

8/11/58

ADMIRAL ROBERT EDWARD COONTZ, U. S. NAVY, DECEASED

Born in Hannibal, Missouri, June 11, 1864, Admiral Robert Edward Coontz, one time Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet, and Chief of Naval Operations, died January 26, 1935 at the Naval Hospital, Puget Sound, Washington. He had retired from the U. S. Navy on June 11, 1928 after 46 years of active service in the Navy.

He was appointed a Naval Cadet from the 12th District of Missouri on September 28, 1881, graduated in 1885, and two years later was commissioned Ensign. His subsequent promotions in rank were as follows: Lieutenant (junior grade) September 5, 1896; Lieutenant, March 3, 1899; Lieutenant Commander, January 1, 1905; Commander, January 7, 1909; Captain, July 1, 1912; Rear Admiral, September 25, 1919; Admiral (temporary) from October, 1919 to October, 1925. He was advanced to the rank of Admiral on the Retired List dating from June 21, 1930.

During the Spanish-American War, he served in the USS PATTERSON, USS CHARLESTON, and USS BOSTON, successively. From December, 1901 until April, 1905 he was attached to the USS ADAMS, USS PHILADELPHIA, USS WHEELING, and then had two years inspection duty under the then Bureau of Equipment, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. In July, 1907, he returned to sea duty in the USS NEBRASKA as Executive Officer, and in 1908, in the NEBRASKA, made the trip with the Fleet around the world. When detached in September, 1909, he reported to the U. S. Naval Academy for duty as Commandant of Midshipmen. Returning to the Navy Department, he served on the Board of Inspection and Survey for Ships, and was so serving when named Naval Governor of Guam and Commandant of the Naval Station, Guam, where he reported in April, 1912. In September, 1913, he returned to the Navy Department for assignment, and was ordered to command the USS GEORGIA, battleship, and served in that command from December, 1913 until June, 1915.

In July, 1915 he assumed duty as Commandant, Thirteenth Naval District, and also Commandant, Navy Yard, Puget Sound, Washington, where he served throughout the first World War. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal "For exceptionally meritorious service in a duty of great responsibility as Commandant of the Thirteenth Naval District and Commandant of the Bremerton Navy Yard, and also for a time while acting as assistant to the Chief of Naval Operations.

From January to June, 1919, he commanded Division 7, Atlantic Fleet, transferring his flag at that time to the USS WYOMING in command of Division 6, Pacific Fleet. In the rank of Admiral from December, 1919, he served as Chief of Naval Operations and member of the Joint Board, Navy Department, until August, 1923. After four years as the ranking officer in the

Navy, Admiral Coontz assumed duty as Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet, and under him the Fleet made the cruise to Australia and New Zealand in 1925 for maneuvers.

From October, 1925 until relieved of active duty in 1928, he served as Commandant of the Fifth Naval District, Norfolk, Virginia, with additional duty as Commandant of Naval Operating Base, Hampton Roads.

In addition to the Distinguished Service Medal, Admiral Coontz had received the Spanish Campaign Medal, Philippine Campaign Medal, Mexican Service Medal, and Victory Medal with Atlantic Fleet Clasp. He also received from the Government of France the award of Commander of the Legion of Honor.

A guided missile frigate, the USS COONTZ, has been named in his honor. The vessel will be launched at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Washington in November 1958. She will be sponsored by Mrs. Robert J. Coontz, wife of Lieutenant R. J. Coontz, USN, grandson of Admiral Coontz.