

REAR ADMIRAL CHARLES J. BADGER, U. S. NAVY, DECEASED

Charles Johnson Badger was born in Rockville, Maryland, on August 6, 1853, into a family in which the naval tradition was already established. His father, Commodore Oscar Charles Badger, a brilliant officer and an authority on ordnance, had been appointed a Naval Cadet in 1841 by his cousin, the Hon. George E. Badger of North Carolina, then Secretary of the Navy under President William Henry Harrison.

Charles Johnson Badger was appointed Midshipman at large by President Grant in 1869, his title changed to Cadet Midshipman by law in 1870. He was graduated from the Naval Academy in that rank on May 31, 1873; and that date promoted to Midshipman. Commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Navy after two years at sea, then required by law, he progressed in rank to that of Captain from July 1907, and was advanced to Rear Admiral in March 1911. He was transferred to the Retired List of the Navy in the rank of Rear Admiral on August 6, 1915, but remained on active duty throughout World War I, and until February 28, 1921.

After graduation from the Naval Academy he served as a junior officer on board the USS NARRAGANSETT, then engaged in survey service in the Pacific. He returned to the East in 1875, and served fourteen months at the Navy Yard, Washington, D. C., and nine months in the USS ALARM, torpedo steamer. On August 3, 1877, he was ordered to Asiatic Station, and during the next four years served successively in the USS ASHUELET, USS MONOCACY and USS MONONGEHELA, the latter flagship of the Asiatic Fleet. Detached on November 1, 1879, he was promoted to the rank of Master on January 19, 1880.

During the four years that followed his return to the United States, he had duty in the Hydrographic Office, Navy Department, Washington, D. C.; at the Boston, Massachusetts, Navy Yard; in the Coast Survey and aboard the USS YANTIC and the USS FISH HAWK. In April 1884, in the rank of Lieutenant (jg), he was assigned to the USS ALERT, one of the vessels which, under the command of Commander Winfield Scott Schley, sailed to the Arctic on the Greely Relief Expedition. He did not get to Sabine Bay, where Lieutenant Greely and the six other survivors of the expedition were found on June 12, 1884. The ALERT, employed as reserve vessel, was frozen in the ice in Melville Bay, and returned to the United States with the other vessels to be reviewed by Secretary of the Navy and Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce, USN. She then sailed for New York, and in 1884 Lieutenant Badger was detached for instruction in ordnance at the Navy Yard, Washington, D. C.

In April 1885 he joined the USS TENNESSEE for brief duty, returning to the Washington Navy Yard in June. In the fall of that year he began a tour of duty which lasted four years and took him from the Atlantic to the Far East and return. Joining the USS BROOKLYN on October 3, 1885, he cruised in her to Asiatic Station, where she became flagship of Rear Admiral Ralph Chandler, Commander in Chief of the Asiatic Station. Having been commissioned Lieutenant from January 5, 1886, he returned to Washington in 1889, had a two year tour at the Navy Yard, then reported to the USS CHICAGO, flagship of Rear Admiral John G. Walker, USN, commanding the Atlantic Station. This vessel, launched at Chester, Pennsylvania, in 1885, was the first steel warship built in the United States.

He was transferred to the USS DOLPHIN, dispatch boat, in March 1893, and after a year and a half in that vessel, he had another tour of duty at the Washington Navy Yard. From June 1 to August 27, 1897, he was under instruction at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, after which he joined the USS CINCINNATI on South Atlantic Station. Under command of Captain Colby M. Chester, USN, the CINCINNATI was off the South American Coast when the Spanish-American War started. In her he participated in his first sea battle when she was under fire at Matanzas, Cuba.

In January 1899 he was assigned duty as Inspector of Equipment in the battleship KENTUCKY at the Newport News Shipbuilding Company's yard at Newport News, Virginia. In September of that year he was transferred to similar duty in the USS ALABAMA, under construction at Philadelphia. In the rank of Lieutenant Commander, he joined the latter vessel as Executive Officer at her commissioning on October 16, 1900. Detached from the battleship ALABAMA in June 1902, he had brief duty in the Bureau of Equipment and in April 1903, in the rank of Commander, was appointed Commandant of Midshipmen at the Naval Academy. He remained on duty in that capacity for two years.

In 1905 he was given command of the USS NEWARK, and when that cruiser was placed in reserve a year later he became Commanding Officer of the USS CHICAGO. In July 1907, while serving as Assistant to the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation (and additionally in connection with the General Board), he was commissioned Captain and appointed Superintendent of the U. S. Naval Academy. After two years there, he assumed command, in June 1909, of the USS KANSAS, of the North Atlantic Fleet. Promoted to Rear Admiral in March 1911, he hoisted his flag on the USS LOUISIANA as Commander Second Division, Atlantic Fleet, on May 1, 1911.

Relieving Rear Admiral Hugo Osterhaus, USN, who commanded the Atlantic Fleet from January 1, 1911, he went aboard the new battleship, USS WYOMING, on January 4, 1913, as Commander in Chief, U. S. Atlantic Fleet. Between that date and the fall of 1914, his flag was hoisted on the USS CONNECTICUT, transferred back to the WYOMING, raised on the USS ARKANSAS, and again transferred to the WYOMING. When it was lowered from the mainmast of the WYOMING on September 17, 1914, he had orders to the Navy Department for duty as a member of the General Board, with additional duty as a member of the Army and Navy Joint Board.

On August 6, 1915, he was transferred to the Retired List of the Navy, but continued on active duty with the General Board until February 28, 1921. During that period he served as Representative of the Navy Department in a conference between Army and Navy officials on the production of large calibre guns and as Senior Member of a Board on Aviation Policy, as well as member of a Board to recommend those deemed worthy of the award of the Navy Cross and Distinguished Service Medal.

When he was relieved of all active duty on February 28, 1921, he received a letter from Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, which stated, in part: "Your detachment from duty with the General Board, where, succeeding Admiral Dewey to leadership on that Board, you have held the position of Chairman of the Executive Committee, terminates a period of six years' service in one of the most important and responsible positions in the Navy. This unusual length

of service was made possible for the good of the Navy as the result of special legislation in recognition of your special fitness for your position.

"During the whole of that period, as Secretary of the Navy, I have found you showing the greatest ability and most mature judgment in dealing with the innumerable naval problems of a period without precedent in the annals of the U. S. Navy.

"The Navy and your country owe much to the wise counsel and far-sighted planning of the General Board before and during the World War, and not only the Secretary of the Navy but the whole Navy recognizes the prominent part you have taken in that work. After six years of constant association, during which ...I have leaned heavily upon your always loyal support and cooperation, you are giving up active duty with my deepest gratitude and highest personal appreciation of the great work you have performed in a great way..."

He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, on November 11, 1920, with citation as follows: "For exceptionally meritorious service in a duty of great responsibility as Chairman of the General Board in advising the Department upon many matters of great importance relating to the conduct of the war."

In addition, he had the Spanish Service Medal (USS CINCINNATI, 1898); Sampson Medal (1898); Mexican Service Medal (USS ARKANSAS, 1914); and the Victory Medal (World War I).

Rear Admiral Badger died at his home at Blue Ridge Summit, Pennsylvania, on September 7, 1932, and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

The USS CHARLES J. BADGER (DD-657) has been named to honor Rear Admiral Badger. The destroyer was sponsored by his granddaughter, Isabelle Edna, a daughter of Admiral Oscar C. Badger, when launched at the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Company's plant at Staten Island, New York on April 3, 1943.