



Artemus L. Gates,

Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Air), 9/5/41 - 7/3/45

Under Secretary of the Navy, 7/3/45 - 12/31/45

Naval Aviator #65

Artemus L. Gates was in the post of Under Secretary of the Navy little more than a month when the tremendous task of supervising the demobilization of a major part of the 3,389,000 uniformed personnel and the more than 750,000 civilian employees of the Naval Establishment burst upon him with the unconditional surrender of Japan, announced by President Truman on the evening of August 14, 1945.

Mr. Gates, who was sworn in as Under Secretary of the Navy on July 3, 1945, had previously served for almost four years as Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Air, in which post he was largely responsible for the building of the Naval air power which proved so vital in bringing about the defeat of Germany and Japan. Thus on the shoulders of the man who directed the forging of Naval Aviation into the most powerful weapon of its kind in the world fell the gigantic problem in reverse of large responsibility for the transition of a stupendous war machine to a peacetime basis. In addition to the vast and intricate details encompassed in the direction of the Navy's personnel, uniformed and civilian, and the general administration of the Department of the Navy, the further scope of the Under Secretary's duties were best gauged by a resume of the variegated activities which reported directly to him. They were; The Administrative Office; Board of Decorations and Medals; Board of Medical Examiners; Board of Review, Discharges and Dismissals; Office of Industrial Relations; Industrial Survey Division; Joint Army and Navy Committee on Welfare and Recreation; Management Engineer's Office; Naval Clemency and Prison Inspection Board; Naval Examining and Retiring Boards; Naval Retiring Review Board; Office of the Judge Advocate General (except for matters of legislation and taxation); Office of War Savings Bonds; and Transportation Branch.

As Under Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Gates succeeded Ralph A. Bard of Chicago, Illinois, who resigned to return to private business. As Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Air, Mr. Gates directed the huge expansion of Naval Aviation

from 6,000 planes, 6,300 trained pilots and seven carriers to a mighty force of more than 37,000 planes of greatly superior types, over 55,000 pilots and about 100 carriers of all types, including the doughty escort carriers. Achieving it was a tremendous job of visualizing the huge requirements for pilots, carriers and planes, their maintenance, and the shore facilities necessary to support them; and of seeing the great training and procurement programs carried through.

To his public service with the Navy, Mr. Gates brought a distinguished combat record as a Naval Aviator in World War I, a continuing peacetime interest in aviation, and a career of prominence in banking.

James Forrestal, when Under Secretary, interested the late Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox in Mr. Gate's appointment as Assistant Secretary for Air. Forrestal and Gates had long been friends, and made a good team as Secretary and Undersecretary of the Navy. The office of Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Air was created in 1926 by Act of Congress. Mr. Gates was the third man to hold this office, Edward P. Warner (1926-1929) and David S. Ingalls (1929-1932), but the office had remained vacant from 1932 until Mr. Gates took the oath on September 5, 1941, three months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

During his service in Washington Mr. Gates flew 313,859 miles and spent 1,725 hours in the air before September 15, 1945. In September 1944 he witnessed strikes on Palau and the Philippines from an Essex-class aircraft carrier. In January 1945 he made a trip of 27,036 miles to Leyte and Lingayen Gulf while fighting was still fierce in the Philippines. He served as an official advisor to the delegation of the United States to the United Nations Conference on International Organization which met in San Francisco on April 25, 1945. In any temporary absence of the Secretary of the Navy, he succeeded as Acting Secretary of the Navy.

Prior to his resignation, which became effective on December 31, 1945, Mr. Gates was presented a Gold Star in lieu of a Second Distinguished Service Medal by the late Secretary of the Navy Forrestal at a ceremony in the Navy Department. (He had been awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for World War I service.) Mr. Gates directed the establishment of facilities for the maintenance and training programs necessary to effect the combination of air-sea power which ultimately eliminated the submarine menace in the Atlantic, and which, spearheading the Allied offensive across the Pacific, blasted and destroyed enemy coastal defenses in advance of every amphibious landing and provided decisive support during major naval engagements with the Japanese Fleet. Taking office as Under Secretary of the Navy on July 3, 1945, Mr. Gates completely justified the confidence reposed in him by the Secretary of the Navy, consistently handling the general administration of the Department of the Navy with discerning judgment and skill. When the unconditional surrender of Japan was accepted by the Allied Nations on September 3, 1945, Mr. Gates rendered immediate assistance to the Secretary in formulating plans and policies for the demobilization of wartime Naval personnel and civilian employees of the Navy, accomplishing this

monumental task well in advance of his scheduled plans. A brilliant and forceful leader, Mr. Gates served his country as he served the Navy, with great moral courage and unwavering devotion to the fulfillment of his solemn obligations.

