

REAR ADMIRAL CYRUS WILLARD COLE, UNITED STATES NAVY (RETIRED)

Rear Admiral Cole was born in Marshall, Michigan, June 21, 1876 the son of Willard Churchill Cole and Mary Underhill Cole. He was appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy from Ohio in 1895. He served in the U.S.S. INDIANA during the Spanish-American War while a Naval Cadet, and participated in the Battle of Santiago. Returning to the Academy at the end of the war, he was graduated on January 28, 1899, and two years later was commissioned Ensign. He was promoted progressively, attaining the rank of Rear Admiral on July 1, 1932. On July 1, 1940 he was placed on the Retired List of the Navy, and relieved of all active duty.

Following graduation from the Naval Academy in January, 1899, Rear Admiral Cole proceeded to the Philippines where he served, during the Philippine Insurrection, aboard the U.S.S. BALTIMORE; the ex-Spanish gunboat PARAGUA; the U.S.S. BROOKLYN; and the U.S.S. PRINCETON. In 1908 he made the cruise around the world with sixteen battleships, in the U.S.S. OHIO.

In 1912 he was in command of the Torpedo Flotilla, Asiatic Fleet, and after duty at the Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, Illinois, served as executive officer of the U.S.S. RHODE ISLAND. During the World War he served in command of the U.S.S. PASTORES, and later the U.S.S. PRESIDENT GRANT, both vessels employed as troop transports engaged in transporting and escorting troops and supplies through the submarine zone to European ports. For that service he was awarded the Navy Cross and a special Letter of Commendation by the War Department.

In 1919, Rear Admiral Cole then in the grade of Captain, served as Aide to the Commander of the Newport News Division, Cruiser and Transport Force, and as Administrator of Harbor Floating Equipment, Hampton Road, Virginia. Later he served as Commander of that division. For two years he was Recruiting Inspector of the Western Division, with headquarters at San Francisco, and from 1921 until 1923 was in command successively of the Receiving Ship, SAN FRANCISCO, the hospital ship U.S.S. MERCY, and the hospital ship U.S.S. RELIEF.

After attending the Naval War College he served as Assistant Commandant of the 12th Naval District, headquarters, San Francisco, during 1924 and in 1925 was ordered to command the light cruiser U.S.S. OMAHA. In 1927 he was given command of the Naval Training Station, San Diego, California and in 1930 was transferred to command the battleship, U.S.S. WEST VIRGINIA. Both the cruiser OMAHA and the battleship WEST VIRGINIA won Battle Efficiency Pennants while in command of Rear Admiral Cole, and he received two special letters of commendation from the President.

Rear Admiral Cole served as Director of Fleet Training, Navy Department, Washington, D.C., from February 4, 1932 until May 28, 1934, when he assumed duty as Commander, Submarine Force, United States Fleet. He served as Commandant, Navy Yard, Portsmouth, New Hampshire from June 15, 1936 until June 28, 1940.

Rear Admiral Cole was in charge of the rescue and salvage operations of the U.S.S. SQUALUS in 1939 and was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal with the following citation:

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL:

"For exceptionally meritorious service in a duty of great responsibility as Officer in Charge of the rescue and salvage operations of the U.S.S. SQUALUS from 23 May 1939 to 15 September 1939, By his efficient administration, exceptional ability in planning the operations and his untiring energy in the rescue of the survivors and the salvage of the stricken submarine, he displayed leadership and perseverance of the highest order."

He also received the following Letter of Commendation from President Franklin D. Roosevelt:

"Upon the occasion of the completion of the salvage operations of the U.S.S. SQUALUS, the Commander in Chief expresses his appreciation of the services rendered by you as Commander of the SQUALUS Salvage Unit in the rescue of the survivors and the salvage of the stricken submarine.

"The successful termination of your task, a labor involving continuous conflict with contrary weather and apparently insurmountable difficulties, indicates leadership, exact planning and perseverance of the highest order.

"I Commend you for the manner in which you have brought this extremely difficult operation to its successful completion. The Secretary of the Navy is directed to have a copy of this letter made a part of your official record,

"Please take appropriate action toward official recognition of the accomplishments of the officers and men of the Salvage Unit."

Rear Admiral Cole was transferred to the Retired List of the U.S. Navy on July 1, 1940.

In addition to the Navy Cross (World War I) and various letters of commendation, Rear Admiral Cole has the Sampson Medal, Spanish American War; the West Indian Campaign Medal; the Philippine Campaign Medal; and the Victory Medal, Transport Clasp. He is also entitled to the American Defense Service Medal.

4 December 1947.