

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

REAR ADMIRAL JOHN R. BEARDALL, U. S. NAVY, DECEASED

John Reginald Beardall was born in Sanford, Florida, on February 7, 1887, son of William and Florence Bonser Beardall. He attended High School in Orlando, Florida, and was graduated from Porter Military Academy, in Charleston, South Carolina, before entering the U. S. Naval Academy from Florida in 1904. While a Midshipman he won class numerals in baseball. He was graduated with the Class of 1908, and served the two years at sea, then required by law, before being commissioned Ensign on June 5, 1910. He subsequently advanced to the rank of Rear Admiral to date from November 3, 1941, and was transferred to the Retired List in that rank on November 1, 1946.

After graduation in 1908, he joined USS ILLINOIS at San Francisco, California, where she had completed the first leg of the World Cruise of the Fleet, and in that battleship finished the cruise to Manila, P. I. and return to the East Coast of the United States. Detached from ILLINOIS in December 1909, he had successive duty until October 1911 in USS NEW YORK and USS CULGOA. He received a commendatory letter from the Secretary of the Navy for his prompt and courageous action on the occasion of an ammunition fire on board the CULGOA in 1910.

In October 1911 he joined USS VERMONT and during the occupation of Vera Cruz, Mexico, in 1914, commanded a company from that battleship. He was detached later in 1914, to serve as an Instructor in the Department of Seamanship at the Naval Academy until March 1917. At the outbreak of World War I in April of that year he was on board USS KANSAS, and later in the war period served as Gunnery Officer of USS NEW HAMPSHIRE. He had similar duty in USS NEW YORK from January 1919 to August 1920, then reported to the Navy Yard, Washington, D. C., for duty as Aide to the Commandant and Ordnance Allowance Officer.

Again ordered to sea, he served as Aide and Flag Secretary to Commander Special Service Squadron from July 1923 until March 1925, attached to USS ROCHESTER, flagship. He then assumed command of USS SANDS, and after a year in command of that destroyer served from July 1926 until August 1928 as Assistant U. S. Naval Attache to England, serving at the American Embassy, London, with additional duty as Assistant Naval Attache at the American Embassies in Paris, France; Rome, Italy; The Hague, The Netherlands; and Berlin, Germany. Remaining overseas, he served from September 1928 to October 1929 as Senior Aide on the Staff of Commander, Naval Forces in Europe, attached to USS RALEIGH, flagship.

He was Commanding Officer of USS GILMER from October 1929 until the spring of 1931, after which he completed the senior course at the Naval War College and served on the Staff of the college until June 1933. In August of that year he was ordered to the Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to assist in fitting out USS MINNEAPOLIS, and

served as Executive Officer of that cruiser from her commissioning on May 19, 1934, until June 1935. He next served as Operations Officer on the Staff of Commander, Battle Force, in USS CALIFORNIA, flagship, and from May 1, 1936, to June 30, 1939, was Aide to the Secretary of the Navy, in Washington, D. C.

Returning to duty afloat, he served as Commanding Officer of USS VINCENNES from July 1939 until April 1941, and in May of that year was assigned duty as Naval Aide to the President of the United States. After the United States entered World War II in December 1941 he was detached for duty as Superintendent of the U. S. Naval Academy and Commandant, Severn River Naval Command, from January 31, 1942 until August 8, 1945. "For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services to the Government of the United States" in that assignment, he was awarded the Legion of Merit. The citation accompanying the medal further states:

"A brilliant and forceful leader, Rear Admiral Beardall administered the affairs of the Naval Academy with distinctive success in directing the conversion from a peace-time to a war-time basis and in supervising the training and education not only of the largest classes of Regular Midshipmen ever to enter and to be graduated from the Naval Academy but also of approximately 3,700 Reserve Midshipmen. Capable and untiring in handling current acquisition and installation of the implements of modern Naval warfare for the practical instruction of midshipmen, Rear Admiral Beardall exercised foresight and sound judgment in planning for post-war curriculum, modernized and expanded according to existing policies. His distinguished service throughout a period of exacting duty has been invaluable to the United States Navy in the successful prosecution of the war."

In August 1945 he became Commandant of the Fifteenth Naval District, at Balboa, Canal Zone, and Commander, Panama Sea Frontier, and for meritorious service in that assignment was awarded the Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of the Second Legion of Merit by the War Department. The citation states:

"This award is made to Rear Admiral John R. Beardall, 7109, United States Navy, for distinguished achievement in the performance of meritorious service from August 23, 1945 to June 27, 1946. Admiral Beardall assumed command of the Panama Sea Frontier and Fifteenth Naval District at a time when his most pressing problem was an orderly demobilization of Naval personnel in his command and the evacuation and return to their home governments of several war-time Naval installations throughout the area. These tasks were performed in a manner which bespeaks highly Admiral Beardall's administrative and executive ability and which reflects great credit upon him as an officer of outstanding personal and professional attainments...(He) has demonstrated a rare and unusual ability to cultivate understanding and cooperative relations with all agencies, both military and civilian, with whom he has come in contact...has contributed unstintingly in his efforts

to maintain friendly relations throughout Latin America and particularly in the Republic of Panama. His genteel and personable efforts have been largely responsible for the fine spirit of cooperation and understanding which now exists between the Army and Navy commands in the Panama area."

On May 27, 1946, Rear Admiral Beardall requested that he be transferred to the Retired List upon completion of forty years' service, and on August 7, that year, he was ordered relieved of active duty, with retirement effective November 1, 1946.

In addition to the Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster (Army), Admiral Beardall had the Navy and Marine Corps Medal (replacing the commendatory letter by the Secretary of the Navy in 1910); the Mexican Service Medal; Victory Medal, Escort Clasp; Navy Expeditionary Medal (for service ashore at Vera Cruz in 1914); the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; American Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal. He had also been awarded the following foreign medals:

Gran Oficial, Orden of El Sol del Peru, by Government of Peru
Gran Maestre, Orden Militaire de Ayacucho, by Government of Peru
Grand Maestre, Orden de Vasco Nunes de Balboa, by Panamanian Govt.
Officier de la Legion d'Honneur, by the French Government
Orden Abdon Calderon, by the Government of Ecuador

Rear Admiral Beardall died on January 4, 1967 in Orlando, Florida. He is survived by his wife,

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