

REAR ADMIRAL ALBERT T. CHURCH
U. S. NAVY, DECEASED

Albert Thomas Church was born in Idaho City, Idaho, on April 6, 1882. He was appointed Naval Cadet (at large) and entered the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, from Idaho on September 7, 1901. His title changed to Midshipman on July 1, 1902, he was graduated in 1905, and after two years at sea, then required by law, was commissioned Ensign on January 31, 1907. He subsequently advanced in rank, attaining that of Captain in 1927, and Rear Admiral, to date from June 23, 1938. On January 1, 1943 he was transferred to the Retired List of the Navy, but continued active duty until December 1945.

His two years at sea as a Passed Midshipman included service on board the USS MISSOURI, USRS LANCASTER, USRS FRANKLIN, USS CHARLESTON, USRS HANCOCK, and USS CONNECTICUT. After he was commissioned Ensign in January 1907, he served for two and one-half years in the USS CLEVELAND, operating on Asiatic Station. In September 1909 he returned to Annapolis for instruction at the Marine Engineering School, and upon completion of the course in May 1911 reported for brief duty as Assistant to the Inspector of Ordnance, at the E. W. Bliss Company, Brooklyn, New York.

During the period August 1911 until August 1914, he had successive duty afloat in the USS CHESTER, USS HANNIBAL and USS LOUISIANA. He was Senior Engineer of the CHESTER, assigned to stand by at Malta and Tripoli (for refugees) during the Tripolitan conflict, and in 1912 participated in the ice patrol established in the North Atlantic after the disaster of the SS TITANIC. He served as Executive Officer of the HANNIBAL surveying the coast of Nicaragua and the eastern entrance to the Panama Canal; and was on board the LOUISIANA at Vera Cruz, Mexico, in 1914.

He next had a tour of shore duty from August 1914 to June 1917 in the Bureau of Steam Engineering, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. Detached during the early months of World War I, he joined the USS MELVILLE, and for the remainder of the war period served as Repair Officer for United States destroyers operating from British bases, and on the staff of Admiral William S. Sims, Commander, U. S. Destroyer Flotillas Operating in European Waters. He received a Special Letter of Commendation as follows: "He performed meritorious service as Flotilla Repair Officer of the Destroyer Force based at Queenstown, where his zeal and activity and resourcefulness made it possible for the destroyers to maintain the patrol with remarkably brief and infrequent intervals for overhaul."

Upon his return to the United States in January 1919, he served briefly in the Bureau of Steam Engineering, Navy Department, and in March of that year reported as Engineer Officer of the Navy Yard, Puget Sound, Washington. After detachment in February 1922 he served at sea for fifteen months as Engineer Officer on the Staff of Commander, Destroyer Squadrons Pacific Fleet. Returning

to the Bureau of Steam Engineering in August 1923, he completed a two-year tour of duty, after which he joined the staff of the Commander in Chief, Battle Fleet, Admiral Charles F. Hughes, USN, to serve as Fleet Engineer. When Admiral Hughes became Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet, in September 1926, he continued duty until September 1927 as Aide on his Staff.

Appointed Head of the Postgraduate School at Annapolis, Maryland, he served in that capacity until June 1931 when he reported to the Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Washington. There he served as Manager of the Yard until June 1936. Ordered next to the Third Naval District (with Headquarters in New York, N. Y.), he served as Naval Inspector of Machinery, with additional duty as Inspector of Navigational Material, for United Dry Docks, Inc., Mariners Harbor, Staten Island, N. Y., and the Federal Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, Kearny, New Jersey.

He reported to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Navy Department, in December 1937, and for almost two years thereafter served in the Shore Establishments Division. During that period he was promoted to Flag rank. In October 1939 he became Director of the Naval Engineering Experiment Division, Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, and continued duty in that assignment (after his retirement) until September 1944. He was then attached to the Naval Academy until relieved of all active duty in December 1945. He was awarded the Legion of Merit "For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services to the Government of the United States as Director of the U. S. Naval Engineering Experiment Station from October 19, 1939 to September 19, 1944..." The citation continues:

"Entering upon this important duty at a time of urgent need for tremendously increased facilities vital to the success of the shipbuilding program, Rear Admiral Church achieved the expansion project without interruption of work at hand and, in addition, provided capacity for greater increase. A thorough and vigorous administrator, extraordinarily skillful in directing the research development and testing activities of the Engineering Experiment Station, during a critical period, (he) has contributed distinctively to the expeditious expansion and the successful operation and maintenance of the largest Navy in the World."

In addition to the Legion of Merit for World War II and his World War I Commendation, Rear Admiral Church had the Mexican Service Medal; Victory Medal, Mobile Base Clasp (World War I); American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal.

Rear Admiral Church died at the Naval Hospital, Annapolis, Maryland, on November 14, 1954.