

Admiral Ion Pursell (1896-1983)

By Jerry Long
c.2025



Ion Pursell – 1918 US Naval Academy,
Annapolis, MD yearbook, p.182



Ion Pursell was born on 1 April 1896 in Ohio County, KY. He was the son of John William Pursell (1859-1947) and Frances Elizabeth Hawkins (1868-1939), who were married in Ohio County, KY on 6 February 1895 and are buried in the Bartlett's Knob Cemetery near Whitesville in Daviess County, KY. Ion is listed with his parents in the 1900 census of Ohio County, KY and 1910 census of Daviess County, KY.

Ion Purcell graduated from the Whitesville High School, in Whitesville, KY on 23 May 1913. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy on 29 June 1917. In the 1920 census Ion is reported to be a lieutenant with the U.S. Naval forces stationed on the U.S.S. Huntington, at Portsmouth, NH. He retired from the Navy with the rank of Rear Admiral on 1 December 1950.

Ion married Karola Froesick Frick (31 January 1885 – 10 December 1969) on 5 May 1923 in Los Angeles County, CA. He and Karola appear in the 1930 census of Annapolis, MD (“officer U.S. Navy”) and 1950 census of Frankfort, Franklin County, KY (reported to be in the “Armed Forces”). He married second Emma Louise Carter (1904-1978), on 29 July 1974 in Frankfort, Franklin County, KY. He died 23 July 1983 in Lexington, Fayette County, KY.

He and his wife, Karola, are buried in the Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. (section 59 plot number 601) His monument has the inscription: Ion Pursell, R. Adm., U.S. Navy, World War I & II, 1 Apr 1896 – 23 Jul 1983.



Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA
Ion Pursell, Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy,
World War I & II
1 April 1896 – 23 July 1983



**The Kentucky Encyclopedia, John E. Kleber, editor
(Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1992), p.749:**

ION PURSELL

By Lee A. Dew

Ion Pursell, naval officer, was born in rural Ohio County on April 1, 1896, to John Williams and Frances Pursell. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1917. He served in World

War I, the Nicaraguan Campaign in the 1920s, and in Guam, where he was chairman of the board of the Bank of Guam. For several years he taught at the naval academy. Pursell participated in the invasions of North Africa in 1942 and Sicily in 1943, and was awarded the Legion of Merit with Star for these services. He served as chief of the U.S. Naval Mission to Ecuador from 1943 to 1946, then as commander of the naval base at Subic Bay in the Philippines. He also served at the Great Lakes Naval District, and from 1949 until his retirement in 1950 was attached to the office of the chief of naval operations in Washington, D.C.

Pursell took an early interest in the problem of illiteracy. When he was a young officer aboard the U.S.S. *Tennessee*, he discovered that many of the crew members were illiterate and set up an educational program for them. Later in Guam he established a similar program for station personnel. While in Ecuador, he was active in a literacy campaign among the sailors of that country's navy, for which he was awarded a decoration by the Ecuadorean government. Pursell moved to Frankfort, Kentucky, and began a financial consulting service, but his main interest continued to be adult literacy. Gov. Lawrence Wetherby (1950-55) appointed Pursell chairman of the Governor's Commission on Adult Education. He was known as the "Good Samaritan for the Three Rs." He was published widely in the area of adult education.

Pursell married Karola Froesick Frick of Berlin, Germany, on May 5, 1923. He died in Lexington on July 23, 1983, and was buried in Annapolis, Maryland.

See Tim Young, "Admiral Ion Pursell," *Daviess County Historical Quarterly* 6 (Jan. 1988): 17-20.



Daviess County Historical Quarterly, Daviess County Historical Society,
Owensboro, KY, Vol. VI, No. 1, January 1988, pp.17-20:

Admiral Ion Pursell

By Tim Young

Today we realize how difficult it is to identify a person who deserves to be recognized as a true hero. Heroes are usually characterized by acts of bravery, but self sacrifice is also a very important quality, especially if it is over a whole lifetime. Rear Admiral Ion Pursell fits every description and stands up to every criticism when heroes are being recognized. Pursell dedicated his whole life to serving his country and the citizens of Kentucky.

