

CAPTAIN STAFFORD H. R. DOYLE, U. S. NAVY, DECEASED

Stafford Henry Rahall Doyle was born in Orangeburg, South Carolina, on May 16, 1876, and was appointed to the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, from the Seventh District of South Carolina in 1896. Graduated with the Class of 1900, he served the two years at sea, then required by law before commissioning, as a Naval Cadet, and was commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Navy on July 1, 1902. Promoted to Lieutenant (junior grade) in 1906, he attained the rank of Commander, to date from May 23, 1917. During World War I he received temporary promotion to Captain and was commissioned in that rank, to date from December 31, 1921.

Upon graduating from the Naval Academy on June 8, 1900, he was assigned to the USS KENTUCKY, in which he served as a Naval Cadet and in ranks of Ensign and Lieutenant (both grades), and while on board won his sharpshooter's medal. In July 1907 he reported to the New York Navy Yard, Brooklyn, New York, where he served in the Department of Steam Engineering until March 1908. He then assisted in fitting out the USS BIRMINGHAM, and served as her Engineer Officer from her commissioning, April 1, 1908, until September 1909.

Returning to Annapolis, he had instruction in Mechanical Engineering at the Naval Postgraduate School until May 1911, then served as Assistant to the Inspector of Engineering Material for the Central Pennsylvania and Western New York District. In August of the same year he assumed command of the USS PAULDING, and while in that command received his promotion to Lieutenant Commander. He returned to the Navy Yard, New York, on June 3, 1914, and while on duty there had additional temporary duty during the trials of the USS NEW YORK and in connection with fitting out the USS ARIZONA.

He joined the USS ARIZONA at her commissioning, October 17, 1916, as Engineer Officer, and was serving in that capacity when the United States entered World War I on April 6, 1917. After his promotion to Commander in June 1917, he was detached from the ARIZONA to fit out the ship FRIEDRICH DER GROSSE, and for duty in command when she was commissioned. Commissioned on July 25, 1917, the ship was renamed USS HURON on September 5 of that year, and he continued duty as her Commanding Officer until August 1918. Under his command, the HURON was engaged in transporting troops to Europe from the United States, and for meritorious service, he was awarded a Special Letter of Commendation by the War Department.

From September 20, 1918 until August 5, 1919, he commanded the USS GREAT NORTHERN, a transport which during this period established a trans-Atlantic round-trip record of twelve days, one hour and thirty-five minutes between New York and Brest, France. Captain Doyle was awarded the Navy Cross and cited: "For distinguished service in the line of his profession as Commanding Officer of the USS GREAT NORTHERN, engaged in the important, exacting and hazardous duty of transporting and escorting troops and supplies to European ports through waters infested with enemy submarines and mines."

On November 13, 1919, he assumed command of the Naval Air Station, Naval Operating Base, Hampton Roads (Norfolk) Virginia. In March 1922 he was assigned additional duty in connection with fitting out the USS LANGLEY, an experimental aircraft carrier converted from the old collier JUPITER. The first

officer of the U. S. Navy to command a carrier, he assumed command of the USS LANGLEY at her commissioning on June 16, 1922. In October of that year the first landing of a plane was made on the deck of the Langley by Lieutenant Godfrey Chevalier, USN, flying Aeromarine #606. As a result of the numerous experiments conducted on board this carrier during his two years in command, Captain Doyle developed a gear to improve the system of landing planes aboard ship. Subsequently, on several occasions he urges the great value of the aircraft carrier as "the type of ship most essential to any fleet to insure control of the air," and advocated the rapid construction of more of them.

He was a student at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, from August 1924 until June 1925, when he reported for three months' aviation training at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, where he was designated a naval aviation observer. From September 1925 until October 1927 he served as Commander Naval Air Station, San Diego, California, after which he commanded the USS TRENTON, Flagship of Light Cruiser Divisions and Division 2, Scouting Fleet.

When detached from command of the TRENTON in July 1929, he became Commandant of the Seventh Naval District, with additional duty as Commander Naval Operating Base, Key West, Florida. He served in that assignment until June 1930, when he reported as Captain of the Yard at the Navy Yard, New York. In May 1934 he was transferred to duty as Chief of Staff to the Commandant, Third Naval District, headquarters in New York City, where he served until his retirement on July 1, 1935, for physical disability.

After retirement he lived with his wife in Gallatin, Tennessee, where he died on February 8, 1942. In addition to Mrs. Doyle, the former Lucy Haynie of Gallatin, he was survived by their two children, William David Doyle and Lucy Allen Doyle.

In addition to the Navy Cross and Letter of Commendation by the Army for World War I service, Captain Doyle had the Philippine Campaign Medal (USS KENTUCKY); Cuban Pacification Medal (USS KENTUCKY); Mexican Service Medal (USS PAULDING); and the Victory Medal, Transport Clasp (USS HURON and USS GREAT NORTHERN).

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