

Friends and Neighbors Pick Admiral Smoot for Honors

LAGUNA HILLS — The first Leisure Worlder of the Month to be nominated by residents of the community is Vice Admiral Roland Smoot, USN (Ret.). He has been selected as Leisure Worlder for May.

In addition to being one of the most distinguished residents of Leisure World, Admiral Smoot is also one of the most active in behalf of the welfare of the community. He's president of Golden Rain Foundation of Laguna Hills, a non-profit corporation which owns and/or operates community facilities and services for the benefit of all member residents.

GRF is in charge of clubhouses, streets, recreation areas, mini-bus service and security. It also contracts for medical support services. All members of the GRF Board serve without compensation and put in hours of work each week for the benefit of their neighbors.

An original oil portrait of Admiral Smoot has been commissioned and will be hung in the main rotunda of the sales pavillion during May. At

the end of the month it will be presented to Admiral and Mrs. Smoot in informal ceremonies.

A 1923 graduate of the US Naval Academy, Admiral Smoot served continuously on active duty as commissioned officer in the Navy until retirement in June 1962. His early career included assignments to destroyers, submarines and battleships with duties about evenly divided between engineering and gunnery.

His later career was devoted to command at sea and personnel administration ashore. Duty at sea included command of two destroyers, two destroyer squadrons, a destroyer flotilla, a heavy cruiser, a division of cruisers and the Mine Force of the US Pacific Fleet.

Wartime service was almost exclusively in command of destroyers and destroyer groups, first operating out of Iceland escorting convoys across the North Atlantic during the Second World War. Here, he says, "the main enemy confronted was weather."

After Pearl Harbor, Admiral

Smoot's first duty was in command of a new destroyer assigned to escort old battleships through the Panama Canal out to the Pacific where the fleet participated in the famous Jimmy Doolittle raid on Japan.

Then followed the amphibious landings on Guadalcanal and many air-sea battles and nighttime forays in the prolonged campaign in the South Pacific.

Admiral Smoot recalls vividly and speaks freely of the many fine young American sailors who died in suicide attacks on his ships. He says, "War is very impersonal, and if you live you are lucky."

Admiral Smoot participated in the amphibious landings at Leyte and Lingayen in the Philippines, where, in command of a squadron of nine destroyers in the Suragao Strait, he directed what will probably be history's last coordinated torpedo attack against an enemy battle line.

In this great sea battle, the furious and devastating kamikaze attacks began and they destroyed six of the

nine destroyers in Admiral Smoot's command.

Following this, Admiral Smoot commanded support of landings at Iwo Jima, Okinawa and finally the surrender of Japan. He witnessed the historical signing of the instrument of capitulation on the USS Missouri.

In his final four years of active duty, Admiral Smoot was assigned as Senior Naval Officer in the Far East, with the title of Commander Taiwan Defense Command. Here, his most important duties were those required from the collateral assignment as Senior US Military Adviser to President Chiang Kai-shek.

Shore duties early in his career were in personnel administration and later in his career a few months were spent in command of the Anti-Submarine Warfare Training School in San Diego. He also had shore duties at Naval Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Admiral and Mrs. Smoot became residents of Leisure World in 1966.

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