Ion Pursell was born in rural Ohio County on April 1, 1896 to John William and Frances Pursell. Pursell's father owned a small farm near Whitesville, and occasionally taught at the local school. The Pursells realized that Ion loved to read, and they encouraged Ion in his studies by borrowing books from friends and relatives so Ion would have plenty of reading material. By the age of ten Ion had already indicated his desire to teach people to read and write, especially adults who were illiterate. Ion graduated from high school in 1913, and planned on entering the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, but because all the positions had been filled he could not gain admittance. Pursell was told that there were openings at the Naval Academy in Annapolis Maryland, and upon hearing this Pursell sought admission, and was nominated by Congressman David Kincheloe. Pursell attended the academy for three years, and studied languages, civil administration, and international and military law. Pursell was commissioned an ensign on June 29, 1917.

Ensign Pursell's first assignment was aboard the cruiser *Huntington*, he spent the remaining months of World War I on this ship, where he specialized in gunnery and communication. With the conclusion of the war, Pursell was re-assigned to the *U.S.S. Tennessee*, and while on this ship participated in the Nicaraguan Campaign during the early and mid 1920's. Pursell's tour in Nicaragua was concerned with landing U.S. Marines to stabilize the weak Nicaraguan Government headed by Adolfo Diaz. Liberals, supported by the government of Mexico, wished to overthrow Diaz and set up their own candidate in office as President of Nicaragua.

The United States sent marines to aid government troops in putting down the revolution, and by May 1927 the liberal threat had been neutralized, but U.S. troops were to remain until U.S.-backed elections were held in 1928. While in Nicaragua the U.S. trained a government police force known as the Guardia Nacional. This police force was set up to ensure stability after the pull out of U.S. troops. Although it was thought that the marines would leave after the 1928 elections, the marines stayed until late 1932 because of renewed guerrilla uprisings led by General Sandino, a liberal guerrilla leader, whose name is the basis of the movement known as the Sandinistas.

Although Pursell did not directly battle anti-government guerrillas, he did play a role in this interesting U.S. involvement in Nicaragua. Pursell's duties in Nicaragua ended sometime in the late 1920's. Immediately before going to Nicaragua Pursell married Karola Frick in 1923. She had been touring the United States as a concert pianist when World War I broke out, as a result she was trapped in the U.S. and decided to remain after the war was over.

After Nicaragua, Pursell was transferred to shore duty in Guam. During his tenure in Guam Pursell was promoted to Lieutenant Commander, and became the Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General of that island. In addition to his government positions, Pursell was Chairman of the Board of the Bank of Guam until his departure in 1934. While in Guam, and in keeping with his desire to educate, Lieutenant commander Pursell enacted a program to teach reading and writing to those who wished to learn.

After his assignment to Guam ended in 1934, Lieutenant Commander Pursell returned to the U.S. and worked at the Naval Academy in Annapolis. In January 1938 Pursell was promoted to Commander. When World War II began, Commander Pursell was put in command of the *U.S.S. Oberon*, a troop ship. While in command of the *Oberon*, Pursell participated in the invasion of North Africa in 1942. Because of his outstanding service in these operations and in the invasion of Sicily in 1943, he was promoted to the rank of Captain. During the assault Pursell's command was subject to shelling and air attacks by the enemy. Although his command was in danger, Pursell was successful in getting combat troops, supplies and equipment on the beaches without significant casualties. Because of his bravery and clear thinking under fire and at such a critical time, Pursell was awarded the Gold Star and The Legion of Merit. Pursell was also recognized by President Roosevelt and Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal.

After his service in the Sicilian and North African Campaigns, Captain Pursell was put in charge of the U.S. Naval Mission to Ecuador until 1946. While attached to the Ecuadorian Minister of National Defense's office, Pursell discovered that most of the enlisted men of the Ecuadorian Navy were illiterate, and were not able to get help in learning to read and write. In reaction to this Pursell instituted a program where naval officers would help men learn to read and write, therefore improving performance and building self confidence. Pursell's program was well received by the government of Ecuador, and was quite successful. As a result, Pursell was presented with the Abdon Calderon, an award similar to the Congressional Medal of Honor. After his service in Ecuador, Pursell was appointed to the post of commander of the naval base at Subic Bay in the Philippines from 1946 to 1947. In 1948 Pursell was put in charge of the Permanent Court Martial

in the Great Lakes Naval District in Illinois. In 1949 and 1950 Pursell was attached to the Chief of Naval Operations in Washington D.C. where he worked in the library and history division. Pursell retired from the Navy on December 1, 1950 with the rank of Rear Admiral

Pursell's military career was only one of three careers he pursued during his life. Immediately after his retirement in 1950 Pursell moved from Washington D.C. to Owensboro and lived here for about one year before moving to Frankfort for the remainder of his life.

