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VICE ADMIRAL
JOEL ROBERTS POINSETT PRINGLE
U.S. NAVY

Joel Roberts Poinsett Pringle was born on 4 February 1873 at his father's plantation in Georgetown County, S.C. The family plantation was named "Greenfield," and it symbolized Pringle's southern heritage. Pringle's father, Dominick Lynch Pringle, was educated at Heidelberg and served for a time as the U.S. Minister to Turkey. He married Caroline Lowndes, the daughter of a naval officer, who gave birth to Joel Roberts Poinsett Pringle shortly after the great dislocation of the Civil War. The new child was named after Joel Roberts Poinsett, a horticulturist, former Secretary of War, and relative by marriage.

Joel Pringle apparently decided upon a military career at an early age, for he was appointed from Illinois to attend the Naval Academy at Annapolis in 1888, when he was only 16. Prior to that time he had attended the Porter Military Academy in Charlestown, S.C. After his graduation from Annapolis in 1892, Pringle served for 2 years aboard the U.S.S. *Mohican*. In 1894 he was assigned to the cruiser *Minneapolis*, which participated in the scouting operations in the Spanish-American War, an operation that finally located Admiral Cervara's fleet in Santiago harbor.

In late 1898 Pringle was assigned to the school ship *Enterprise*, and in 1899 he obtained a tour of shore duty at Annapolis, the first since his commissioning. His interest in shore duty is perhaps explained by his marriage on 25 January 1899 to Cordelia Pythian, the daughter of Commodore R.L. Pythian of Lexington, Ky. This marriage produced one daughter, who also married a naval officer. Two months after his marriage, Pringle was promoted to lieutenant (junior grade), and the following year he was promoted to lieutenant.

Between 1900 and 1917 Pringle obtained some additional operational experience. His first command was the destroyer *Perkins* in the Atlantic Flotilla. He also served as the Executive Officer of the battleship *Nebraska* from 1911 to 1913, where in 1912 he received his promotion to the rank of commander. In June of 1916 he was given the command of Destroyer Divisions 3 and 4 of the Second Atlantic Flotilla. In November of 1916 he was given the command of the entire flotilla, with the tender *Melville* as his flagship.

When the United States entered the First World War in 1917, she was unaware of the full extent of the emergency caused by unrestricted submarine warfare. The British, who had insuf-

ficient destroyers to both operate with the Grand Fleet and escort merchant vessels in the Western approaches, called for American assistance. Responding to this request, the United States ordered the Second Flotilla to Queenstown, Ireland. By August of 1917, 37 destroyers and two tenders were stationed there, and Pringle, now with the temporary rank of captain, was the senior U.S. naval officer.

As British destroyers under Adm. Sir Lewis Bayley were already operating from Queenstown, some sort of joint command was desirable which would offend neither British nor American sensibilities. Admiral Sims had been designated Commander in Chief of all American naval forces operating in European waters. As Sims was required to spend most of his time in London, his Chief of Staff would have practical control over the American destroyers at Queenstown. On 9 October, Pringle was appointed as Sims' Chief of Staff at Queenstown, and his rank of captain was finally made permanent on 1 July 1918. Pringle was also designated as the Chief of Staff to Admiral Bayley and managed the logistics of the British forces as well as the American. Thus, in practice, Admiral Bayley ordered both British and American destroyers into action while Pringle served as Chief of Staff for both forces. This arrangement was criticized in America and was, in fact, extremely delicate. In addition to Pringle's responsibilities as an administrator of a multinational force, he also was required to maintain a certain degree of mutual acceptance among Admiral Bayley, Admiral Sims, and the American public. His successful welding of this heterogeneous force into an effective combat unit while retaining the favor of all parties concerned was his best performance as a naval officer,

and it was accomplished only by drawing upon a very great understanding of men and a keen appreciation of their feelings.

In March of 1919 Pringle left Queenstown for the Naval War College, where he studied for a year as a student and remained for an additional year on Admiral Sims' staff. After a tour as Commanding Officer of the battleship *Idaho*, Pringle returned to the War College in 1923-1925 as Chief of Staff. In July of 1925 he was assigned as Chief of Staff to the Commanding Officer of the battleships of the Battle Fleet, and while in that assignment he received his promotion to flag rank on 6 December 1926. From 1927 to 1930 Pringle served as President of the Naval War College. In 1930 he was sent to represent the United States at the London Conference on Naval Disarmament. In May of 1932 he was given the command of Division 3 of the battleships of the Battle Fleet, and from there he rose in a few months to command all the battleships in the U.S. Navy. As a vice-admiral, Pringle was in line for Chief of Naval Operations when he died unexpectedly in San Diego on 25 September 1932. Upon Pringle's death, Admiral Bayley had this to say of him:

He was a man of perfect tact and exceptional ability . . . He was as universally liked as he was implicitly obeyed. He never once failed me during the war and was just as ready to help the British ships as American, his one idea being to do his duty; and no man ever did it better.

Recognition of Vice Admiral Pringle's outstanding service was acknowledged at the Naval War College by commemorating Pringle Hall in his honor.

CHALLENGE!



The recent decision to retire numerous obsolete U.S. Navy ships has been identified by many analysts as a potential turning point in the historical development of our Navy. This event might indeed signal the opportunity to exchange quantity of units for quality and efficiency; or it could result in the diminution of U.S. seapower.

While the Soviet Union moves to expand its naval capabilities in as many areas as possible and with a broad spectrum of modern and innovative weapons systems, the direction which our Navy will take becomes ever more crucial. If we are to continue to perform our mission, it is imperative that we be sensitive to the processes by which we have obtained and will obtain the ships and hardware we deem essential. In this context, it is enlightening to consider the Navy's program for continued modernization of the attack carrier striking force.

Recently this program was sharply challenged in the Senate. It was proposed that additional funds for the nuclear attack carrier CVAN69 not be appropriated until a comprehensive study and investigation of past and projected costs and effectiveness of attack carrier task forces be completed. This proposal was made in spite of the fact that \$132 million had already been appropriated for CVAN69 as the result of a complete study made only a year ago and that a considerable portion of the \$132 million has already been obligated or expended.

The proposal was defeated. It is expected that construction of CVAN69

will proceed as scheduled. However, the Senate did vote that the results of a comprehensive study and investigation be considered prior to any authorization or appropriation for the production or procurement of the third *Nimitz* class carrier, CVAN70. This study is to be completed before the end of April 1970.

It is clear from the Senate's discussion of this issue that military requests for forces will receive increasingly detailed scrutiny, particularly from the viewpoint of cost effectiveness. It is equally clear that the procedures used in systems analysis in the Department of Defense have been accepted, adapted, and put to use by the Bureau of the Budget and the Congress. Therefore, although considerable strides have been made by the military in justifying forces on the basis of cost effectiveness, the challenge remains to produce yet more cogent reasoning in the interests of still better justification.

This applies particularly to the attack carrier, and with good reason. First, some proponents of land-based airpower consider the increased capabilities of land-based air as a *raison d'être* for fewer carriers. In failing to recognize the complementary nature of sea-based air in assuring overall airpower, they view the attack carrier only as a competitor for the scarce defense dollar. Second, as the most costly of our warships, the