



**Orley
Comfort**

Navy

Orley Comfort

May 27, 1920 - Nov 6, 1996

BIRTHPLACE: Wells, Kansas

SOLDIER DETAILS

HIGHEST RANK: E6, Machinist Mate

DIVISION: Navy, USS Wichita (CA-45), Heavy
Cruiser

THEATER OF OPERATION: Pacific

SERVED: Jan 26, 1942 - Sep 29, 1945

BATTLE: USS Wichita battle record from Nov 1942 to Sep 1945. Thirteen battle stars were awarded to veteran. Operation Torch, Engagement with Vichy French Casablanca Harbor where sustained damage, Nov 8, 1942 Rennell Island (Pacific) Japanese torpedo attacks. Wichita hit by dud Japanese torpedo, Jan 29, 1943. Kwajalein and Eniwetok Jan 29, 30, 31, 1944. Majuro Atoll, Feb 4, 1944 Truk Island, Feb 12, 1944 Yap, Woleali and the Palaus, March 30, 1944 Hollandia and Wakde, April 13, 1944 Task Group 58.2, Returning to Truk Island area, April 29, 1944, shelled positions Satawal Island (Caroline Islands). Marianna Islands, operating southeast of Saipan, June 14, 1944. (battle referred to as the "Great Marianas Turkey Shoot" or Battle of the Philippine Sea.) Guam, Shelled Japanese positions July 8th-12th, 1944. Guam, bombardment July 18th to early August, 1944 Palau, Carloline, Philippines and Netherlands East Indies, Aug 10-29, 1944. Manila (Philippines) kamikaze attack, "Splashed" 50 yards from ship, Sep 21, 1944 Samar (Philippines), Cebu, Negros, Coron, Sep 25, 1944. Okinawa, Oct 10, Aparri, Luzon, Oct 11, Formosa, Oct 12, Leyte, Oct 12, 1944. (During this engagement, sister ship Houston and Canberra were torpedoed.) Leyte, assisted in sinking carrier Chiyoda, Oct 18, 1944 Leyte, fought off air attacks, Oct 30, 1944 Ship returned to U.S. for repairs Okinawa, evaded torpedo attack, March 25, 1945 Okinawa Bombardment, March - April, 1945

MILITARY HONORS: 13 battle stars awarded for service on the USS Wichita, 1942-1945

BIOGRAPHY

Orley Deane Comfort ("Dean") was a third generation Kansan. His grandparents, Robert and Anna Comfort, were homesteaders in Ottawa County in 1874. His Comfort ancestors were English Quakers that initially settled in Bucks County, PA in the 1690's. (Because of the early arrival to the colonies, Dean had ancestors' who served in the Revolutionary War, Civil War and WWI.) The Comfort family migrated west over the next two centuries to Ohio, Iowa and to Ottawa County, Kansas where Dean was born and raised. All his ancestors were farmers. They remained in the Quaker (Friends) faith until about 1900 when his grandparents died in Kansas. There were no other practicing Quakers in the area. (Dean had an extensive genealogy of the family dating from the 1690's to 1970 that he passed on to his children.) Dean attended grades 1-8 at Wells and high school in Minneapolis, Kansas. He grew up in a period of that included the dust bowl, depression and WWII as he entered adulthood. In spite of these challenges he was surrounded by family and a supporting community. After the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Dean was called to service. Before departing for training he married Inez Lavilla Beals on January 10, 1942. He left for naval service soon after. In the 3 years and 8 months Dean was in the war, he was able to see his bride one time, in November 1942, when his ship (USS Wichita) returned to New York for repairs after being damaged by a Vichy French shore battery off Casa Blanca. (He saved a piece of twisted medal from the engagement.) After Dean was released from active duty in September 1945, he returned to Kansas and also returned to farming for a short period. Later he started a career with Leidig and Haven Lumber Companies in Clay Center, Kansas. He had several transfers over years to Salina, Lincoln, Ks, Windsor, Mo, Caney, Ks, Emporia, Ks and Bartlesville, Ok, where he retired. Dean and Inez raised three children, Kent born 1946, Doyle born 1948 and Janet 1954. Inez was a teacher, then homemaker, giving piano lessons in the home for many years. Dean was a modest and thoughtful man. In business he was known to be honest and reliable, a characteristic of his Quaker heritage. He never sought attention or recognition for himself but looked up to as leader in the business and faith community. Like most WWII veterans he didn't expound on his duty and awards. The following information in the "Major Battles" section were taken from the his ships history and the battles stars he received. This was gathered, and learned, after he died in 1996.