Henry Glass Munson

Clan Israel

Captain Henry Glass Munson, USN



Captain Henry "Hank" Glass Munson, was born on New Year's Eve of 1909 in a military hospital in Manila, Philippines, to Lieutenant Commander (LCDR) Francis Merton Munson, Jr. and his wife, Katherine Burnett Glass, daughter of Rear Admiral & Mrs. Henry Glass. The father, Francis, Jr., was the son of the well-regarded Rev Francis Merton, Sr. & Mrs. Munson of Delaware. Their wedding, while smallish, was quite the social event held at the home of the Glass family in Berkeley, California, in 1905. The couple had met while Katharine was receiving her nursing training and Munson was on hospital staff months before.

By the time their only child was born, LCDR Munson, was a "Passed Associate Surgeon." What that means in military parlance is that he had passed all his training and exams and could operate on his own, but was less senior than a senior surgeon. He had previously been stationed with the Pacific Fleet (referred to in those days as the Asiatic Squadron) and spent time in San Francisco.

Francis received his undergraduate degree at Harvard in 1897. In 1898, he was part of the Delaware Regiment that was briefly assigned to Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American War. Francis Jr. served as a hospital steward, and his father served as regimental chaplain. Then, he attended the now-defunct Medico-Chirurgical College and Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he graduated in 1899.



Medico-Chirugical College, Philadelphia

The couple's marital bliss was short-lived, even with the advent of having a child. In 1909, Francis, Jr. was court martialed for drunkeness. While serving on the steamship U.S.S. Buffalo, the intoxication event occurred while docked in Hawaii. His court-martial was held at Mare Island Naval Station near San Francisco in January 1911. He was convicted but reprimanded and allowed to stay in service. He also received a reduction in rank. For all intents and purposes, his career was destroyed. His years as a naval surgeon also came to an end. His next assignment was as a recruiting doctor in Hartford, Connecticut, giving physicals to new recruits. He was retired due to medical issues in 1915 after having spent several months in the hospital on Mare Island with a serious illness.

In 1915, Katherine had had enough. She filed for divorce, citing the fact that Francis was inebriated most of the time. The case made the headlines all over California. She secured her divorce on the basis of intemperance in early 1916 and was awarded sole custody of Henry, who was recovering from appendicitis and surgery. Mrs. Munson took a cottage in Berkeley, where she lived with Henry.

Francis remarried relatively quickly. He took a series of public health officer jobs, each lasting a few months, in Sioux Falls, SD, and Paducah, KY, before becoming assistant public health officer for the State of Maryland. A Navy friend was visiting him in 1927. They had gone to La Plata, MD, and were returning to the Annapolis area when they missed a curve near Indian Head. Both were thrown from the car and killed. No determination could be made who was driving.

Katherine raised Henry in California. He attended high school in San Diego, then enlisted in the Navy in 1927. He was selected to attend the U. S. Navy Preparatory School and the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis and graduated in the Class of 1932. He served on a number of surface ships, including the U.S.S. West Virginia (a destroyer), the U.S.S. Wright (a one-of-a-kind auxiliary ship), U.S.S. Bridge (a stores ship), and the U.S.S. Ellis (a Wickes-class destroyer). He was then selected for the U.S. Navy Submarine School in 1937. The sub school at New London, Connecticut, was founded in 1916. Submarine warfare had come a long way in both safety and technology. His class of 30 graduated in 1939. His first submarine, the U.S.S. Porpoise, where he served as engineering officer. When he



Hank, 1932 US Naval Academy

completed that tour, he was assigned shore duty at Pearl Harbor as Mine Overhaul Officer. The timing of his shore duty was perfect and gave him time to marry his love, Anna Olsen, daughter of LT Hjalmer (U.S. Navy, Retired) & Mrs. Olsen of Decatur, Illinois. Anna had six brothers, all Navy men. She knew what she was getting into.

On 29 Jun 1939, Hank and Anna were married at the Saint Augustine by the Sea Catholic Church on Waikiki.



St Augustine by the Sea, Waikiki

In Aug 1940, he joined the sub U.S.S. Sculpin as the Executive Officer (the second senior position on a ship). Back on shore in Nov 1940, Anna and Hank welcomed their first son, John Henry Glass Munson. Hank trained the first sub relief crews just prior to the attack of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese in Dec 1941.

From Jan 1941 and for the next year, he skippered the U.S.S. S-38 sub. During his time, he and his crew rescued the 54 survivors of HMS Electra, a British vessel lost by enemy action during the Battle of Java Sea in Mar 1942. Hank also conducted the first bombardment by a submarine of a Japanese-held shore position on Bawean island, Java Sea. After eight war patrols in the Pacific, including the Gilbert Islands, the ship was taken to San Diego for overhaul.

In Mar 1943, Hank swung by New London and both commissioned and took command of the U.S.S. Crevalle, a new Baloa class sub. They cruised to Australia for supplies and the ship began its first war patrol. Over the next year, Hank was able to sink a few Japanese ships and lay mines along the South China Sea. Back to land for a few months, he was placed in charge of relief sub crews again before he began his tour skippering the U.S.S. Rasher, a Gato-class sub commissioned just the year before. After years of action, Hank was sent back to New London to become an instructor and Assistant Officer in Charge. In late 1946, he became skipper of the 71st Sub Division, where he led firings of the first submarine-launched guided missiles.

He then commanded the U.S.S. Myles C. Fox destroyer for a year before heading back to Naval Postgraduate School in Annapolis. He received a master's in science in 1952.

His last ship command during war would be during the Korean War, when he skippered the U.S.S. Mispillion, an oiler, which saw considerable action during the last year of



THE OLSEN FAMILY
Back Row: Rear Admiral Charles, Rear Admiral Clarence, Lt Cmdr Earl, CaptainRobert, and Captain Albert. Front Row: Anna and Hjalmer and Anna Olsen Munson about 1937. Another son, Lawrence, died tragically in a fire at the Marion Military Institute in Selma, Alabama, in 1924.

the war. Then it was assignment to the Navy Department, Hydrographer of the Navy, under the Chief of Naval Operations. While Hydrographer Captain Munson planned the course of the U.S.S. Triton's SSRN-586 submerged circumnavigation in 1960 and staffed the vessel to take a complete bathyscopic and magnetic survey of the globe along her course. In late 1960 he was attached to the Bureau of Inspection and Survey and served as test pilot and strategy instructor for new nuclear attack submarines on their acceptance trials.

He retired to direct RCA Labs Military Systems office. When he retired again, he taught Physics at Princeton HS, Princeton, NJ. Captain Munson died July 17, 1975. Anna Olsen Munson died in 2001. Their ashes were taken to the waters of Hawaii for disbursal in 2002.

Hank received multiple unit citations and personal awards throughout his 32-year career including the Navy Cross with two gold stars. His son John Henry died in 1987.

Israel Munson > Joseph Munson > Samuel Bishop Munson > Francis Merton Munson Sr > Francis Merton Munson Jr > Henry Glass Munson



Left to right: John Henry (d. 1987), Anna, Hank, and Christopher James Munson,(b. 1947)

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