After settling in Frankfort, Rear Admiral Pursell registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission and opened Pursell's Investment Service at the Southern Hotel in Frankfort. Pursell's successful tenure as Chairman of the Board of the Bank of Guam as well as his studies at the Naval Academy helped him in this pursuit. The Admiral's venture in investments was successful, but short-lived, because in 1953 Governor Lawrence Weatherby appointed Pursell Chairman of The Governor's Commission on Adult Education. Although the title of Pursell's organization sounded very governmental and official it was not. The Commission received no state money, and was not connected with the State Board of Education. All the funds used by the Commission came out of Pursell's personal funds, Pursell would not accept donations but he would take donated books.

The Governor's Commission on Education, which later became known as the Good Samaritans For the Three R's, was slow to take hold, but once initial suspicions were overcome the program was successful. The program was an at-home instruction and study, no school teachers or school facilities were used. All books and other materials were donated, and mailing and advertising were the only expenses in the program. The program encouraged family and friends of the illiterate person to help the student learn to read and write, thus the name Good Samaritan came into use. Often a school child on summer vacation would teach parents or grandparents to read and write. In one instance a ten year old girl from Muhlenberg County taught her grandparents to read during summer vacation. The basic reading program took students through the sixth grade reading level if students wished to learn more Pursell would send more advanced reading material. The program worked well, and was easily adhered to, many people reached the sixth grade level in a few months. Pursell often rewarded his pupils, and everyone who completed the program received a free ball point pen. Young teachers who displayed exceptional motivation in teaching received a one hundred dollar cash prize. Brenda Faye Miller from Muhlenberg County won the prize in 1955 and 1956 for her work with her grandparents.

Admiral Pursell realized that illiteracy was a growing problem in Kentucky, and that in order for the state to move ahead that its people had to have an education, even a rudimentary one. Pursell realized that most adults would be embarrassed by having to attend a formal school to learn to read and write so he stressed the use of young people as teachers. Pursell felt that young people would lessen embarrassment, and would be better able to teach adults in the privacy of their own homes. Pursell's plan was novel for its time because it involved no government supervision and was dependent on average citizens to help educate illiterate community members.

The Good Samaritan program also had a positive side for its young teachers. Besides receiving an award from Pursell the young teachers often were rewarded with better grades. Along with better adult literacy and better grades for the young teachers the Good Samaritan program brought with it a heightened sense of the importance of education and school work.

By the end of the program's first year it had more than thirty counties involved in adult education. Many school administrators volunteered time and energy to the Good Samaritan program. It was amazing how such a loosely organized and virtually non-funded endeavour could become so widespread and successful. The Good Samaritans For the Three R's was the forerunner

of many adult education programs. Today there are many new programs being organized along the same lines that Pursell used in his program. In February 1963 Superintendent of Public Education Wendell Butler congratulated Pursell on beginning the adult education program, and recognized him as a pioneer in that field.

Rear Admiral Pursell retired from his second career in the early 1960's and continued to reside in Frankfort. Pursell remained active in other areas, however, he was a member of the Army-Navy club and in 1973 became an editor for "Sky News and Views", an astronomy magazine. Pursell lived in Frankfort until early July 1983 when he became ill with pneumonia and was admitted to St. Joseph's Hospital in Lexington where he died on July 23, 1983.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 30 January 1938, p.3B:

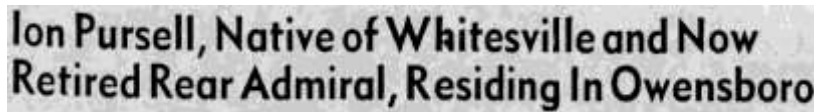


Ion Pursell, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Pursell, of the Whitesville community, who was promoted a few days ago from lieutenant commander to commander in the United States navy, is an alumnus of the Whitesville county high school.

