

## Walter Clifford Ansel Biography



**Walter C. Ansel - Class of 1915,  
b. August 25, 1897 - d.**

**November 26, 1977** From the  
EHS Yearbook, *The Maroon*:  
“*Watch out for my torpedo*”  
Freshman Debating Club; Winner  
Freshman-Sophomore  
Declamation Contest; Winning  
Team Junior Exhibition Debate;  
Associate Editor Annual; Mirror  
Board.

Walter C. Ansel was born in Elgin, Illinois on August 25, 1897. He was the son of Albert Frank Ansel, a president of a food-packing firm, and the former Emilie Pauline Binder. Walter Ansel was married to the former Eleanor Dyer on October 23, 1921. They had three children: Abbie Dora (now Mrs. Carval Blair), David Dyer, and Willits Dyer Ansel.

Walter Ansel graduated from Elgin High School in 1915 and then received an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy. He graduated from the Naval Academy with the Class of 1918. During World War I he served on the patrol craft *USS Rambler*, which engaged in anti-submarine operations off the coast of France. During his subsequent career in the U.S. Navy, Admiral Ansel served in various types of combat vessels and shore establishments. From 1918 to 1924, Ansel was stationed, as a line officer, to the Destroyer Escort Force out of Brest, France. In 1930, he completed the junior course at the Naval War College and the Field Officers Course, in 1931, with the Marine Corps. Before World War II he devoted a good deal of time and effort to the development of the technique and corresponding doctrine and manuals for amphibious landing operations.

After WWI he had service on board the cruiser *USS Milwaukee* (CL-5) and at the Naval Academy, and command of the destroyer *USS Bulmer* (DD-222) and Destroyer Division 14. During a tour in the War Plans Division of OpNav just prior to World War II, Ansel observed the poor state of U.S. Navy war planning. He was first CO of the oiler *USS Winooski* (AO-38), then had staff duty for the planning of the invasions of North Africa, Sicily, and Southern France. In 1944-45, he commanded the light cruiser *USS Philadelphia* (CL-41), including support duty in the Mediterranean. After postwar staff duty in the support force off Japan, he was on a SecNav Board and then served 1947-49 as sub-chief of the U.S. naval mission to Brazil. Rear Admiral Ansel retired in 1949.

At the outbreak of World War II, Rear Admiral Ansel was on duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, and a month later he assumed command of the oiler *USS Winooski*. He commanded that vessel from her commissioning in January until July 1942, and was commanding her in operations in the North Atlantic. Ansel was then ordered to the staff of Commander Advance Group, Amphibious Force, Atlantic Fleet in the United Kingdom. This group became the Naval Port Support Group for the North African invasion. The main objective

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was Oreon, Algeria. At this time Rear Admiral (then Captain) Ansel was serving as Plans and Operations Officer. During the landings in Algeria (Nov. 1942), he commanded the Advance Party, which entered the small port of Arzeu in the wake of the assault units. His party secured the shipping and prepared the port for unloading operations. For his role in the action Admiral Ansel was awarded the Commendation Ribbon with combat "V". He was then transferred to duty as Assistant Chief of Staff and Operations Officer on the staff of Commander, Amphibious Force, North African Waters. For his services in this capacity during the preparations for and during the invasion of Sicily, he was awarded the Legion of Merit. In October 1943, Ansel was ordered to command the cruiser *USS Philadelphia*, in the Mediterranean. Early in 1944, the *Philadelphia* supported the operations at Anzio and Formia. In this operation Rear Admiral Ansel, with marines from the *USS Philadelphia* and the cruiser *USS Augusta*, accepted the surrender of the German garrisons in the fortress islands off Marseilles. In recognition for distinguished service, Rear Admiral Ansel was awarded the Gold Star in lieu of the second Legion of Merit and the Croix de Guerre with Silver Star from the French Government.

Returning to the United States in late 1944, Admiral Ansel was assigned to duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. In 1946, he was again ordered to sea with duties as Chief of Staff, Support Group One, Japan. Following this assignment, he returned for duty in the Office of the Secretary of the Navy and later served with the U.S. Naval Mission in Brazil. In June 1949, Rear Admiral Walter Ansel retired and was placed on the inactive list.

Admiral Ansel would be recalled to active duty for a brief time. From September 1952 until April 1953 he would be on duty in accordance with his work on the U.S. Naval Academy's Forrestal Fellowship.

Ansel was given this privilege because he was awarded the fellowship and to minimize the expense. He was the second individual to receive the Forrestal Fellowship and was at the age of fifty-four. This fellowship in Naval History was instituted at the U.S. Naval Academy and is set up for extensive study of Sea Power as it relates to land and air power. It is the task of the fellows to set forth from the great mass of naval and military records the lessons of Sea Power in the last two World Wars and previous conflicts. Admiral Ansel undertook this fellowship to research and write on the German Operation Sea Lion for the invasion of Britain with the view of adding to the general naval historical fund of knowledge in this specific subject. His objective was also the drawing pertinent lessons of Sea and Amphibious Power for the benefit of our own Navy. Ansel's work necessitated research in Germany, France, and England to obtain first hand material from participants, particularly in the hitherto unexplored lower echelons.

The research material and inquiries that Admiral Ansel obtained in Europe was used by him to produce several works relating to the German military operations in World War II. He was able to accomplish much of his research in Germany with cooperation with the U.S. Army Historical Division. In addition to his research material, Admiral Ansel was able to speak and correspond with German officers that served in the German High Command. In this collection of Admiral Ansel's papers resides these communications. The remaining arrangement is a collection of photographs, German Military Documents, and an assortment of material used by Admiral Ansel to write his books, *Hitler Confronts England* and *Hitler and the Middle Sea*. From 1953 until his

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death in 1977, Admiral Ansel lived in retirement and working on his farm in Gavea, Maryland. After his second book was completed he then moved to produce a third work titled Study of National Strategy and Policy of the United States and their Difference and Confusions. This final work would not be completed because Admiral Ansel passed away in 1977.

## BOOKS WRITTEN BY WALTER ANSEL

The papers of Admiral Ansel deal primarily with research for and publication of his books, Hitler Confronts England and Hitler and the Middle Sea. The documents range in date from 1929 to 1974. Included in the collection is correspondence with German and American military officers who were involved in the second world war, copies of German Military documents dated from 1938 to 1942, and maps mostly of Europe dated from 1917 to 1969.

He is buried at Anne Arundel County, Maryland, USA



Commendation Ribbon with combat "V"

Legion of Merit



Croix de Guerre

