

= Daniel J. Callaghan =

Daniel Judson Callaghan ( July 26 , 1890 ? November 13 , 1942 ) was a United States Navy officer who received the Medal of Honor posthumously for his actions during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal . In a career spanning just over 30 years , he served his country in two wars . He served on several ships during his first 20 years of service , including escort duties during World War I , and also filled some shore @-@ based administrative roles . He later came to the attention of US President Franklin Roosevelt , who appointed Callaghan as his Naval Aide in 1938 . A few years later , he returned to command duties during the early stages of World War II . Callaghan was killed by an enemy shell on the bridge of his flagship , the USS San Francisco ( CA @-@ 38 ) , during a surface action against a larger Japanese force off Savo Island . The battle ended in a strategic victory for the Allied side .

= = Early life = =

Callaghan was born on July 26 , 1890 , in San Francisco , California , the son of businessman Charles William Callaghan and Rose Wheeler Callaghan . The family was devout Roman Catholic . One of his younger brothers , William Callaghan ( 1897 ? 1991 ) , would later go on to a career in the US Navy as well . Both brothers studied at Saint Ignatius College Preparatory in San Francisco , the elder graduating in the class of 1907 . He then graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1911 . His first assignment was on board the armored cruiser USS California ( ACR @-@ 6 ) , in command of a turret with twin 8 @-@ inch guns . He was promoted to the rank of Ensign on May 21 , 1912 .

His second assignment was on the destroyer USS Truxtun ( DD @-@ 14 ) in mid @-@ 1913 . He was promoted to Lieutenant ( Junior Grade ) in May 1915 . In his first few years of service , he developed a reputation as a conscientious sailor , noted for avoiding heavy alcohol consumption and regularly attending Mass . His dedication to naval gunnery also became apparent . Some years later , one of his captains , Joel Pringle , would write : " [ Callaghan 's ] devotion to duty , sound judgment and ability to inspire loyalty in his subordinates have resulted in a constant and steady increase in the efficiency of the above mentioned batteries . At the recent battle practice of the Pacific Fleet in 5 @-@ inch guns , he made the largest percentage of hits of any ship of the Fleet . "

During his first few years of naval service , Callaghan had been courting Mary Tormey of Oakland , California ; the two married on July 23 , 1914 . Their son , Daniel Judson Callaghan Jr . , was born in Alameda , California , on October 16 , 1915 .

In July 1915 , the Truxtun was on its way to Alaska when it broke down and was unable to continue its mission . Initially , the blame fell on Callaghan , who had apparently ordered incorrect parts for the condenser . He was suspended from duty and ordered to appear before a court @-@ martial . Subsequent investigation , however , found that another man was responsible for the error and Callaghan received a full acquittal and was reinstated . A few months later , he was appointed as commanding officer of the Truxtun , but the stress of his trial appeared to have left its mark ? at the age of 25 years , his hair had already turned gray .

= = World War I = =

Callaghan 's next posting was to the cruiser USS New Orleans ( CL @-@ 22 ) in November 1916 . Following the entry of the United States into World War I , in April 1917 , the New Orleans escorted cargo ships crossing the Atlantic Ocean . It was at this time that he first met Ross McIntire , a surgeon , who would later have a significant impact on his career . According to biographer Francis Murphy , Callaghan played a pivotal role in the rescue of a disabled British liner off the coast of Ireland : " Four times a hawser was hauled aboard the cruiser from the liner , that was about three times the cruiser 's size , and four times the cable parted . The Captain was for abandoning the job . But not Dan . With superhuman strength and the full cooperation of his men , he finally secured the cable . For forty @-@ eight hours the New Orleans stayed with the stricken vessel hauling it out of

danger [ and ] finally handing it on to tugs from a North Ireland base . "

Following the war , he settled in Georgetown , Washington , D.C. for two years with his wife and young son . During this time , he worked on reassignment of warrant and chief petty officers from the navy . Callaghan next served aboard the newly commissioned battleship USS Idaho ( BB @-@ 42 ) , commencing in October 1920 . While his family moved back to Oakland , he began serving as a fire control officer on the Idaho . He left the Idaho in June 1923 , returning to shore duties for two years before taking up the position of First Lieutenant on the USS Colorado ( BB @-@ 45 ) in May 1925 . The Colorado transported a shipment of gold to Australia before returning to the United States in 1926 . His next assignment was the position of gunnery officer , on board the USS Mississippi ( BB @-@ 41 ) . Captain Thomas Hart wrote of Callaghan : " I can scarcely report too favorably on this officer . He is excellent generally and particularly ; and he looks and acts the part . As gunnery officer , he is being highly successful and I unhesitatingly recommend him for almost any detail . "

Callaghan left the Mississippi in July 1928 and worked in naval inspections for the next two years . He served as Aide to the Commander in Chief , US Fleet , and was promoted to the rank of Commander in June 1931 . He then served as Executive Officer of the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps at the University of California , Berkeley , before working on the USS Portland ( CA @-@ 33 ) . In 1938 , US President Franklin Roosevelt asked his physician , Ross McIntire , to recommend someone for the position of Naval Aide . McIntire recommended Callaghan , who was appointed to the role in July 1938 and would fill it for the next three years . He was promoted to the rank of Captain in October 1938 .