Commander Pursell was a member of the 1914 graduating class at Whitesville, and in June that year entered the United States Naval academy at Annapolis, Md., to which he was appointed by the Hon. A. O. Stanley, then a member of congress from this district. He will be 42 years old April 1. He is now an instructor in the academy at Annapolis. The commander and wife visited his parents in the summer of 1935.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 4 November 1951, p.3B:



By W. E. Daniel

Fifty-odd years ago, at their home miles east of Whitesville in Daviess County, there was born to John W. and Fannie Hawkins Pursell a son they named Ion. The Pursells were plain folk.

The husband taught school and carpentered in about the town of Whitesville, and they raised garden and chickens, and their home life was little different from that of the neighbors. Ion was a bright lad. His recreation was reading, and his parents saw to it that he was supplied with reading matter. They bought more books than the average family, and borrowed from the neighbors books not in their home. After Ion's graduation from the Whitesville High School under the superintendency of O. E. Baird, he looked about for more educational opportunities. An appointment to the West Point Military Academy appealed to him.

Immediately the ambitious young fellow inquired about how to obtain an appointment that would afford him facilities for study. When he learned that there was no opening for West Point, but that Congressman David H. Kincheloe, of this district, could nominate him to the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md., he lost no time in contacting the congressman with the proper recommendations. and soon he began the career that lasted until he retired from active duty Dec. 1, 1950. His continuous service of more than 33 years included both shore and sea duty. The scholarly country boy who entered Annapolis by the favor of his congressman became the scholarly Naval officer. He studied and became very proficient in languages, in military and international law and civil administration.

Retired As Rear Admiral

From Ion Pursell's graduation from the Naval Academy as an ensign the boy from Whitesville moved steadily upward, and when he was retired almost a year ago it was as rear admiral, one of the highest ranks in the Navy and one that not many of those who entered the academy with him reached. His was an eventful career, and although a veteran of two world wars, actively engaged in combat in various parts of the globe, he escaped being wounded. The admiral has always had perfect health, he said. and except for a little cold now and then, and one touch of pneumonia several years ago, he has never been ill. The years have been kind to him. He carries no excess weight. He is about five feet eight inches, and weighs about 150 pounds, a lithe, active man.

Admiral Pursell is a modest man, and it was only after a long talk with the writer that he displayed a large number of decorations and medals, and a dress sword given him by the government of Ecuador, in South America, while he was chief of the U. S. Naval mission there. It is the highest decoration awarded by the government of Ecuador. Among his highly prized marks of distinction was his promotion to rear admiral, in recognition of the fact that twice had the President of the United States commended him for his services in combat with the enemy. He saw plenty of combat in various parts the world. During the second world war, while he commanded one of the Navy's largest cruisers in the Mediterranean, he was engaged in battles there, as he had been in other sectors.

Admiral Pursell's, whole generation in the United States Navy was not a lot of riding giant ships in rough strange waters as if on summer. tours. The 30-odd years were filled with action, in war and peace. He taught Spanish at the Naval Academy several years, as practically all his shore duty was at Annapolis except the last three years before his retirement when he and Mrs. Pursell lived in Washington, D. C. where he was assigned to the Naval history division of the office of Chief of Naval Operations. His knowledge of law came in handy from 1931 to 1934, inclusive. while he was lieutenant governor of the island of Guam. On such assignments Mrs. Pursell went along to enjoy with the admiral the social life for which the Navy is noted.

Now Lives In Owensboro

From Washington, within a few miles of the Naval academy at Annapolis where he began serving ashore and afloat under the flag, the admiral came home, and with his charming wife he is now living at 1319 Frederica St., next door to E. B. Anderson, prominent Owensboro lawyer who was in the Naval Academy before studying law. Mrs. Pursell was born and reared in Germany, and after pursuing her studies in music in her native land, she came to the United States on a concert tour, as a singer and pianist, in 1913, the year the husband was graduated from the Whitesville High School. Ten years later they were married while the admiral was a lieutenant. She joined Admiral Pursell in looking forward to living in his native county where he has many relatives.

It so happened that the newspaperman who talked with the admiral and his wife about the facts used in this story was acquainted with his youngest sister, Imogene, who, like some other members of the family, had gone from the Whitesville High School to the University of Indiana, and returned to teach at Whitesville, before her employment to teach in government school in Alaska. Another sister, Carrie, was met soon after she went to Alabama, to teach. She is still in that state, at Quinton, as a librarian. The eldest sister, Arna, taught in the Philippines, in Siam, and with her husband in Liberia, before their return the United States. As Mr. and Mrs. G. R. Dale, they are now living in Alamosa, Colo. Carrie is unmarried and Imogene is Mrs. Homer Stockdale.

