

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

COMMODORE CHARLES THEODORE DICKEMAN
(CIVIL ENGINEER CORPS), USN, RETIRED

Charles Theodore Dickeman was born in New York, New York, on August 11, 1894. He attended Morris High School in New York City, and in 1917 was graduated from Cooper Union Institute of Technology, also in New York, with the degree of Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering. In 1922 he was awarded the degree of Civil Engineer from the same institution.

On September 30, 1917, he enlisted in the U. S. Army as Sergeant, and during World War I served overseas with Company E, 302nd Engineers. He was wounded in the Oise-Aisne Offensive in September 1918, and received his honorable discharge from the Army on May 10, 1919. As a result of a competitive examination, he was commissioned Lieutenant (junior grade) in the Civil Engineer Corps of the U. S. Navy on September 14, 1921, and was promoted as follows: Lieutenant, September 19, 1922; Lieutenant Commander, May 10, 1934; Commander, January 1, 1942; Captain, June 20, 1942; and Commodore, July 13, 1945. He was transferred to the Retired List in the rank of Commodore on October 1, 1947.

On September 27, 1921, he reported for duty as Assistant Public Works Officer at the Naval Air Station, Lakehurst, New Jersey, and in July 1924, was transferred to similar duty at the Navy Yard, Pearl Harbor, T. H. Returning to the United States in November 1928, he was assigned duty in January 1929 at the Navy Yard, Puget Sound, Washington. He served as Public Works Officer at the U. S. Naval Station, Tutuila, Samoa, from November 1932 until July 1934, and after his return to the United States had similar duty at the Naval Operating Base, San Diego, and Marine Barracks, Quantico, Va.

On October 18, 1939, he was placed in charge of the construction of a battleship and double destroyer dry dock at the Navy Yard, Pearl Harbor, T. H. In November 1941 he was assigned duty as Naval Representative to the U. S. Military North African Mission, serving under Major General Russell Maxwell, U. S. Army, with headquarters in Cairo, Egypt. There he selected sites and supervised layouts and designs for various supporting installations in Palestine, Egypt, and Eritrea; inspected the industrial facilities of South Africa; and later investigated the requirements for harbor development at Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Upon his return to the United States in May 1942, he was assigned duty as Officer in Charge of the Naval Advance Base Depot, Gulfport, Mississippi, and from November 1942 until December 1943, had similar duty at the Naval Advance Base Depot, Davisville, Rhode Island, with additional duty as Officer in Charge of the Receiving Barracks at that base. He reported on December 31, 1943 for duty as Director of the Advance Base Department, Bureau of Yards and Docks, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., and for his services in that assignment was awarded the Legion of Merit with the following citation:

LEGION OF MERIT:

"For exceptionally meritorious conduct...as Director, Advance Base Department, Bureau of Yards and Docks, from January 1, 1944, to June 10, 1945. Demonstrating business judgment and civil engineering knowledge, (he) administered the planning, procurement, testing, shipping and development of materials and equipment necessary to equip the Navy's Construction Battalions and for the construction of the Navy shore installations at advance bases in the Pacific. By his analytical ability and thoroughness, Captain Dickeman contributed greatly to the successful direction of advance base matters in the Bureau, and to the sound administrative and supervisory control of the bases."

Promoted to the rank of Commodore in July 1945, he reported as Officer in Charge of the Fifth Naval Construction Brigade, Service Force, Pacific Fleet, with headquarters at Guam Island, Marianas. There he had additional duty as Civil Engineer Officer (redesignated in September 1945, Marianas Area Engineer) on the staff of the Island Commander, Marianas. In February 1946 he returned to the Navy Department for temporary duty in the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., and later served on a special board appointed to survey continental naval shore establishments.

On December 18, 1946 he was ordered to duty as Superintending Civil Engineer, Area V, with Headquarters in Chicago, Illinois, and had collateral duty as Superintending Civil Engineer, Area IV, New Orleans, Louisiana. On July 14, 1947, he was ordered relieved of all active duty pending his retirement on October 1, 1947.

In addition to the Legion of Merit, Commodore Dickeman has the Victory Medal and the Purple Heart Medal (for service in World War I with the Army), and for service in the Navy he is entitled to the American Defense Service Medal, Base Class; the European-African-Middle Eastern Area Campaign Medal; the American Area Campaign Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Area Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal.

Commodore Dickeman is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers. While an undergraduate at Cooper Union Institute of Technology, he was President of the Athletic Association; Secretary of the Student Council; Captain of the Baseball Team and Basketball Team for three years; and President of Sigma Tau Rho Fraternity.

NAVY Biographies Branch, OI-450