

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

REAR ADMIRAL HAROLD J. COKELY, MEDICAL CORPS, U. S. NAVY, RETIRED

Harold Jay Cokely was born in Pickering, Missouri, on February 9, 1906, son of the late Reverend John Jay Cokely and Mrs. Gertrude Klepper Cokely, also deceased. He was graduated from the University of Missouri at Columbia, Missouri, with the degree of Bachelor of Science in Medicine in 1929 and in 1931 received the degree of Doctor of Medicine from Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Commissioned Lieutenant (jg) in the Medical Corps of the U. S. Navy on June 8, 1931, he subsequently advanced to the rank of Captain, to date from March 25, 1945. His selection for the rank of Rear Admiral was approved by the President on August 2, 1960, his date of rank July 1, 1960.

Reporting on June 29, 1931, he served first at the Naval Hospital, Portsmouth, Virginia, where he completed his period of internship in February 1933. In April of that year he reported to the Naval Hospital, Canacao, Philippine Islands, and after four months' duty there joined the USS GUAM in which he had duty afloat until May 1935. From August of that year until August 1937 he served at the Naval Hospital, San Diego, California, and for a year thereafter at the Naval Air Station, also at San Diego. During that period he had temporary additional duty in connection with maneuvers of the Fleet Marine Force in March 1938.

On August 13, 1938 he joined the USS RANGER, an aircraft carrier of the Battle Force, and from November, that year, until July 10, 1940, was assigned to Destroyer Division 11, Battle Force, attached successively to the USS HENLEY and USS McCALL, flagships. On July 29, 1940, he began instruction in Urology at the Naval Hospital, Washington, D. C., and continued the course at the James Buchanan Brady Foundation, New York Hospital, New York City, during the period June 1941 until June 1942.

From July to September 1942 he served as Ward Medical Officer at the Naval Hospital, Quantico, Virginia, and during the next ten months was the Urologist at the Naval Hospital, Bethesda, Maryland. At sea, he took part in the Gilbert Islands operation, the occupation of Kwajalein and Majuro Atolls, and the capture and occupation of Saipan, as Chief of Urology aboard the USS RELIEF, hospital ship. He received a Letter of Commendation, with Ribbon, from the Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet, as follows:

"For excellent service in the line of his profession while serving as Medical Officer in Charge of the Urology Department of the USS RELIEF from June 14, to August 1, 1944. His surgical skill and devotion to duty contributed materially to the recovery of large numbers of wounded in the Marianas operation. He also was in charge of a large number of wounded Japanese prisoners, in which capacity his skill, tact and foresight were extremely valuable..."

In October 1944 he reported as Chief of Urology at the Naval Hospital, Jacksonville, Florida, and four months later returned to the Naval Hospital, Bethesda, for duty as Chief of Urology Service. He remained there until March 1951, and during that six-year period had additional duty at the Naval Dispensary, Washington, D. C. He served next as Chief of Urology at the Naval Hospital, St. Albans, Long Island, New York, from April 1951 until June 1953, and for eighteen months following served as Executive Officer of the Naval Hospital, Guam, Marianas Islands.

In January 1956 he returned to the Naval Hospital, St. Albans, to serve for a year as Executive Officer, and when detached was ordered to Key West, Florida, for duty in command of the Naval Hospital there. He served as Commanding Officer of the Naval Hospital, St. Albans, from November 1959 until April 1961, when he assumed command of the Naval Hospital, San Diego, California, with additional duty as Eleventh Naval District Medical Officer. In December 1964 he became Commanding Officer of the Naval Hospital, Oakland, California, with additional duty as District Medical Officer of the Twelfth Naval District and Director and Advisor on Medical Matters to the Commander Western Sea Frontier. He served as such until relieved of active duty pending his retirement, effective October 21, 1967.

In addition to the Commendation Ribbon, Rear Admiral Cokely has the American Defense Service Medal; the American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with stars; the World War II Victory Medal; and the National Defense Service Medal with bronze star.

Dr. Cokely is a Diplomate of the American Board of Urology, a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, and a member of the American Urological Association.