

### *Chester W. Nimitz:*

*Chester W. Nimitz was born at Fredericksburg, TX on February 24, 1885 and was the son of Chester B. and Ann, a Nimitz. Nimitz's father died before he was born and as a young man he was influenced by his grandfather Charles H. Nimitz who had served as a merchant seaman. Attending Tivy High School, Kerrville, TX, Nimitz originally wished to attend West Point but was unable to do so as no appointments were available. Meeting with Congressman James L. Slayden, Nimitz was informed that one competitive appointment was available to Annapolis.*

*Viewing the US Naval Academy as his best option for continuing his education, Nimitz devoted himself to studying and succeeded in winning the appointment. Arriving at Annapolis in 1901, he proved an able student and graduated with distinction on January 30, 1905, ranked 7th in a class of 114. Assigned to the battleship USS Ohio, he traveled to the Far East. Remaining in the Orient, he later served aboard the cruiser USS Baltimore. In January 1907, having completed the required two years at sea, Nimitz was commissioned as a ensign.*

### *Submarines & Diesel Engines:*

*Leaving Baltimore, he served on several destroyers during 1907, including USS Decatur. While conning Decatur, Nimitz grounded the ship on a mud bank in the Philippines. Though he rescued a seaman from drowning in the wake of the incident, Nimitz was court-martialed and issued a letter of reprimand. Returning home, he was transferred to the submarine service in early 1909. Promoted to lieutenant in January 1910, Nimitz commanded several early submarines before being named Commander, 3rd Submarine Division, Atlantic Torpedo Fleet in October 1911.*

Ordered to Boston the following month to oversee the fitting out of USS Skipjack (E-1), Nimitz received a silver Lifesaving Medal for rescuing a drowning sailor in March 1912. Leading the Atlantic Submarine Flotilla from May 1912 to March 1913, Nimitz was assigned to oversee the construction of diesel engines for the tanker USS Maumee. While in this assignment, he married Catherine Vance Freeman in April 1913. That summer, the US Navy dispatched Nimitz to Germany and Belgium to study diesel technology. Returning, he became one of the service's foremost experts on diesel engines.

### *Nimitz in World War I:*

Re-assigned to Maumee, Nimitz lost part of his right ring finger in demonstration of a diesel engine. He was only saved when his Annapolis class ring jammed the engine's gears. Returning to duty, he was made the ship's executive officer and engineer upon its commissioning in October 1916. With the US entry into [World War I](#), Nimitz, now a lieutenant commander, returned to submarines as an aide to Rear Admiral Samuel S. Robinson, commander of the US Atlantic Fleet's submarine force. Made Robinson's chief of staff in February 1918, Nimitz received a letter of commendation for his work.

### *The Interwar Years:*

With the war winding down in September 1918, he saw duty in the office of the Chief of Naval Operations and was a member of the Board of Submarine Design. Returning to sea in May 1919, Nimitz was made executive officer of the battleship USS South Carolina. After brief service as the commander of USS Chicago and Submarine Division 14, he entered the Naval War College in 1922. Graduating he became chief of staff to

Commander, Battle Forces and later Commander-in-Chief, US Fleet. In August 1926, Nimitz traveled to the University of California-Berkeley to establish a Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps Unit.

Promoted to captain on June 2, 1927, Nimitz departed Berkeley two years later to take command of Submarine Division 20. In October 1933, he was given command of the cruiser USS Augusta. Principally serving as flagship of the Asiatic Fleet, he remained in the Far East for two years. Arriving back in Washington, Nimitz was appointed Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Navigation. After a brief time in this role, he was made Commander, Cruiser Division 2, Battle Force. Promoted to rear admiral on June 23, 1938, he was transferred to be Commander, Battleship Division 1, Battle Force that October.

### *Nimitz in World War II:*

Coming ashore in 1939, he was selected to serve as Chief of the Bureau of Navigation. He was in this role when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Ten days later, Nimitz was selected to replace Admiral Husband Kimmel as Commander-in-Chief of the US Pacific Fleet. Traveling west, he arrived at Pearl Harbor on Christmas Day. Officially taking command on December 31, Nimitz immediately began efforts to rebuild the Pacific Fleet and halt the Japanese advance across the Pacific.

On March 30, 1942, Nimitz was also made Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Ocean Areas giving him control of all Allied forces in the central Pacific. Initially operating on the defensive, Nimitz's forces won a strategic victory at the Battle of the Coral Sea in May 1942, which halted Japanese efforts to capture Port Moresby, New Guinea. The following

month, they scored a decisive triumph over the Japanese at the [Battle of Midway](#). With reinforcements arriving, Nimitz shifted to the offensive and began a protracted campaign in the Solomon Islands in August, centered on the [capture of Guadalcanal](#).

In late 1965, Nimitz suffered a stroke which was later complicated by pneumonia. Returning to his home on Yerba Buena Island, Nimitz died on February 20, 1966. Following his funeral, he was buried at Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno, CA.