

Albertus Wright Catlin

Born

December 1, 1868, Gowanda, New York

Entered Service

July 1, 1892, Minnesota

1886 – 1892 (Navy) Academy and sea duty

1892 – 1919 (Marine Corps)

Vera Cruz, Mexican Campaign

Died

May 31, 1933, Culpeper, Culpeper County, Virginia



Early Career

Albertus Wright Catlin was born December 1, 1868, in Gowanda, New York. He was appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy in May 1886 from Minnesota and was the captain of the football team and played left halfback at Annapolis for three years. He graduated with the Class of 1890. To fulfill the required two years of sea duty, he served on board the USS Charleston as a Midshipman.

Catlin applied for the Marine Corps and was commissioned a second lieutenant on July 1, 1892. That September he reported for duty at the Marine Corps School of Application and graduated first in his class in April 1893. Then he was promoted to First Lieutenant and transferred to Marine Barracks, League Island, Philadelphia Navy Yard, Pennsylvania in December. In August 1895, he reported to USS Cincinnati.

Spanish-American War

He then transferred to the USS Maine and was in command of the Marine Corps Guard when it was destroyed by being blown up in Havana Harbor in February 1898. This was the catalyst that started the Spanish-American War. During that war, he served on board the auxiliary cruiser the "USS St. Louis", which participated in the blockade of the harbor at Santiago de Cuba, and led the first Marines to land in the occupation of Cuba. The Marines and Sailors attempted to cut the undersea telegraph linking Cuba with Jamaica.

(June 1911, Catlin's Mamaluke Sword was recovered "in a fair state of preservation" and a penknife, from his quarters in the salvaging operation of the Maine.)

1899 – 1913

After the Spanish-American War, Catlin's orders sent him to the Marine Barracks at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, New York. In March 1899, he was promoted to Captain and assigned to the Marine Barracks at Port Royal, South Carolina. In 1902, Catlin received orders to the Marine Barracks at Cavite, Philippines. From that February to July 1904, he was the first commanding officer of the Marine Barracks, Naval Station, Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii. After that he served in recruiting duty at Buffalo, New York until the following spring when he returned to the Marine Barracks at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. He was promoted to Major in June 1905.

June 30, 1906, Major Catlin was in command of a battalion of Marines consisting of 7 officers and 204 enlisted men on board the USS Dixie, from the League Island Navy Yard for Monte Cristi. From the fall of 1906 until May 1909, he served with the First Provisional Regiment in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

After this, he served the Post Quartermaster at the Marine Barracks at Boston, Massachusetts. Later he was transferred back to the Marine Barracks at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. In 1911, he returned to serve in Cuba in command of the 1st Regiment, which formed at Guantanamo Bay on March 8, 1911. After this in the fall of 1911, Catlin served in succession on board USS Connecticut, USS Utah, and USS Wyoming.

Medal of Honor Action

Catlin served as a Major during the 1914 Vera Cruz, Mexican Campaign, on board the USS Wyoming. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his bravery on April 22, 1914. His citation reads:

The citation reads: "For distinguished conduct in battle, engagement of Vera Cruz, 22 April 1914. Eminent and conspicuous in command of his battalion, Maj. Catlin exhibited courage and skill in leading his men through the action of the 22nd and in the final occupation of the city". His Medal was awarded on December 4, 1915.

World War I

In December 1914, Catlin was in command at the Naval Prison, Portsmouth Navy Yard, Maine, and also had a temporary duty at the Army Service Schools at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. In October 1915, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and in February 1917 was promoted to Colonel.

He graduated from the Army War College one month after the outbreak of World War I. Due to his graduation, he was placed in charge of the Marine overseas training camp at Quantico, Virginia. He was sent to France in October 1917 as the commanding officer of the 6th Marine Regiment, 4th Brigade, 2nd Division, AEF. From June 1 – 6, 1918, the 6th Regiment were in action in the front lines from Paris-Metz Road through Lucy-le-Bocage to Hill 142. On June 6, 1918, when the 6th Regiment was attacking Bois de Belleau, (the Battle of Belleau Wood), Catlin was wounded in the chest by a sniper and evacuated to a hospital the next day. It was the first time he had been wounded in 28 years of active service. He was awarded the Croix de Guerre with Palm and the French Legion of Honor by France for his service in their country.

Final Years and Retirement

When Colonel Catlin returned to the United States, he served at Headquarters Marine Corps and was appointed brigadier general on August 30, 1918. After his tour at Headquarters, he was assigned to the Marine Barracks at Quantico. In November 1918, he assumed command of the First Brigade of Marines in Haiti until September 1919.

Brigadier General Catlin retired from the Marine Corps in December 1919. He was in ill health as a result of his wound until his death in Culpeper, Virginia, on May 31, 1933. Brigadier General Catlin is buried in Arlington National Cemetery along with his wife, Martha Ellen Catlin.

**Compiled by Glynæ Deschene
Maria Sanford Chapter DAR**

Buried at
Arlington National Cemetery,
Section 7, Site 10038



Added by: [Don Morfe](#)

Honors

In addition to the Medal of Honor, Catlin was awarded two Croix de Guerre, one with palms and one with gilt star for gallantry in action against the enemy at Belleau Wood. He was also made an Officer of the Legion of Honour for his services in the same sector.

Soon after his return from France, he summarized his war experiences in a book called *With the Help of God and a Few Marines*.

On Marine Corps Base Quantico, the base headquarters building in Lejeune Hall is on Catlin Avenue, which is named for him.

During World War II, in the Salt Lake area of O'ahu, Hawai'i, Camp Catlin was formed to train Marines for fighting in the Pacific and became the first home for Headquarters, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific As well, the SS *George Washington* was renamed the *USS Catlin* (AP-19) in his honor.

On December 1, 2006, Rear Admiral Harry Harris Jr., Captain Mark Leary, and Marine Major George Nunez, unveiled a monument dedicating Quarters M101 on Guantanamo Bay to the memory of Catlin. From that day forward, the flag quarters at the Marine Site will be known as Catlin House.

References

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External links

- "Medal of Honor citation". Archived from the original (PDF) on October 4, 2006. Retrieved 21 May 2015.
- "Albertus Wright Catlin, Brigadier General, United States Marine Corps". Arlington National Cemetery. Archived from the original on 29 August 2006. Retrieved 2006-10-11.

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