= = World War II = =

In May 1941 , during the early stages of World War II , Roosevelt released Callaghan to take command of the cruiser USS San Francisco ( CA @-@ 38 ) . Roosevelt wrote : " It is with great regret that I am letting Captain Callaghan leave as my Naval Aide . He has given every satisfaction and has performed duties of many varieties with tact and real efficiency . He has shown a real understanding of the many problems of the service within itself and in relationship to the rest of Government . "

In April 1942 , he was promoted to the rank of rear admiral and was appointed as chief of staff to the Commander , South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force Vice Admiral Robert L. Ghormley . In November , as commander of Task Group 67 @.@ 4 , he led US forces in an engagement off Savo Island during the Guadalcanal Campaign . During this battle , he was on the bridge of the USS San Francisco when incoming enemy fire killed him and most of his command staff on November 13 , 1942 . At that time , he became the third US Navy admiral killed in action during World War II . He received the Medal of Honor posthumously for his efforts in this battle .

Following the explosion , Lieutenant Commander Bruce McCandless assumed operational command of the San Francisco . Earlier in the battle , Rear Admiral Norman Scott had been killed , so two US commanders had now been lost , as well as several of their staff . Despite the deaths of so many senior officers , the battle ended in a strategic victory for the Allied side .

In hindsight , Callaghan was criticized for not putting his five ships that had the superior SG radar systems at the ends of his column , for not using one of them as his flagship , for directing the battle from his flagship 's bridge instead of the radar plot , for not issuing his battle plans to his captains , and for issuing confusing orders during the battle . Analysis of the battle led to a rapid improvement in USN techniques for fighting in poor visibility , particularly in the adoption of combat information centers .

Callaghan was buried at sea . He was survived by his wife , Mary Tormey Callaghan , and son , Daniel Judson Callaghan Jr . ( 1915 ? 2006 ) . His brother William Callaghan would later become a US Navy vice admiral , first captain of the USS Missouri ( BB @-@ 63 ) , and first commander of the Military Sea Transportation Service .

By order of President Roosevelt , both Rear Admirals Callaghan and Scott were posthumously awarded the Navy Medal of Honor .

= = Honors and awards = =

= = = Medal of Honor = = =

Callaghan 's Medal of Honor citation read :

For extraordinary heroism and conspicuous intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty during action against enemy Japanese forces off Savo Island on the night of 12 ? 13 November 1942 . Although out @-@ balanced in strength and numbers by a desperate and determined enemy , Rear Admiral Callaghan , with ingenious tactical skill and superb coordination of the units under his command , led his forces into battle against tremendous odds , thereby contributing decisively to the rout of a powerful invasion fleet and to the consequent frustration of a formidable Japanese offensive . While faithfully directing close @-@ range operations in the face of furious bombardment by superior enemy fire power , he was killed on the bridge of his Flagship . His courageous initiative , inspiring leadership , and judicious foresight in a crisis of grave responsibility were in keeping with the finest traditions of the United States Naval Service . He gallantly gave his life in the defense of his country .

His son was a Lieutenant ( junior grade ) at the time , and accepted his father 's Medal of Honor on his behalf .

= = = Other honors = = =

Prior to receiving the Medal of Honor , Callaghan had been awarded the Distinguished Service Medal . Other awards to Admiral Callaghan include the World War I Victory Medal , the American Defense Service Medal and posthumous awards of the Purple Heart , Asiatic @-@ Pacific Campaign Medal and World War II Victory Medal .

= = Legacy = =

The US Navy has named two ships after Callaghan : USS Callaghan ( DD @-@ 792 ) and USS Callaghan ( DDG @-@ 994 ) . The first ship was commissioned on November 27 , 1943 , and was sponsored by Callaghan 's widow . It sank in late July , 1945 , as the result of a kamikaze attack . The second ship was commissioned on August 29 , 1981 , one of a class named for the four American admirals killed in World War II , and sold to Taiwan just over 20 years later .

Callaghan 's name is listed on Tablets of the Missing at Manila American Cemetery in the Philippines . Callaghan Hall at Officer Training Command , Newport , Rhode Island , is named in his honor . The Callaghan Fitness Center at Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Portsmouth Virginia is also named for him . A street , Admiral Callaghan Lane in Vallejo , California , is also named after him , and a monument in Lands End , San Francisco ( including part of the bridge of the USS San Francisco , where he died ) , honors him and his comrades .