

REAR ADMIRAL WALTER R. GHERARDI, U. S. NAVY, DECEASED

Walter Rockwell Gherardi was born in Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii, on August 9, 1875, son of Rear Admiral and Mrs. Bancroft Gherardi. He entered the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, on appointment at large by the President of the United States, on September 4, 1891. He was graduated on June 7, 1895, and was commissioned Ensign after two years at sea then required by law, on July 1, 1897. Promoted to Lieutenant (junior grade) on July 1, 1900, he progressed as follows: Lieutenant, from September 23, 1902; Lieutenant Commander, from July 1, 1908; Commander, from July 1, 1914; Captain (temporary) on October 15, 1917, and Captain (permanent), from October 20, 1919; and Rear Admiral, from January 16, 1934.

As a Passed Midshipman he served at sea in the USS AMFHITRITE and USS MAINE during the period June 24, 1895 to April 28, 1897, and after final graduation and his commissioning in the U. S. Navy in July 1897, he was assigned to the USS TEXAS, and later USS NASHVILLE. He had brief duty on board, and in command of the USS SIOUX, and on May 7, 1898, joined the MARBLEHEAD. He had Spanish-American War service in that vessel and the USS INDIANA, and when detached from the latter in October 1898, he proceeded to the Naval Station, San Juan, P. R., in the USS SOLACE. During the period December 1898 to September 1903, he served successively in the USS PANTHER, USS SARATOGA, USS WOMPATUCK, USS ANNAPOLIS, USS VILLALOBOS and USS NEW YORK.

On October 20, 1903, he reported to the Navy Yard, Washington, D. C., where he served until June 1904 as Aide to the Commandant, and after instruction at the Naval Torpedo Station, assumed command of the USS DAHLGREN at New York and returned her to Newport, R. I. He commanded the USS YANKTON from August 1905 to May 1908, then attended the Conference of Officers at the Naval War College, Newport, from June 1 to September 14, that year. He was next assigned to the Bureau of Equipment, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., and remained on duty there until March 31, 1910, when he was ordered to the Norfolk Navy Yard. There he assisted in fitting out the USS DELAWARE and went aboard as Navigating Officer at her commissioning on April 4, that year. He later served as her First Lieutenant, from October 18, 1911 until November 25, 1912.

Ordered to the Naval Observatory, he served there briefly before reporting to the Office of Naval Intelligence, Navy Department on April 11, 1913. After briefing he was sent to Berlin, Germany, as Assistant to the U. S. Naval Attache there and the Hague, The Netherlands, and later served as the Naval Attache, June 1913 to February 1917. He returned to Washington with the Ambassador just prior to the entry of the United States into World War I, and on April 21 joined the Flagship of the Commander in Chief, U. S. Atlantic Fleet, for temporary duty.

On April 27, 1917, he reported to the Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he fitted out the USS PRINZ EITEL FRIEDERICK, and commanded that vessel from her commissioning (name changed to USS DEKALB) on May 12 of that year, until August 12, 1918, in the rank of Captain. He had temporary

duty with the Commander SIXTH Battle Squadron, and on September 14 joined the USS NEW JERSEY. After the Armistice, November 11, 1918, he returned to the Navy Department, Washington, D. C., where he had temporary duty prior to his assignment to Paris, France, for duty.

For World War I service he received a Letter of Commendation from the War Department, and was awarded the Navy Cross, "For distinguished service in the line of his profession as Commanding Officer of the USS DE KALB, engaged in the important, exacting and hazardous duty of transporting and escorting troops and supplies to European ports through waters infested with enemy submarines and mines."

Detached from his Paris assignment on February 22, 1919, he assumed command of the USS NEW JERSEY on March 20, and commanded that battleship until November 25 of the same year. He attended the Naval War College, Newport, R.I. from December 1, 1919, until November 22, 1920, and upon completion of the course was ordered to the Bureau of Navigation, Navy Department, for a tour of duty. While there he had additional duty as a Member of a Special Board in July 1921, and as President of a Board to formulate rules for fixing precedence of temporary and Reserve officers of the Staff Corps of the Navy transferred to regular service. He also served as Assistant to the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation from June 5 to June 15, 1922.

When detached from the Bureau of Navigation on July 13, 1922, he had orders to duty in command of Air Squadrons, Atlantic Fleet, with additional duty as Commanding Officer of the USS WRIGHT. Later the same month, his title was changed to Commander Aircraft Squadrons, Scouting Fleet, due to the establishment of the Aeronautic Organization of the Navy, effective July 1, 1922, and he was detailed to duty involving flying, effective July 15, 1922. On April 5, 1923, he was relieved of the additional duty in command of the WRIGHT, but continued to command Aircraft Squadrons, Scouting Fleet, until June 27, 1924. That day he became Aide to the Secretary of the Navy, and served in that capacity until October 2, 1926.

He assisted in fitting out the USS LEXINGTON at Fore River Shipbuilding Company's plant at Quincy, Massachusetts, and was detached before that aircraft carrier was commissioned (December 14, 1927) to report to Headquarters First Naval District, Boston, Massachusetts, on July 1, 1927. He served there one year, after which from June 1, 1928 to June 18, 1930, he served as a member of the General Board, Navy Department. On June 21, 1930, he reported as Hydrographer of the Navy, in the rank of Rear Admiral from May 10, 1930. He continued duty as Hydrographer for almost five years, during which he was designated Chairman of the American Delegation to represent the United States at the meeting of the International Hydrographic Bureau held at Monaco, from April 2, 1932. From March 1935 to July 1938 he was Commandant of the First Naval District, and Commandant of the Navy Yard, Boston, Massachusetts, and on September 1, 1938, reported as President, General Court Martial, San Francisco, California. He served in that capacity until ordered relieved of all active duty on April 24, 1939, pending his retirement on September 1, 1939.

In addition to the Navy Cross and War Department Letter of Commendation (Ribbon), Rear Admiral Gherardi had the Spanish Campaign Medal; the Philippines Campaign Medal; World War I Victory Medal with Transport Clasp (USS DE KALB).

Admiral Gherardi died on July 24, 1939.

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