

REAR ADMIRAL GAYLORD CHURCH
CIVIL ENGINEER CORPS, U.S. NAVY, RETIRED

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

Gaylord Church was born in Meadville, Pennsylvania, August 14, 1885, son of Alfred G. and Alice Mosier Church. He attended public schools and Allegheny College in Meadville before his appointment to the United States Naval Academy from Pennsylvania in 1905. He was a member of the Rifle Team while a midshipman, winning the Sharpshooter and Expert Rifleman's Bar in 1908. He graduated with distinction in 1909, and thereafter served the two years at sea required by law before being commissioned Ensign. He subsequently advanced in rank to that of Rear Admiral, to date from September 15, 1942. His retirement from the Naval Service became effective on November 1, 1945.

When detached from the Naval Academy in the summer of 1909, he was assigned to the USS CONNECTICUT, and in 1910 transferred to the NEW YORK, armored cruiser, and cruised in her to the Asiatic Station. Her name was changed to SARATOGA in February, 1911, and as such she was assigned as flagship of the Asiatic Fleet. Returning to the United States in July, 1911, he attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York, for the postgraduate course in Engineering, and in March, 1913 he was transferred to the Civil Engineer Corps. He thereafter served at the Naval Station, Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii, until March, 1914. He had consecutive tours of duty as follows: U.S. Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1915-1917; when the Virgin Islands were first acquired by the United States, he served on the staff of the Naval Governor, 1917-1919, for meritorious services in that assignment, he received a Letter of Commendation from the Secretary of the Navy; Public Works Officer, Naval Mine Depot, Yorktown, Virginia, 1919.

In September, 1919, he reported for instruction at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, and upon completion of the course, he served as Public Works Officer, Submarine Base, New London, Connecticut, until May, 1921. He had charge of constructing the Naval Submarine and Destroyer Base, Astoria, Oregon, serving there from June, 1921 until January, 1924. He received a second Letter of Commendation from the Secretary of the Navy for services rendered the City of Astoria during a disastrous fire in 1922. From January, 1924 until July, 1926 he served in the Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Washington, and for two years thereafter had duty as Public Works Officer, Fifteenth Naval District, Balboa, Canal Zone. The next four years he served in the Bureau of Yards and Docks, Navy Department, Washington, D.C., and during the ten years between 1932 and 1942, he was assigned consecutively as Public Works Officer in the Sixteenth Naval District, Cavite, P.I., and in the navy yards at Portsmouth, New Hampshire and Philadelphia.

In April, 1942 he reported for duty as Superintending Civil Engineer of Area Number One, Boston, Massachusetts. On April 14, he was given additional duty as Acting Superintending Civil Engineer, Area Number 2, and on January 12, 1943, he was assigned to further additional duty as Acting Superintending Civil Engineer of Area Number 3, consisting of West Virginia, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, and South Carolina. He was awarded the Legion of Merit, the citation stating in part:

"For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services to the Government of the United States as Superintending Civil Engineer, Areas I, II and III. Qualified for a highly responsible office because of his engineering experience and executive ability, (he) directed the effective utilization of available resources and expedited the construction of major additions to the Navy's shipbuilding and repair yards and to other naval activities on the East coast of the United States. In addition, he administered, with outstanding success, organizations charged with building additions to privately owned plants under Civil Works Contracts . . . enabling the United States Naval Service to provide unprecedented shipments of war materials to the Allied navies throughout a trying period of the war."

He continued on these duties until relieved of active duty due to physical disability and transferred to the Retired List of the Navy, November 1, 1945.

In addition to the Legion of Merit, Rear Admiral Church has the Victory Medal with Silver Star denoting a Commendation, the American Defense Service Medal, American Campaign Medal, and World War II Victory Medal. He also has the Expert Rifleman's Medal and Bar.

Rear Admiral Church is a member of the Army and Navy Clubs of Washington, D. C. and of Manila, P. I., Army and Navy Country Club, Arlington, Virginia, Delta Tau Fraternity, and Masonic fraternal organizations in Oregon and Washington.

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