

VICE ADMIRAL HARLEY HANNIBAL CHRISTY  
UNITED STATES NAVY, DECEASED

Harley Hannibal Christy was born on September 18, 1870, in Circleville, Ohio, and died at the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland, on June 4, 1950. He was appointed in 1887 to the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, from the Eighth Congressional District of his native state, by the Honorable R. P. Kennedy. He completed the four year course and served the two years at sea, then required by law, before he was commissioned Ensign on July 1, 1893. He advanced periodically in grade to that of Rear Admiral, to date from November 27, 1924, and on October 1, 1934, was transferred to the Retired List of the U.S. Navy. On January 1, 1950, he was advanced to the rank of Vice Admiral to date from August 17, 1947, on the basis of combat awards.

After graduation from the Naval Academy in 1891, he joined the USS LANCASTER, and in July 1893, transferred to the USS NEWARK. Detached from the latter in June 1896, he was assigned to the Proving Ground, Annapolis, Maryland. He remained there until January of the following year, when he reported aboard the training ship CONSTELLATION, for duty until July 1897.

He was serving in the USS DETROIT, when the United States entered the Spanish American War, February 15, 1898. In October of that year he was assigned to the USS AMPHITRITE, and continued duty in that vessel following the cessation of hostilities, August 14, 1898, until September 1901. He then returned to the Naval Academy to serve as an Instructor in the Department of Physics and Chemistry, after which he reported in May 1902 aboard the USS CHESAPEAKE.

Between September and December 1902 he commanded the USS ALVARADO and USS SANDOVAL, successively, and upon relief from the latter, proceeded to Asiatic Station, for duty in the USS SOLACE. He was detached from the SOLACE in August 1903, and then joined the USS ANNAPOLIS, also on Asiatic Station, as Executive and Navigating Officer. In May 1904, he transferred to the USS RAINBOW, serving in that vessel during the Philippine Campaign.

He again had duty in the Department of Physics and Chemistry at the Naval Academy, from July 1906 to June 1908, interspersed with temporary service in the USS FLORIDA, between May and August 1907. He was assigned to the USS NORTH CAROLINA, to serve first as Senior Engineer and later as Executive Officer, until September 1910, after which he again reported to the Naval Academy. While there he attended in the summer of 1912, the conference of officers at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Relieved of duty at the Naval Academy in September 1912, he joined the USS DELAWARE as Executive Officer, and in April 1921, assumed command of the USS SALEM. He was aboard the latter during the occupation of Vera Cruz, Mexico, in January 1915. He was assigned additional duty in command of the Receiving Ship at Boston, Massachusetts, the USS BROOKLYN, and USS CHESTER. He was relieved of command of the CHESTER, but continued his other duties until June of that year, when he joined the USS KEARSARGE as Commanding Officer. He commanded the REINA MERCEDES, station ship at the Naval Academy from September 1915 until July 1917, and subsequently commanded the USS MINNEAPOLIS. He was so serving when the United States entered World War I, on April 6, 1917.

He assumed command of the USS SAN DIEGO in September 1918, and was commanding that cruiser when she struck what was believed to be a floating German mine and sunk off Fire Island, New York, July 19, 1918.

Following that disaster, he transferred in the same capacity, to the USS WYOMING, which operated with the British Grand Fleet, until the cessation of hostilities in November 1918. For services during World War I, he received a Letter of Commendation from the War Department, and the Distinguished Service Medal by the Navy. The citation for the latter follows:

"For distinguished service in the line of his profession in command of the USS SAN DIEGO, 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. Particularly for exceptionally meritorious conduct at the time the USS SAN DIEGO was struck by a mine and sank. Later, for services in command of the USS WYOMING, in the Atlantic Fleet."

Relieved of command of the WYOMING in September 1919, he served as Commandant of the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, until June 1923, after which he commanded the USS CALIFORNIA until June 1924. Completing the senior course at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, in May 1925, he reported in September of that year, after four months' leave, as Commander Control Force, U. S. Fleet, USS CAMDEN flagship, with additional duty in command of Submarine Divisions, Control Force. In August 1927 he was relieved of those duties, and subsequently became Commandant, Fifteenth Naval District, with additional duty as Commandant of the Naval Operating Base, Canal Zone.

He served as such until April 1929, and the following month reported as Commander Battleship Division THREE, Battle Fleet. A year later, May 1930, he transferred, in a like capacity, to Battleship Division FOUR, Battle Fleet. In November 1930 he assumed duty as Commander of the newly formed Training Squadron, created under the operating plan

for the Fleet, to operate along the Atlantic Seaboard, with the USS WYOMING as flagship. Detached for this command in the spring of 1931 he served on the staff of the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, before he reported in November 1931 for duty as Commandant Eighth Naval District, and Commander Naval Operating Base, New Orleans, Louisiana. In July 1932 he was given additional duty as Commander of the Naval Air Station at New Orleans.

The same month (July 1932) he reported for duty in connection with the General Board, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., and in December 1933, became President of the Naval Examining Board, and President of the Naval Retiring Board, Navy Department. He was relieved of those duties on August 1, 1934, pending his transfer to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy, on October 1, 1934, having attained the statutory retirement age of sixty-four years.

In addition to the Distinguished Service Medal, Vice Admiral Christy had the Spanish Campaign Medal; the Sampson Medal (USS DETROIT); the Philippine Campaign Medal (USS RAINBOW); the Mexican Service Medal (USS SALEM); and the World War I Victory Medal. He was honored by the Government of Portugal with the decoration Grand Official of the Order of Avis, and was also presented the Abdon Calderon, First Class and Diploma, by the Government of Ecuador.

He is buried at the family plot on the U. S. Naval Academy Grounds, Annapolis, Maryland.

23 January 1951