

VICE ADMIRAL ALBERT PARKER NIBLACK, U. S. NAVY, DECEASED

Vice Admiral Niblack was born in Vincennes, Indiana, July 25, 1859. He was appointed to the U. S. Naval Academy in 1876 from the Second Indiana District, and graduated with the Class of 1880. After two years service on the Pacific Station, he was commissioned Ensign, and progressively advanced in rank to that of Rear Admiral dating from March 20, 1918. He served from 1921 temporarily in the rank of Vice Admiral. Having reached the statutory age on July 25, 1923, he was transferred to the Retired List of the Navy after forty-seven years active service. His death occurred in Monte Carlo, Monaco, on August 20, 1929, and he was posthumously advanced in rank to Vice Admiral under the law of 1930 that provides for retirement in the highest rank held by an officer in active service.

From 1883-1884, Vice Admiral Niblack was a student at Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D. C., under instruction in exploring prior to his service in Alaska. For four years, 1884-1888, he had duty with surveying and exploring expeditions in that area. In May 1887, he participated in rescue of the crew of the SS OCEAN KING which had foundered on the coast in the Northwest, and for that service he received a letter of commendation. He occupied various posts for the next several years, and from 1896 until the outbreak of the war with Spain, he was Naval Attache at Berlin, Rome, and at Vienna.

Vice Admiral Niblack was transferred to sea duty, and in the USS TOPEKA during the Spanish-American War, he took part in the blockade on Cuban ports, and the capture of Nipe Bay on July 21, 1898. He transferred to the flagship OLYMPIA at Manila in November 1898, and joined in suppressing the Filipino insurrection. He commanded the naval landing force at the capture of Ilo-Ilo Straits, February 12, 1899. On board the USS OREGON he had a part in the operations in Lingayen Gulf in November 1899, and the subsequent capture of Vigan and the occupation of Subig. In the USS CASTINE, of the North China Expeditionary Force, he took part in the campaign against the Boxers also.

Returning to duty as Naval Attache, Vice Admiral Niblack served from 1910 until 1913 at Buenos Aires, and at Berlin. From 1913 to 1916 he commanded the battleship MICHIGAN. During this service he commanded the third seamen's regiment in the occupation of Vera Cruz, Mexico, in 1914.

During the first World War, he was in command of the Second Squadron, Patrol Force, Atlantic Fleet, USS BIRMINGHAM, flagship, based at Gibraltar. He was commended by Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels in these words: "Admiral Niblack directed our forces at Gibraltar to the end of the war with fine judgment and ability. He and his force became a tower of strength in that region to our Allies as well as our own Navy." He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal "For exceptionally meritorious

service in a duty of great responsibility as Commander of the U. S. Naval Base at Gibraltar and of the U. S. Naval Forces in the Western Mediterranean." This Force, aggregating 41 vessels, 314 officers and 4660 men, provided the major percentage of convoy escorts required between Gibraltar and the United Kingdom, and for allied forces in the Mediterranean.

From 1919-1920, he served as Director of Naval Intelligence, and in January 1921, he assumed the duties of Commander, U. S. Naval Forces in Europe with the accompanying rank of Vice Admiral.

In addition to the Distinguished Service Medal, Vice Admiral Niblack had the Spanish Campaign Medal, Philippine Campaign Medal (USS CONCORD), Mexican Service Medal (USS MICHIGAN), Victory Medal with Patrol Clasp (World War I). He also was awarded the following decorations by foreign governments:

Order of the White Eagle, First Class, by the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes;  
Diploma Grand Officer of the Order of St. Charles, by Louis II of Monaco;  
Commander, First Class, of the Order of Dennebrog, from Denmark;  
Grand Officer of the Order of the Aviz, from Portugal;  
Second Order of the Sacred Treasure, from Japan;  
Legion of Honor, rank of Commander, from the French Republic;  
Grand Officer of the Nichen Iftikhar, from the Bey of Tunisia;  
First Order Wen Hu, awarded by the Chinese Ministry;  
Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, from Great Britain;  
Commander of Saint Maurice and Lazarus, from Italy;  
Grand Officer of the Shereefian, Order of the Ouissam Alaouite, from the Sultan of Morocco;  
Commander of the Royal Victorian Order of Great Britain, from the Prince of Wales (Edward VIII of Great Britain).

Besides his prestige as a sea commander, Vice Admiral Niblack was a renowned scientist and writer of naval subjects. He was the prize essayist of the U. S. Naval Institute in 1890 and again in 1896. He is the author of several books. In Alaska, he engaged in all phases of surveying, astronomical observation, hydrography, and coast line delineation. His scientific services in the Philippines were just as noteworthy, and included surveys of Ilo-Ilo Straits and Subig Bay. In 1924, he was appointed a member of the International Hydrographic Bureau, at Monaco, and was in charge of the Bureau of Charts and Publications. Two years later he was elected President of the Board of Directors of that bureau, an office he held until his death in 1929. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. His wife, Mrs. Mary Harrington Niblack of San Francisco, survived him by twenty years, and died in Bethesda (Maryland) Naval Hospital in April, 1949.

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