

REAR ADMIRAL WILLIAM H. GODSON, JR.
CIVIL ENGINEER CORPS, U. S. NAVAL RESERVE, RETIRED

William Howard Godson was born in Troy, New York, on September 1, 1897. He attended St. Laurence Academy and Troy High School, both in Troy, New York, and was graduated from Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York, with the degree of Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering in 1922. While in college, he enlisted in the U. S. Army on July 1, 1916, and served throughout World War I, participating in several battles, including that of St. Mihiel, France. He was honorably discharged in the rank of Sergeant on June 30, 1920.

On August 20, 1940, he was appointed Lieutenant Commander, Civil Engineer Corps, U. S. Naval Reserve. He was subsequently promoted to Commander on August 20, 1942, and to Captain, his date of rank March 15, 1945. He served in the temporary rank of Commodore from June 1945 until after the Japanese Surrender in September of that year, reverting to his permanent rank of Captain in December 1945. On October 1, 1956 he was transferred to the Retired List in the rank of Rear Admiral.

During the period between the World Wars, Rear Admiral Godson served with the State Highway Department of Connecticut, and was employed by the Callen Construction Company, the George H. Fuller Building Construction Company, and the Fuller-Turner-Spencer Engineering Construction Company. From 1937 to 1940 he was with the Public Works Department of the State of Connecticut.

He was called to active duty, in the rank of Lieutenant Commander, in September 1940, and after brief duty in the Bureau of Yards and Docks, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., reported to the Office of the Supervisor of Shipbuilding, Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, Newport News, Virginia. In May 1942 he became Officer in Charge of Construction of "Civil Works" of that Company, and remained in that capacity until September 1942. He then served successively, until August 1943, as Officer in Charge of Construction of "Civil Works" Contracts at the Erie Forge and Steel Company, Erie, Pennsylvania; the Electric Boat Company, Groton, Connecticut; and the Bethlehem Steel Company, Quincy, Massachusetts.

After two months' duty at the Naval Training Center, Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Virginia, he reported in October 1943 as Officer in Charge of Naval Construction Battalion 137. In November of that year he was transferred to the Naval Advance Base Depot, Receiving Barracks, Gulfport, Mississippi, and in January 1944 became Officer in Charge of the Naval Construction Battalion Training Center, Fleet Marine Force, Camp LeJeune, New River, North Carolina. He later had duty as Public Works Officer for the Marine Barracks there.

Temporary duty in the Second Naval Construction Brigade, from June to October 1944, preceded his assignment to the Seventh Naval Construction Brigade. On May 22, 1945, he was designated Officer in

Charge of the Second Naval Construction Brigade. He was detached in December, after the Japanese Surrender in September 1945. He was awarded the Legion of Merit, with citation which follows in part:

"For exceptionally meritorious conduct... as Executive Officer of the SEVENTH Naval Construction Brigade, as Officer in Charge of the SECOND Naval Construction Brigade and as Executive Officer to the Officer in Charge of Construction and Senior Brigade Commander, SECOND and SEVENTH Naval Construction Brigades during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Leyte-Samar Area of the Philippine Islands, from March 12 to September 5, 1945..." The citation further states:

"Captain Godson was responsible for effecting policies, for the assignment and accomplishment of construction work by the Construction Regiments and Battalions, and for the coordination of personnel, material and equipment. Under his able direction, the Construction Battalions succeeded in completing their work well ahead of schedule. By his initiative, judgment and effort to complete a task of great magnitude in a minimum of time, (he) contributed essentially to the progress of the Pacific War during a period of critical operations..."

Returning to the United States in December 1945, he reported to the Bureau of Yards and Docks, Navy Department, and after brief duty there served from March until September 1946 at Headquarters, Fifth Naval District, Norfolk, Virginia. He then returned to the Bureau of Yards and Docks, and in November 1947 was designated Assistant to the Chief of the Naval Group, American Mission for Aid to Turkey, serving in the capacity of a Civil Engineer until May 1951.

In June 1951 he was ordered to the Naval Missile Test Center, Point Mugu, California, and a year later he was detached for duty on the Staff of Commander Naval Forces, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean. Under orders of February 4, 1953, he reported to the Office of the Director, Joint Construction Agency, Paris, France, and on December 24, 1953 was assigned as a Member of Joint U. S. Military Group, Spain. He continued duty in Madrid, Spain until February 1956, when he was ordered to return to the United States to serve in the Atlantic Division, Bureau of Yards and Docks, with headquarters in New York, New York. He remained there until relieved of all active duty pending his retirement, effective October 1, 1956.

In addition to the Legion of Merit, Rear Admiral Godson has the Victory Medal (World War I); the American Defense Service Medal; the American Campaign Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; the World War II Victory Medal; National Defense Service Medal; and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon.