

From:
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REAR ADMIRAL RALPH WALDO DEMPWOLF, USCG (Ret)

Rear Admiral Ralph Waldo Dempwolf, United States Coast Guard, was born on 14 August 1881, in York, Pa. He graduated from York High School, York, Pa., in 1897, and from the Pennsylvania State Nautical School in 1899. In 1902 he began his training as cadet on board the U. S. Practice Ship CHASE, which served as the summer quarters of the Coast Guard cadets at that time, and was stationed in Baltimore, Md. The Coast Guard was then known as the Revenue Cutter Service.

Graduated and commissioned an Ensign on 25 October 1905, RADM Dempwolf was subsequently promoted as follows: Lieutenant (jg); 1 October 1906; Lieutenant, 17 December 1914; Lieutenant Commander, 1 July 1918; Commander, 1 July 1926; Captain, 1 October 1934; Rear Admiral (Ret), 14 August 1945.

Rear Admiral Dempwolf has a long and distinguished career in the Service. Following his original commissioning, he was stationed on cutters serving the Great Lakes, his first assignment being on temporary duty aboard the ONANDAGA on 1 June 1905, and then on the DALLAS at Ogdensburg, N. Y., 1 July 1906. From January 1907 until November 1908 he served on the ALGONQUIN which was stationed in Puerto Rico. While on that vessel he won recognition and appreciation for performance of duty when the ALGONQUIN, under his temporary command, rendered assistance to the Steamer S. V. LUCKENBACH, on fire in the harbor of San Juan, P. R. on 29 October 1908.

Leaving this station, he proceeded to a new assignment aboard the APACHE at Baltimore, Md., in December 1908, and in February 1909, reported to the Commanding Officer, U. S. Practice Cutter TASCAS for duty on that vessel and at the School of Instruction then conducted at Arundel Cove, Md. In 1912, while at the School of Instruction, which two years prior had moved to Fort Trumbull, Conn., Rear Admiral Dempwolf received orders transferring him to the Cutter BEAR on which he served in the Pacific Ocean and the Bering Sea, and at which time he was also U. S. Commissioner for the Alaska District. It was during this period that the famous BEAR aided in the rescue of Vladimir Stefanson's icebound crew off the ill-fated KARLUK 90 miles north of Wrangel Island in the Arctic Ocean. After two years of duty in the Alaskan area, he returned to the U. S. where he was stationed ~~successively~~ on the Cutter PAMLICO at Newburn, N. C., in November 1914, and again at South Baltimore, Md. for duty at the Depot in ~~August 1919.~~

August 1918, the United States already engaged in World War I, found RADM Dempwolf serving with U. S. Naval forces in European waters in command of the Naval Gunboat U.S.S. SURVEYOR. He was in command of that vessel at Gibraltar when the Armistice was signed 11 November 1918. He then returned to the United States to assume duties aboard the U.S.S. GRESHAM at Norfolk, in February 1919, until his return to Europe as Executive Officer of the Naval Transport Ship U.S.S. SUSQUEHANNA in July 1919. At the close of the war, and after decommissioning of the vessel, he returned to the GRESHAM, and by December 1919

left for the Coast Guard Academy, New London, Conn., to assume command of the BOTHWELL. On 1 April 1920 he became Superintendent and Commander of the Pennsylvania Nautical Schoolship ANNAPOLIS, a training ship which trained young officers for the rapidly expanding Merchant Marine. Detached February 1923, he reported to Honolulu, T. H. as Executive Officer of MOJAVE, of which he later became commanding officer, serving in the Pacific and in the Bering Sea Patrol as a relief to the BEAR after she was disabled. From 1925 to 1928, he served as commanding officer of the CUMMINGS, and Commander, Division 4, of the Destroyer Force and Commander, New London Patrol Area. When the CHELAN was commissioned in September 1948 he assumed command and served as commander of the Bering Sea Patrol Force in 1930 and stayed in the Northwestern Division until 1931.

From 1932 to 1933, he served as Chief of Staff, Destroyer Force, New London, and in 1934, detached as Aide to the Captain of the Port, New York, he assumed duties as Chief of Staff in Seattle. While there, he commanded the Bering Sea Patrol for 1936, and among his activities he inspected ships and ports, and presided as President of the Seattle Federal Business Association. Upon detachment from Seattle, he received commendation from the Secretary of the Treasury for serving as coordinator, Treasury Law Enforcement Agencies while in Seattle. Transferred to the New York Division in 1938, he served as commander of the New York District and assumed duties as Captain of the Port, and at the same time served as member of the Marine Investigation Board. In 1942 he became District Coast Guard Officer of the Cleveland, 9th Coast Guard District, conducting ice-breaking activities on the Great Lakes, as one of his duties. There he served until his retirement in August 1945 with the rank of Rear Admiral.

In 1907, RADM Dempwolf married Maude Elizabeth McDonald of York, Pa., who was his constant companion when ashore until her death in Cleveland in December 1942. He remarried on 10 January 1945, to Mabelle Clapp Hinckley. Rear Admiral Dempwolf has no children. He and his wife reside at, 855 Palmer Avenue, Winter Park, Florida.

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