

Contributed by Wolfgang Hechler



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REAR ADMIRAL EDWIN A. ANDERSON
U. S. NAVY, DECEASED

Edwin Alexander Anderson was born in Wilmington, North Carolina, on July 16, 1860 and was appointed to the Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, from the Third District of North Carolina, in June 1878. Graduated on June 9, 1882, he served the two years at sea, then required by law, and in July 1884 was commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Navy. Through subsequent promotions, he attained the rank of Rear Admiral in August 1917, during World War I, and from June 1922 until August 1923 served in the temporary rank of Admiral as Commander in Chief, Asiatic Fleet. He was retired in his permanent rank of Rear Admiral on March 23, 1924, and died on September 23, 1933.

After graduation from the Naval Academy, he went to sea, as a Passed Midshipman in the USS KEARSARGE, and a year later transferred to the USS ALLIANCE. He began his commissioned service aboard the USS PASSAIC, and during the next four years also had duty in the USS PENSACOLA, USS KEARSARGE, and USS QUINNEBAUG. He was assigned to the Coast Survey Steamer ENDEAVOR during the period April 1888 to September 1890, after which he had successive service aboard the USS ALERT and USS ALBATROSS.

Shore duty at the Branch Hydrographic Office, New Orleans, Louisiana, from January 1894 to May 1895 was followed by a six months' assignment in the USS MICHIGAN. From November 1895 to March 1896 he was attached to the Navy Hydrographic Office, and after a month's instruction in Ordnance at the Navy Yard, Washington, D. C., he again had sea duty, first in the USS COLUMBIA, and from February 1897 to May 1898 in the USS MARBLEHEAD, being a Lieutenant aboard the latter vessel during the first part of the Spanish-American War.

On May 11, 1898 he commanded the boats from the MARBLEHEAD which in cooperation with boats from the NASHVILLE, in the face of heavy fire at point blank range from the enemy on shore, cut nearly 200 feet of submarine cable with hacksaws, off Crenfuegos, Cuba. Lieutenant Winslow, in command of the expedition, reported "Lieutenant E. A. Anderson commanded the sailing launch of the MARBLEHEAD and did his work with coolness, bravery and intelligence, continuing the work regardless of the hot fire to which he was exposed, until ordered by me to desist." He was advanced five numbers in grade for extraordinary heroism.

On November 1, 1898 he assumed command of the USS SANDOVAL, and had additional duty as Commanding Officer of the ALVARADO during the period February 1899 until his detachment in May 1899. He then reported to the Naval Torpedo Station, Newport, Rhode Island, where he remained on duty until early 1901. Temporary duty aboard the USS SOLACE preceded his command of the USS NANSHAN from May 1901 until January 1902.

Ordered next to Asiatic Station, he reported to the Naval Station, Cavite, Philippine Islands, in February 1902, and after a month aboard the USS MANILA, assumed command of the USS GENERAL ALAVA. In November 1903 he was transferred to command of the DON JUAN DE AUSTRIA and additionally commanded the ISLA DE CUBA until detached for duty from February 1904 to January 1905, at the Naval Gun Factory, Navy Yard, Washington, D. C.

He served as Navigator of the USS PENNSYLVANIA from February 1905 to May 1906, after which he was Commander, Second Torpedo Flotilla, with his pennant in the USS HOPKINS, from June 1906 until December 1907. For five months he was Officer in Charge, Naval Recruiting Station, Cincinnati, Ohio, and from May 1908 to September 1910 was Ordnance Officer of the Navy Yard, Mare Island, California. He then took command of the USS YORKTOWN and sailed for Panama.

Commissioned Captain in June 1911, he commanded the USS IOWA from August of that year to November 1913. From December 1913 until November 1915 he was Commanding Officer of the USS NEW HAMPSHIRE being in command of that battleship during the Mexican War. For gallantry in action during landing operations at Vera Cruz, Mexico, in April 1914, he was awarded the Medal of Honor, and cited as follows:

"For extraordinary heroism in battle, engagement of Vera Cruz, 22 April 1914, in command of the Second Seaman Regiment. Marching his regiment across the open space in front of the Naval Academy and other buildings, Captain Anderson unexpectedly met a heavy fire from riflemen, machine guns and 1-pounders, which caused part of his command to break and fall back, many casualties occurring amongst them at the time. His indifference to the heavy fire, to which he himself was exposed at the head of his regiment, showed him to be fearless and courageous in battle."

Reporting to the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island in December 1915, he completed the advanced course there a year later, at which time he was ordered to duty as Supervisor, Naval Auxiliary Reserves, Norfolk, Virginia, and when the United States entered World War I in April 1917 he was given additional duty as Commander Squadron 3, Patrol Force. In July 1917 he was designated Commander Patrol Squadron ONE, Patrol Detachment, Atlantic Fleet, with the accompanying rank of Rear Admiral, the USS TALLAPOOSA, his flagship.

He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, with citation as follows: "For exceptionally meritorious service in a duty of great responsibility in organizing and in the administration and operation of the American patrol detachment, and in developing arrangements for the cooperation of air, surface and submarine craft. Also for his successful cooperation with the Cuban Government in making the available vessels of the Cuban Navy efficient and ready for service."

In August 1919 he assumed command of Division ONE, Cruiser Squadron ONE, Atlantic Fleet. He was detached to report on November 1, 1919 as Commandant, Navy Yard, Charleston, South Carolina, and served in that capacity until May 1922. On June 10, 1922 he was named Commander Naval Forces Operating in European Waters, with the accompanying rank of Vice Admiral, but that order was rescinded and on June 29, 1922 he became Commander in Chief, Asiatic Fleet, with the rank of Admiral. He hoisted his flag in the USS BLACK HAWK, and served in that command until August 30, 1923, when he returned to the United States.

Reporting to the Navy Department, Washington, D. C., he served in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations until his retirement became effective after forty years' service in the Navy, on March 23, 1924. He died at his home "Eshcal," Masonboro Sound, Wilmington, North Carolina, on September 23, 1933, survived by his wife, Mrs. Mertie Lorain Anderson, and a son, Lieutenant Commander Lorain Anderson, USN, Retired.

Admiral Anderson had, in addition to the Medal of Honor and Distinguished Service Medal, the Spanish Campaign Medal; Philippine Campaign Medal; Mexican Service Medal and the Victory Medal, Patrol Clasp.

The USS ANDERSON (DD 441), named in honor of Admiral Anderson, was sponsored by his widow at the launching on February 4, 1939, at the Federal Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, Kearny, New Jersey. Mrs. Anderson died on June 18, 1940, and is buried with Admiral Anderson in Arlington National Cemetery.