

Fr. Henry Joseph BROWN 66 USA

* Aug. 2, 1920 Philadelphia

+ Aug. 11, 1986 Cornwells, PA

After graduating in 1938 from West Catholic High School in his hometown, he attended one year of business school before starting to work in an office. In 1942 military service claimed him and he spent four years in the Pacific and in the Pentagon as a member of the Navy's Combat Intelligence Unit. Discharged in 1946, he did another year of office work while considering whether to join the religious life and/or the priesthood--an option that he had been entertaining for several years. He then asked to join the Congregation.

After two years at Cornwells, he pronounced his vows at Ridgefield Aug. 22, 1950. His senior studies followed at Ferndale at the age of 30. As he had prematurely lost his hair, some of his exuberant juniors thought it a great joke to congratulate him especially on the feast of St. Ubald. He smilingly tolerated their crude humor. On June 2, 1935, he was ordained a priest. Later, too, he also acquired an M.A. at La Salle, as well as various other non-degree certificates.

His first assignment sent him to St. Joseph House in Philadelphia, where he worked for four years and began to see the need of a new approach to the post-war generation.

In 1960 he became director of the students at Cornwells. He was destined to spend the remaining 26 years of his life in that community, including four terms as superior of the house, 1971-85, and then as superior of the retirement community in Cornwells.

He died there of cancer. Interment took place at the local community cemetery.

His years in the Navy characterized the kind of a man he was: he

served in the Pentagon "holding a position of the utmost trust and handling top-secret information." His unprecedented fourth term as a Superior of Cornwells resulted from the almost unanimous recommendation of the Fathers and Brothers in his area: they saw in him the ideal man for that demanding position because of his exemplary religious life, competence and fatherly concern for all. At the same time, he was a zealous promoter of the Congregation, as well as widely in demand for extracurricular service to people from all walks of life. The Catholic War Veterans chose him as their chaplain, first on the local and state level and later as their national chaplain. In 1985 they also elected him as their Man of the Year.

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