

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN JAMES E. AYRES, UNITED STATES NAVY

James Edward Ayres was born in Pasadena, California, on November 29, 1926, son of Rudolph J. and Hazel (Reading) Ayres, both now deceased. He attended Oregon State College at Corvallis, for one year and on July 1, 1944 enlisted in the U. S. Naval Reserve. Under the V-12 Program, he attended Willamette University, Salem, Oregon, until June 1945, then the University of Washington at Seattle. On June 20, 1946 he was commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Naval Reserve and subsequently advanced in rank to that of Captain, to date from January 1, 1968, having transferred to the U. S. Navy on May 16, 1947.

After receiving his commission in 1946, he had alternating duties in the USS MAY (AGS-16) and USS EDISTO (AG-89) until September 1950. While on board the MAURY, he participated in hydrographic surveys of Truk Island (July 1946 to March 1948) and the Persian Gulf (January to April 1949 and October 1949 to September 1950). In the EDISTO, he took part in an Arctic resupply and survey (April to December 1948) and a hydrographic survey of the Arctic (May to September 1949).

From October 1950 to July 1951 he had duty in connection with hydrographic survey programs at the Naval Hydrographic Office, Suitland, Maryland. He next had an intelligence assignment on the Staff of Commander Naval Forces, Far East and in that capacity participated in the Joint United States/Japan survey effort. In October 1953 he rejoined the USS MAURY to serve as Hydrographic Officer during Atlantic surveys. He returned to the Naval Hydrographic Office in January 1955, where he was engaged in special hydrographic projects until July 1956. He next had postgraduate instruction in oceanography at the University of Washington, from which he received the degree of Bachelor of Science in October 1957.

He had temporary duty under instruction in special navigation systems on board the USS COMPASS ISLAND (EAG-153) until June 1958, after which he served as Officer in Charge of Oceanographic Detachment TWO, on board the USNS DUFFON (T-AGS-22). In that capacity, he participated in special oceanographic operations in the eastern Mediterranean. In February 1960 he reported as POLARIS Program Officer at the Navy Underwater Sound Laboratory, New London, Connecticut and in June 1962 became Scientific Liaison Officer at the Office of Naval Research Branch Office, London, England.

During the period October 1964 to July 1966 he had collateral duty as Operations Officer at the Naval Oceanographic Office, Suitland, Maryland and Executive Assistant to the Director of the Oceanographic Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department. He continued his assignment in the Office of the Oceanographer of the Navy, serving consecutively as Director of the Programs Division and Chief of Staff to the Oceanographer. "For exceptionally meritorious service from February 1967 to July 1971:...", he was awarded the Legion of Merit. The citation further states in part:

"...In carrying out exacting duties in connection with organizing the Navy's overall oceanographic program, Captain Ayres guided the assignment of program priorities and played a leading role in assuring the establishment of a firm base of oceanographic research and technological development programs which will provide for increased future Fleet operational effectiveness..."

From August 1971 to July 1972 he served in the newly-established positions of Deputy Associate Administrator for Interagency Relations and Assistant to the Federal Coordinator for Ocean Mapping and Prediction at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C. He was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal and cited in part as follows: "...With major responsibility for coordinating multiple programs in marine science among the many federal agencies involved and for assisting in the development of a national marine program, Captain Ayres was greatly instrumental in originating innovative improvements in marine affairs of great benefit to the Navy and the nation..."

He next had instruction at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Washington, D. C. and while there attended the graduate program at George Washington University, from which he received the degree of Master of Science. He reported in September 1973 as Chief of the Hydrographic Division at the Defense Mapping Agency, Washington, D. C. and in February 1974 was designated Commander of the Naval Oceanographic Office, Suitland, Maryland.

In addition to the Legion of Merit and the Meritorious Service Medal, Captain Ayres has the American Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; National Defense Service Medal with bronze star; the Korean Service Medal and the United Nations Service Medal.

He was elected to Tau Beta Pi, Phi Beta Kappa and Sigma Xi honorary societies during his Navy sponsored schooling. He is also a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

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