

Jaysee Mentor Enters Marines

First Lieutenant's Rank Is Given Mel Griffin

Long Beach lost another of its leading athletic coaches to the armed forces yesterday when it was announced that Mel Griffin, veteran Long Beach J. C. mentor, was sworn into the United States Marine Corps Reserve as a first lieutenant, Aviation Volunteer Specialist, Wednesday in Los Angeles.

Griffin expects to leave within three or four weeks. He'll attend a special officers' training course either at San Diego or Quantico, Va., before being assigned to active duty with the Fleet Marine Force in the Eleventh Naval District, probably at San Diego.

Griffin is the fourth prominent local coach to receive a commission in the armed forces and the second to enter the Marines. The others are Captain Charles R. Church of the Marines; Captain Walter W. Bell of the Army, and Lieutenant Orian M. Landreth of the Navy.

The junior college basketball and baseball coach is enthused over his appointment, stating it was just the line of duty he had hoped for.

"Griff" graduated from the University of Kansas in 1924 and, after coaching a few years in the midwest, came to Long Beach. This is his thirteenth year in the city school system. Incidentally, the number 13 figures prominently in the Griffin family, Mel having been sworn in on the thirteenth, his wife's birthday falling on February 13 and his mother-in-law's birthday on January 13.

In his stay at Long Beach J. C. Griffin has had four championship basketball teams and three championship baseball clubs. He coached the Viking football team for one season, in 1935, and the Norse finished second in the conference race. Mel is best known for his great 1941 and 1942 hoop teams. The '42 club of Grant Denmark, Dick West, Dave Cohee, Ed Gillean, Bob Howard and Don Cecil captured all jaysee honors, winning the Western Conference, Southern California and state titles.