



Ralph Raymond Kugel (1917 – 1944)

Ralph Raymond Kugel was born on 13 January, 1917 in the farm country of Benson County, North Dakota, about 70 miles from the Canadian Border. His parents were Louis Henry Kugel and Gertrude Eleanor Kennedy, and they lived at Box 27, Chula Vista, CA.

Ralph Kugel was a Fire Controlman First Class (FC1/E6) in the United States Navy in World War Two and he was assigned to the Battleship, the USS Colorado (BB—45). His service number was 03287524 and his home of record is listed as Minnesota. His date of death was July 25, 1944.

The famous “Marianas Turkey Shoot” had taken place in mid-June, 1944. For a perspective of the events in July 1944: - on July 7, 1944, the US Marines and the Army capture the island of Saipan, in the Marianas. On 21 July, the Army and the Marines invaded Guam. On 24 July, US Forces land on the island of Tinian, and the battle was over by 3 August, 1944.

He is buried at the Honolulu Memorial Cemetery located at Honolulu, Hawaii. (The Punchbowl). His name is listed among the many that died on 24 & 25 July 1944 while serving aboard the USS Colorado (BB-45) while engaged in fierce action against the enemy on the island of Tinian. Among other places, his death is listed in a casualty report in the *San Diego Union* on August 31, 1944. His name is also engraved on a brass plate at the American Memorial Park in the Court of Honor on the island of Saipan located at Plate #25, Column 3.

A brief history of the USS Colorado and its involvement with the Battle of Tinian follows:



On July 24, the veteran COLORADO nosed in alongside Tinian to pound the shore installations and unexpectedly received a pounding herself. Her first battle damage came as a result of accurate fire from the Tinian batteries opposing her, 22 shells in all ripping into the COLORADO. Continuing her cannonading despite heavy damage, the COLORADO tenaciously held her covering position to rip apart enemy forts within the invasion area as 35,000 troops began taking over at 0740. Limping away from the Tinian area on August 3, the COLORADO sailed home via Pearl Harbor, was berthed in the Bremerton Navy Yard undergoing repairs by August 21.

On the day of her arrival at Bremerton, Washington, Navy Cross recipient Captain Granat (awarded for his "superb ship-handling and unrelenting aggressiveness" in evidence at Tinian) relinquished his command to Captain Walter S. Macaulay, USN.

FC1 Ralph Kugel was awarded the Purple Heart. His name appears in Memorial Park in Chula Vista, and he is also honored with a street named in his honor in the Otay Ranch subdivision of Montecito Ridge.



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