EARLY LIFE

Artemus L. Gates was born on November 3, 1895, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, the son of Marvin John Gates and Erma Lamb Gates. The family moved in 1899 to Clinton, Iowa, where Artemus Gates attended public schools. He later had four years at Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, Connecticut, and after graduation entered Yale. In college he was active in sports, being a member of the freshman football and track teams, the 1915-1916 university football teams, and the 1916 university track team. At the end of the season he was selected by Walter Camp as tackle for a second All-American Team. He was also Captain-elect of the 1917 Yale Football Team. During summer vacation of 1915, he attended the Army Training Camp at the Presidio, San Francisco, California, and the next summer, with Robert A. Lovett and F. Trubee Davison, he did his first flying, using a flimsy flying boat named the "Mary Ann." Davison's father, the late Henry P. Davison, presented this nucleus of the "Yale Unit" with a cedar flying boat, superior to the "Mary Ann," and the three qualified as fliers that summer, making solo flights after approximately five hours in the air.

In March 1917, before the United States declared war, Mr. Gates left college and on March 24 enrolled in the United States Naval Reserve Force at New London, Connecticut, with rank of Ensign, for a four-year term. After training at West Palm Beach, FL., and at Huntington, Long Island, he qualified as a Naval Aviator No. 65. Ensign Gates embarked for overseas on August 15, 1917. During his first three months in France, he was graduated from the French Aviation School at Tours, receiving French military wings, and from the French Naval Air School at San Raphael on the Riviera, where he received his French naval wings. On November 29, 1917, by then a LTJG, he was sent to the U. S. Naval Air Station at Dunkirk where he served as Chief Pilot and at one time as Intelligence Officer. With the rank of LT, he was made Commander of the station on July 1, 1918, and served in that capacity until he was shot-down over German territory and captured. A dangerous rescue by LT Gates of British airmen shot down at sea is described in Volume II of "The First Yale Unit-A Story of Naval Aviation, 1916-1919," by Ralph D. Paine. The U. S. Navy awarded him the Distinguished Service Medal for this rescue. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross by the Government of Great Britain for the same rescue, and from the French received the Croix de Guerre with Palm and was made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. Lieutenant Gates volunteered to fly with the Escadrille de Saint-Pol, a French unit flying Spads (landplanes) which was based at the Dunkirk station. On a flight over Belgium on October 4, 1918, the French Squadron was attacked by much larger German forces, and LT Gates was shot down behind the enemy lines and made a prisoner of war. To keep his plane useless to the Germans, he set fire to the gasoline dripping from it. After making several futile attempts to escape, he succeeded by jumping from a

railroad train as it was passing through a tunnel enroute from Karlsruhe to Villengen on November 2, 1918. He set out for the Swiss border, and was within three paces of it in the German section of Constance when he was recaptured. He was released on November 26, 1918, and returned to the United States. LT Gates was detached from active duty at Great Lakes, Illinois, on January 27, 1919. On April 29, 1919, he took oath as LCDR in the Naval Reserve, to rank from October 1, 1918.

Admiral William S. Sims, Commander U. S. Naval Forces in Europe, during World War I, in a tribute to the First Yale Unit, wrote as follows of Gates: "LCDR Artemus L. Gates was one of three, of a naval force of some 5,000 officers and 75,000 enlisted men, whom I recommended for the Congressional Medal of Honor. He commanded our naval air station at Dunkirk with marked efficiency and under almost constant shell and bomb fire from the enemy. He rescued the crew of a British air patrol which was wrecked in the sea off Ostend, for which he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross by the British Government. This act of bravery was not a duty required of this officer and demonstrated the highest type of intrepidity and resourcefulness. Gates took part in many flights over the lines, was shot down in combat, and made prisoner by the enemy. He made heroic and determined efforts to escape. Throughout his service he was an example of modesty and unceasing attention to duty." Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy, sent Mr. Gates a Letter of Commendation. Vice Admiral H. B. Wilson, Commander U. S. Naval Forces in France, forwarded the Croix de Guerre and French citation to Mr. Gates' mother with a letter of sincere appreciation and approval of the services rendered by her son for his country as well as for France.

Mr. Gates remained in the Naval Reserve until October 26, 1928, and kept up his flying. F. Trubee Davison, then Assistant Secretary of War for Air, interested him in joining the Army Reserve, in the chance of getting more flying. In November 1928 he filed application, and on April 1, 1929, took the oath as a Major in the Specialist Corps Reserve, his appointment dating from March 20, 1929. He was rated as an Army airplane pilot effective May 27, 1929, and served for five years, his commission terminating March 18, 1934. Before moving to Washington he flew his own plane for several years, and during his service in the Department of the Navy he acted as Go-pilot from time to time on inspection flights. In 1919 he returned to Yale for the Spring Term and received the degree of Bachelor of Arts. In July of that year he started work in the old Liberty National Bank in New York City, which merged with the New York Trust Company in 1921. He was appointed Assistant Treasurer of the New York Trust Company in January 1923; Vice-President in January 1926; and President in June 1929. Early in September 1941 he resigned the presidency of the bank and all other business connections to become Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Air. On January 3, 1922, he was married to Miss Alice T. Davison, daughter of the late Henry P. Davison, the banker who was chairman of the American Red Cross in World War I.