As the admiral talked about his family, his wife brought out pictures of two very pretty girls, his 11-year-old nieces, Ione and Joan, twin daughters of his brother, Maurice, and Mrs. Pursell, who now live Albany, Ky. They, formerly lived with his parents the family home near Whitesville. Another brother, Marvin, enlisted in the Navy in 1924, and is now a lieutenant. He made a career of the service his brother, Ion, had found so satisfying. Whitesville is only 15 miles out from Owensboro, the present home of the admiral and Mrs. Pursell. The old Pursell home burned several years ago, but the farm boy who was picked by Congressman Kincheloe in 1913 as a likely candidate for Naval honors will be driving out when the spirit moves him, and the wife will be enjoying drives through the country with him.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 20 March 1953, pp.1A & 14A:

Rear Admiral Ion Pursell Aiding Fight Against Illiteracy

FRANKFORT, Ky., March 19 – A pair of Kentuckians is getting results, and fast, in meeting what they regard as one of life's biggest challenges.

It's simply this: To combat adult illiteracy in their home state.

But it's not a simple problem to solve.

Kentucky long has ranked low among the 48 states for the number of persons unable to read, write and figure.

At one time, records show, one-third of those called for military service were rejected because of illiteracy.

These two men of good will and bustling energy are doing something about the problem at an age when many think of retiring and taking things easy.

Both Grover Sales, Louisville attorney, and Rear Admiral Ion Pursell, Owensboro, are 65. Pursell is officially retired from the Navy.



Ion Pursell

Their idea for plain citizens to get together with officials and educators and work out a plan voluntarily to teach illiterates bore fruit yesterday.

They with a score of Kentucky college representatives and Gov. Lawrence Wetherby.

The college educators promised co-operation.

And the governor announced, while "heartily endorsing" the program, he will appoint a commission on adult education in Kentucky to serve as a focal point.

It will include educators, civic leaders and public officials. It will seek support from county judges, school superintendents and local groups to get the program under way in various communities.

Teachers will be sought as volunteers, from housewives and ex-teachers, but not just those. Actually, most everyone desiring to teach could help out if spare time is available.

Existing facilities and buildings will be used.

Wetherby said the state might be able to provide a little money help later on. But the drive is depending support from those enthusiasts joining in. Neither Sales nor Pursell will get any pay. It is planned for Pursell to move here to set up an office as executive director of the group.

The pair is seeking expert guidance from educators in mapping teaching programs, though Pursell has long experience as a teacher himself.

They're planning to call on county farm and home demonstration agents to help find illiterates, those classified as "functionally illiterate" – those without a fourth grade education.

But when found, the proper approach will be needed to encourage them to accept instruction.

A little child shall lead them ... or perhaps a relative, or a friend. Pursell was thinking along this line, drawn from his long experience as an educator while a Navy officer. He carried out an anti-illiteracy program on Guam. He also taught for years at the Naval Academy.

He told yesterday's group adults who cannot read and write and figure can be contacted best through a child, or a friend or relative and be encouraged to accept help.

The group hopes to get some "pilot" projects started in counties with outstanding county judges and school superintendents. Harlan, Bell, Estill and Breathitt were mentioned as good starting points.

They plan, too, to develop local committees to carry on the work, integrating the adult program with the "grass roots" school survey being carried on in Kentucky's 228 school districts.

Grass roots committees are studying needs and making recommendations for establishing an adequate educational program in public schools.

Sales said he got his idea while reading in a hospital. He struck by the high rejection rate among Kentuckians for military service.

Upon retiring as president of the family service organization at Louisville after 15 years' service, he said he decided he would make his main life work, outside his law practice, the eradication of illiteracy in his state. He also is chairman of Louisville's labor-management committee, which has received national recognition for its work.

Joe Creason, a Louisville Courier-Journal staff writer, told Sales about Admiral Pursell. Sales and Pursell then found a great community of interest. For Pursell had been considering a "plan of good-neighborly action," as he put it, to tackle the illiteracy problem.

