whittlesey House), 1945; The Jungle Seas, a novel of action and romance in the South Pacific (Random House), 1954; Admiral Ambassador to Russia, the memoirs of Admiral William H. Standley as American Ambassador to the Soviet Union during World War II (Regnery), 1955; and co-author of The Marine Officers Guide (U. S. Naval Institute), 1956. In 1961, he published a novel, Hit the Beach (The New American Library), which has been translated and published in Italian, French, Danish, Swedish, and Finnish and is projected for publication in Norwegian and Spanish. He has also written a number of published magazine articles and short fictional pieces.

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