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ADMIRAL CHARLES B. McVAY, JR.
UNITED STATES NAVY, DECEASED

Charles Butler McVay, Jr., was born in Edgeworth, Pennsylvania, on September 19, 1868, son of Charles B. and Anne Huntington (Jones) McVay. He attended public schools in Pennsylvania and Colorado, before his appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, from the State of Colorado in 1886. Graduated on June 6, 1890, he served the two years at sea, then required by law, before he was commissioned Ensign on July 1, 1892. He advanced progressively in rank until his promotion to Rear Admiral to date from January 6, 1923, and served from September 9, 1929 to October 19, 1931, in the temporary rank of Admiral. He was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy on October 1, 1932, and on July 16, 1942, was advanced to the rank of Admiral on the Retired List by Act of Congress.

Following graduation from the Naval Academy in 1890, he joined the USS PENSACOLA, flagship of the South Atlantic Station, and in 1893 transferred to the USS CHICAGO, operating in European waters. Detached from that vessel in November 1895 he returned to the United States for steel inspection duty at Munhall, Pennsylvania.

In August 1897 he reported as Watch and Division Officer in the USS AMPHITRITE, and was aboard her during the War with Spain, participating in the blockade of Cuba and the bombardment of San Juan, Puerto Rico. Ordered to the Homestead Steel Works, he had duty from March 1901 to September 1902 as Inspector of Ordnance, after which he joined the USS HARTFORD. Between March and May 1905 he commanded the USS HERCULES. He rejoined the HARTFORD and served as her Navigator until September 1905, when he was assigned duty on the staff at the Naval Academy, where he remained until August 1907.

During the historic World Cruise of the Fleet, 1907-1909, he was Navigator of the flagship ALABAMA from Hampton Roads, Virginia, to San Francisco, California, and upon her arrival at San Francisco, he assumed command, on May 9, 1908, of the fleet dispatch boat YANKTON. Upon entering the Mediterranean word was received of the Messina (Sicily) earthquake and the YANKTON was sent to the scene with surgeons, supplies and clothing to relieve the sufferers of the disaster. For this service he was awarded the Red Cross Diploma and Button. He also received the thanks of the Cuban Government for duty in connection with the search for a lost fishing vessel off the south coast of Cuba.

Between April 1910 and February 1912 he served in the Executive Department at the Naval Academy, after which he had duty as Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief, Asiatic Fleet. While so serving orders were received by the Commander in Chief to recognize the Chinese Government and a twenty-one gun salute was given to the Republic of China at Shanghai. Returning to the United States in April 1914 he became Assistant to the Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. He remained in that capacity until December 1916, and in April of

the next year completed a course at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

He assumed command of the USS SARATOGA, and when relieved, in August 1917, transferred to the USS NEW JERSEY to command her until September 1918. He then reported as Commanding Officer of the USS OKLAHOMA, based at Bantry Bay, Ireland. The OKLAHOMA was one of the United States vessels which stood ready to oppose any German cruisers that might threaten shipping in the waters to the south of Ireland and England or on the routes to the ports of Northern France. In that vessel, he took station at Brest, France, during the Peace Conference and commanded an escort consisting of the OKLAHOMA and four destroyers when the late President Woodrow Wilson returned to the United States in the GEORGE WASHINGTON after the signing of the Peace Treaty.

He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for "exceptionally meritorious service in a duty of great responsibility in command of the USS NEW JERSEY and later of the USS OKLAHOMA, operating in the War Zone in association and cooperation with British Naval Forces."

Relieved of command of the OKLAHOMA in July 1919, he reported the next month to the Washington (D. C.) Navy Yard as Captain of the Yard and Assistant Superintendent of the Naval Gun Factory. In April 1920 he became Commandant of the Yard and Superintendent of the Naval Gun Factory. He continued duty there until June 19, 1920, when he was appointed Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department. It was while in that assignment that such advancements were made as a modern fire control system; protection of vessels against plane and submarine attack; fire control by aeroplanes by definite method; launching of aeroplanes from ships; launching of torpedoes from aircraft; and efficient floating mines.

From August 1923 until July 1925 he was Commander Yangtze Patrol, USS ISABEL, flagship. During this period the so-called "student riots" took place in China. He was Senior Officer Present of all Navies part of that time, and by unanimous vote of all senior officers present at a council meeting at Shanghai, all men-of-war were placed under his supervision. At first this included only ships at Shanghai and along the Yangtze River, but the order was later amended to include ships along the China Coast. (33, with the flagship of the Commander in Chief).

Returning to the United States in July 1925, he was appointed Budget Officer of the Navy Department, with further duty as a member of the General Board. In May 1927 he was relieved of duty on the General Board, continuing to serve as Budget Officer until March 1929. Between September 9, 1929 and September 1, 1931, he was Commander in Chief, U. S. Asiatic Fleet. Prior to his transfer to the Retired List on October 1, 1932, he again served as a member of the General Board.

In addition to the Distinguished Service Medal, Admiral McVay had the Spanish Campaign Medal; the Sampson Medal; the World War I Victory Medal, Grand Fleet Clasp; and the Yangtze

Service Medal.

He died on October 28, 1949, at the Naval Hospital, Bethesda, Maryland, and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia. He is survived by his wife, the former Edith Harriet Stowe Reno of Sewickley, Pennsylvania, who presently resides at [REDACTED] and a son Rear Admiral Charles B. McVay, III, USN, Retired.

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