Exalt learning and study and emphasize their many advantages, says the admiral, until all will avail themselves of educational opportunities. T

He recalled the "moonlight" schools of years ago in Kentucky, when adults were taught at night. Pursell said they successfully employed his conception of those moonlight schools at Guam in 1931-34 when he was lieutenant governor and civil affair officer.

And Kentucky's new program will be somewhat of a modernized version.



Courier-Journal, Louisville, KY, Wednesday, 10 January 1973, p.6A:

Ion Pursell fought against illiteracy

Man who taught thousands to read is honored

Associated Press

FRANKFORT, Ky. – A retired rear admiral who founded an international, non-profit organization to teach illiterate adults how to read was honored yesterday by the Kentucky State Board of Education.

Ion Pursell, 76, was presented a plaque commending his "50 years of service to education and more especially 20 years' devotion to adult education in Kentucky."

Pursell, who has lived in Frankfort since retiring from the Navy in 1950, was appointed in 1953 by then Lawrence Wetherby as executive director of the Governor's Commission on Adult Education.

Finding that 40,000 adults in Kentucky could not read and another 250,000 had no more than a fourth grade education Pursell founded "Good Samaritans for the Three R's."

The organization used children with a few years of schooling to teach their parents, grandparents, other relatives and friends how to read. It also offered a free correspondence course.

The organization claims to have helped more than 5,000 persons from throughout the United States and eight foreign countries.

Pursell was born in a log cabin in Ohio County, Kentucky, in 1896 and attended a one-room school there.

After graduating from high school, Pursell was appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis. He was graduated in 1917 after earning a bachelor of science degree.

While serving on the USS Tennessee in the 1920s, he began teaching many men on the ship who were illiterate how to read and write. He later taught engineering, German and Spanish at the Naval Academy.

From 1931 to 1933, while serving as lieutenant governor and attorney general of Guam, he began a program to teach reading, writing and arithmetic to the natives there.

And while serving as chief of the U.S. naval mission giving technical help to Ecuador from 1943 to 1946, Pursell started a program through which officers in the Ecuadoran navy taught enlisted men.



Courier-Journal, Louisville, KY, Wednesday, 17 August 1983, p.8B:

Retired Admiral Pursell dies; active in fight against illiteracy

From Staff and Special Dispatches

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Ion Pursell, a retired U.S. Navy rear admiral who was active in various campaigns against illiteracy, died July 23 at St. Joseph Hospital in Lexington. He was 87.

Pursell served in the Navy from 1917 to 1950, and came to live in Frankfort upon his retirement. He was born in Whitesville and graduated from the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. Upon graduation, he served aboard the USS Huntington during World War I.

He also served at the Naval Academy as an instructor in the Department of Marine Engineering and Naval Construction and as a Spanish teacher.

From 1931 to 1933 he was lieutenant governor and attorney general of Guam. He spent much of World War II in the European theater, commanding ships in the assaults on Casablanca, Sicily and Salerno Bay.

In 1943-46 Pursell became special assistant to the Minister of Defense of Ecuador to help develop and train that country's navy. Ecuador presented him with its highest award given to either citizens or foreigners.

He retired in 1950 and advanced to rear admiral on the basis of various combat awards, including the Legion of Merit.

During his service on Guam, he initiated a program of mass instruction for adult illiterates, and in Ecuador, he devised a plan for that country's naval officers to teach the sailors under their command.

After his retirement, Pursell continued his efforts, and in 1953 he was named executive director of the Governor's Commission on Adult Education to combat illiteracy in Kentucky.

He subsequently founded "Good Samaritans for the Three R's," an organization that encouraged children to teach their parents and other relatives to read.

In 1973, Pursell was given an award commending his "50 years of service to education and more especially 20 years' devotion to adult education in Kentucky" from the Kentucky State Board of Education.

Pursell is survived by two sisters, Imogene Stockdale of Florida, and Carrie Pursell of Frankfort.

The body was cremated and taken to Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia for burial.



Rear Admiral Ion Pursell, United States Navy, was awarded the Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services to the Government of the United States. He won the award twice as commander of an assault transport at Salerno and Sicily during World War II.

The Legion of Merit is a United States military decoration awarded for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service. It is awarded to members of the U.S. Armed Forces and to political and military figures of allied nations.



Legion of Merit award

