

From: Public Relations Division
U. S. Coast Guard
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COMMODORE GORDON T. FINLAY, USCG

Commodore Gordon Thomas Finlay, United States Coast Guard, was born in Battle Creek, Mich., on September 12, 1886, the son of James and Agnes Gallie Finlay. He was graduated from Battle Creek High School in the class of 1906. Appointed a cadet in the U. S. Coast Guard in November, of the same year, he received a commission as an ensign in May, 1909.

His first assignment was to the cutter YAMACRAW, Savannah, Ga. Detached from this ship in July, 1911, he next served on the cutters FORWARD and MIAMI, based at Key West, Fla. From April to December, 1913, he was assigned to the MORRILL, Baltimore, Md., and then served on the ANDROSCOGGIN until April of 1916, when he reported for duty to the Superintendent of Anchorages, Chicago, Ill. His next assignment was to the ALGONQUIN, Baltimore, Md. Leaving this ship in March, 1917, he reported for duty on the ACUSHNET at Woods Hole, Mass.

In June, 1917, he was assigned for duty to the Third Naval District, New York, N. Y., and during the next six months served for short periods at Section Base Eight, Tompkinsville, N. Y., and the Navy Yard, Brooklyn, N. Y., and on the ships HALCYON and TUSCARORA. In December, 1917, he was attached to the GALATEA at Philadelphia, Pa., and sailed that month for overseas duty. He left the GALATEA while this ship was stationed in the Azores for temporary duty on the USS MARIETTA. Detached from the MARIETTA in France he was assigned to the USS NOMA as executive officer, and assumed command of this ship in October, 1918. He returned to New York in July, 1919, on the NOMA, after a tour of duty at Plymouth, England, and Constantinople, Turkey.

In September, 1919, he was assigned to duty at Mobile, Ala., as Division Supervisor of Communications, in charge of the South Atlantic and Gulf Division. In November of 1921 he reported at New Orleans, La., to put the CAHOKIA in commission and proceeded with this ship to her station at Eureka, Calif. From December, 1923, to September, 1924, he served on the UNALGA, Juneau, Alaska, as executive officer, and then was assigned to duty as Coast Guard Liaison officer at the Naval Training Station, Hampton Roads, Va. Terminating this duty in September, 1925, he was placed in charge of the Receiving Unit at the Coast Guard Academy, New London, Conn. In May, 1928, he became commanding officer of the destroyer SHAW, and in September of the same year took over the additional duties of commanding Division One of the Destroyer Force.

Detached from the SHAW in August, 1930, he served a short period of temporary duty on the staff of the Commander, Destroyer Force, and then was assigned to the Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Pa., for duty as Coast Guard Representative to supervise repairing, altering, and equipping five destroyers turned over to the Coast Guard by the Navy.

Assigned to the Coast Guard Academy, New London, Conn., as executive officer in May, 1931, he also took over the additional duties of commanding the Receiving Unit, and serving as registrar of the Coast Guard Institute. From June, 1934, to October, 1937, he was commanding officer of the SHOSHONE and was appointed U. S. Commissioner, Third Judicial Division, Territory of Alaska, in connection with patrols in Alaskan waters.

His next assignment was that of commanding officer, Base Eleven, Oakland, Calif. During this assignment he also served as Purchasing Officer for the Pacific Coast. In May, 1939, he became the commander of the Hawaiian Section, Honolulu, T. H., and in July, 1939, assumed command of the Honolulu, District. In June, 1940, his duties were expanded to include those of Captain of the Port of Honolulu. Leaving this assignment in August, 1940, he became the commander of the Chicago, Ill., district, with additional duties as Captain of the Port of Chicago.

In May, 1941, he returned to his former assignment as commander of the Honolulu District, with designation as District Coordinator of Treasury Department law enforcement activities of the Territory of Hawaii. While on duty in Hawaii, his assignment was changed to that of District Coast Guard Officer of the 14th Naval District. In October, 1942, he was transferred to Norfolk, Va., to become District Coast Guard Officer, of the 5th Naval District.

After receiving a commission as an ensign, he was promoted in rank as follows: lieutenant (jg), July 28, 1910; lieutenant, February 2, 1921; lieutenant commander, January 12, 1923; commander, July 1, 1929; captain, September 4, 1940; commodore, June 1, 1943. For service during the first World War, he received the Victory Medal.

Commodore Finlay married Sallie Owens Carmichael of Savannah, Ga., in December, 1912. They have two daughters: Lilah Finlay Sinclair (Mrs. W. B. Sinclair), and Sarah Finlay Baldwin (Mrs. S. C. Baldwin). The Finlays reside at 1309 Westover Avenue, Norfolk, Va.

17 October, 1944