

ADMIRAL ALBERT GLEAVES, UNITED STATES NAVY, DECEASED

Albert Gleaves was born in Nashville, Tennessee, on January 1, 1858. He attended Hume School in Nashville, prior to entering the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, from the State of Tennessee in 1873. Upon completion of the four-year course in 1877, he served the two years at sea, as then required by law; was warranted Midshipman on June 26, 1879 and commissioned Ensign, to date from January 1, 1881. He subsequently advanced in rank to that of Rear Admiral, to date from July 29, 1915; Vice Admiral, from December 4, 1918 and Admiral, to date from September 1, 1919. He reverted to his permanent rank of Rear Admiral, on February 4, 1921. On January 1, 1922 he was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy in the rank of Rear Admiral, and by Act of Congress of June 21, 1930, authorizing World War I flag officers to be retired in the highest rank held on active duty, he was promoted to Admiral on the Retired List on that date.

Following graduation from the Naval Academy, he was assigned, in August 1877, to the USS HARTFORD, and in March 1879 transferred to the USS PLYMOUTH. From November 1879 to September 1883 he served in the USS NIPSIC, then had duty in the USS TRENTON. In November 1886 he reported for Ordnance Duty at the Navy Yard, Washington, D. C., and the following February was ordered to the Naval Ordnance Proving Ground, Annapolis, Maryland, where the guns built for the new steel cruisers were being tested.

In November 1889 he reported on board the USS DOLPHIN, the first of the new steel cruisers. From May 1891 to March 1893 he served in the USS BOSTON, then returned to the Washington Navy Yard for ordnance duty. During the period, August 1895 to May 1897 he served in the USS TEXAS, interspersed with an assignment, between February and July 1896 in the USS MONADNOCK. He next commanded the USS CUSHING, the first modern torpedo boat in the Navy, and was on board that vessel when the Spanish-American War began early in 1898. Under his command, the CUSHING conducted tests of the Obrey gear, a gyroscope-operated torpedo steering device which was designed to improve the accuracy of torpedoes. In September 1898 he was again assigned to the Navy Yard, Washington.

He joined the USS ALABAMA in May 1900 and a month later transferred to the USS INDIANA to serve as Navigator. He returned to the ALABAMA in August that year, for duty during her trials and became Navigator of that battleship the following October. In November 1901 he assumed command of the USS DOLPHIN, a gunboat which was being used as the President's Yacht, and in June 1902 transferred to command of the USS MAYFLOWER, which replaced the DOLPHIN as the Presidential Yacht.

In November 1904 he was designated Inspector of Ordnance in charge of the Naval Torpedo Station, Newport, Rhode Island. After a brief tour of duty (April-November 1908) as Commanding Officer of the USS ST. LOUIS, he was assigned to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C. From July 1910 to November 1911 he had command of the USS NORTH DAKOTA, the Navy's first dreadnaught, and the first battleship equipped to carry oil fuel and fitted to burn either oil or coal.

He next became Commandant of the Naval Station, Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island and of the Second Naval District. While in that capacity, he went abroad to study the torpedo manufacturing processes of foreign nations and, upon his return, built a complete torpedo manufacturing plant at the Torpedo Station. In June 1912 he reported as Commandant of the Navy Yard, New York and of the Third Naval District, and in September 1914 assumed command of the superdreadnaught, USS UTAH. He served in that assignment, interspersed with temporary command (June 1915) of the Second Division, Battleship Squadron, until his promotion to the rank of Rear Admiral in July 1915.

Following several months' service at the Naval Station, Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island, he assumed command in November of the Torpedo Flotilla, Atlantic Fleet (his title changed in June 1916 to Commander Destroyer Force, Atlantic Fleet). After the declaration of war between the United States and Germany in April 1917, he was assigned additional duty as Commander of the U. S. Convoy operating in the Atlantic. In July that year, he became Commander Cruiser Force, Atlantic Fleet and a month later assumed additional duty in command of the Transport Force. He remained in that assignment throughout World War I.

As Commander Cruiser and Transport Force, it was his task to build a fleet of transports and to guard them from attack as they carried the American Army across the Atlantic to France. Under his command 2,000,000 men were safely transported without the loss of a single ship. Known familiarly as "The Man who put 'em across and brought 'em back," he was also in charge of transporting the Army home after the Armistice was signed. "For exceptionally meritorious service..." he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal by the Navy Department and the Distinguished Service Medal by the War Department. The citations follow:

Distinguished Service Medal (Navy Department): "For exceptionally meritorious service in a duty of great responsibility as Commander of the Cruiser and Transport Force, in connection with the organization and operation of the Cruisers and Transports in convoy work and transportation of troops."

Distinguished Service Medal (War Department): "For exceptionally meritorious and conspicuous service as Commander of the Cruiser and Transport Force. His untiring energy, close cooperation and wise decision contributed greatly to the successful overseas operation of the Transport Fleet, resulting in the successful transportation of the United States Forces abroad."

From September 1919 to February 1921 he served, in the rank of Admiral, as Commander-in-Chief, Asiatic Fleet, his flag in the USS SOUTH DAKOTA. Returning to the United States he was a member of various selection and special boards until May of that year, when he reported as Commandant of the First Naval District, with additional duty as Commandant of the Navy Yard, Boston, Massachusetts. He was relieved of active duty and transferred to the Retired List effective January 1, 1922, having reached the statutory retirement age of sixty-four years. In September 1928 he was recalled to duty as Governor of the U. S. Naval Home, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and served in that capacity until again relieved of active duty, September 1, 1931.

In addition to the Distinguished Service Medal (Navy) and the Distinguished Service Medal (War Department) Admiral Gleaves had the Spanish Campaign Medal and the Victory Medal, Escort Clasp. He received the following foreign decorations: Commander of the Order of the the Legion of Honor (France); Grand Cordon of the Sacred Treasury (Japan); Military War Cross with Lime Tree Leaves (Czechoslovakia); and Order of the Striped Tiger (Wen Hu), First Class (Government of China).

Admiral Gleaves died in Haverford, Pennsylvania, on January 6, 1937. He was survived by his wife, Mrs. Evelina Heap Gleaves.

He was the author of several books on naval subjects, including, History of the Cruiser and Transport Force, 1921; Life of an American Sailor, William Hensley Emory, Rear Admiral, USN; and a biography of Captain James Lawrence, USN.

