

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN HERBERT C. COCKE, U. S. NAVY, DECEASED

Herbert Claiborne Cocke was born in Prince George County, Virginia, on January 16, 1878. He attended McCabe's School in Petersburg, Virginia, prior to his appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, from the Fourth District of Virginia in 1896. He was graduated as a Naval Cadet after completing the four year course in 1900, and following two years at sea, then required by law before commissioning, was commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Navy on July 1, 1902. He was promoted as follows: Lieutenant (jg) and Lieutenant, to rank from July 1, 1905; Lieutenant Commander, from July 1, 1912; Commander (temporary), October 15, 1917 and (permanent) July 1, 1918; Captain (temporary) June 30, 1919 and (permanent) October 15, 1922.

Upon graduation from the Naval Academy on June 8, 1900, he was assigned to the USS ALBANY, in which he was serving during the Philippine Insurrection, and later while that cruiser operated in European waters. Detached in August 1902, he joined the USS CHICAGO and served on board until she was de-commissioned late in 1903. In December of that year he reported to the USS ABARENDIA in which he served briefly as Executive Officer. In March 1904 he was transferred to the USS CLEVELAND as Watch and Division Officer, remaining on board in that capacity until September 1906.

From October 1906 until June 1909 he served as an instructor in navigation at the Naval Academy, after which he again went to sea as Assistant to the Engineer Officer of the USS GEORGIA. He became her Engineer Officer in November 1909, and when detached in July 1910, he reported to the USS KANSAS for duty as Senior Engineer Officer. He remained aboard that battleship until October 1912, and for two years thereafter had duty at the Navy Yard, New York. In December 1914 he assumed command of the survey ship LEONIDAS, and after one year and one-half, he was ordered to the USS DELAWARE of the Atlantic Fleet, as Navigator.

He was serving in the DELAWARE at the outbreak of World War I, and continued duty as Navigator of that battleship during the period December 1917 to July 1918 when she operated with the SIXTH Battle Squadron of the British Grand Fleet. He was then transferred to duty as Executive Officer of the USS TEXAS, which also operated with the British Grand Fleet, and served as such until after the Armistice was signed in November 1919.

Returning to the United States, he had duty from December 1918 until April 1921 as Naval Inspector of Ordnance in Charge of the Naval Ammunition Depot, Iona Island, New York. In July 1921 he assumed command of the USS BRIDGEPORT, tender for Destroyer Squadrons, Atlantic Fleet. After two years in that command he reported to the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, where he was a student during the 1923-1924 year. Detached in May 1924, he reported to the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., and in July the same year became Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Station, Naval Operating Base, Hampton Roads (Norfolk), Virginia. He remained in command of that station until October 11, 1926.

He served at Headquarters, Third Naval District, New York, New York, for for three months, then from January 20, 1927, until February 20, 1928, he was at sea serving as Commanding Officer of the USS MELVILLE, another destroyer

tender (for Destroyer Squadron 11, Battle Fleet). During the next year he was granted sick leave four times (three months each period), and in February 1929 he returned to the Navy Department, Washington, D. C., for duty. There he served until May 29, 1931 in the Office of Naval Intelligence, Naval Operations.

Captain Cocke commanded the USS NEW MEXICO during her period of modernization and following her return to Battleship Division 2, Battle Force, during the period June 1931 until June 1933, then reported as Commanding Officer of the Naval Training Station, Newport, Rhode Island. He remained in command there until April 30, 1935, when he was ordered home to await orders. He was relieved of all active duty and transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy on June 30, 1935. He died at his home in Petersburg, Virginia, on May 1, 1938.

Captain Cocke had the Spanish Campaign Medal; Philippine Campaign Medal and Victory Medal with Grand Fleet Clasp (World War I) for service in the USS DEL-AWARE and USS TEXAS.

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Biographies Branch
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