

= Wat Tyler Cluverius , Jr . =

Wat Tyler Cluverius , Jr . (12 December 1874 ? 28 October 1952) was an admiral in the United States Navy and president of Worcester Polytechnic Institute . When he died , he was the last surviving officer of the sinking of the USS Maine .

An 1896 graduate of the United States Naval Academy , Cluverius joined the crew of the USS Maine in 1897 and was on board when the ship suffered an explosion in Havana Harbor in 1898 . The sinking of the Maine helped precipitate the Spanish ? American War , a war in which Cluverius participated on a number of ships including USS Scorpion . During the Philippine ? American War he served on the USS Solace . In 1914 , he took part in the United States occupation of Veracruz , commanding a battalion of bluejackets from the battleship USS North Dakota . During World War I he commanded the minelayer USS Shawmut , laying the anti @-@ submarine mine barrage across the North Sea , for which he was awarded the Navy Distinguished Service Medal .

Cluverius was Commandant of Midshipmen at the Naval Academy from 1919 to 1921 , and attended the Naval War College from 1921 to 1922 . He was aide to the Secretary of the Navy , Curtis D. Wilbur . Promoted to flag rank in 1928 , he was Commandant of the Norfolk Navy Yard from 1928 to 1930 , commanded Battleship Division Two the Scouting Fleet from June to November 1930 , and was Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief United States Fleet . He was commandant of the Ninth Naval District and the Fourth Naval District before retiring from the Navy on 1 January 1939 . In retirement , Cluverius became president of Worcester Polytechnic Institute , but returned to active duty during World War II as secretary of the Naval office of Public Information and as a member of the Navy Board of Production Awards . In this capacity he was involved in the conferring of Army @-@ Navy " E " Awards .

= = Naval career = =

Wat Tyler Cluverius , Jr. was born in New Orleans , Louisiana on 12 December 1874 , the son of Wat Tyler Cluverius , Sr. , and his wife Martha Lewis née Manning . He attended Tulane University before being appointed to the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis , Maryland , which he entered on 20 May 1892 .

In those days , naval cadets ? the rank of midshipman would not exist for a few more years ? by law had to serve for two years before they were eligible to take the examinations for the rank of ensign . Therefore , after graduation from the Naval Academy in June 1896 , Cluverius was posted to the cruiser USS Columbia . In 1897 joined the crew of the USS Maine . He was on board on 15 February 1898 when the ship suffered an explosion in Havana Harbor . Cluverius made his way out , splashing through water up to waist deep in the darkness , his path obstructed by wreckage . He joined other survivors on deck , and was rescued by the SS City of Washington . He was one of only 89 survivors , of whom 18 were officers .

The loss of the Maine helped precipitate the Spanish ? American War . Cluverius saw action during the conflict on a number of ships including USS Scorpion , on which he participated in the Second Battle of Manzanillo and the bombardments of Santiago and Aquadores . Commissioned as an ensign , he served in the Philippine ? American War on the USS Solace in 1900 . He then served on the gunboat USS Newport .

In 1899 , he became engaged to Hannah Walker Sampson , the daughter of Rear Admiral William T. Sampson . The families knew each other well , and Cluverius was an usher at the wedding of Hannah 's sister Olive . On 5 April 1900 , they were married in a ceremony at the Boston Navy Yard . Their marriage produced two daughters , Elizabeth (Betty) and Martha , and a son , Wat Tyler Cluverius III . Not only did their son become a naval officer , but both daughters married naval officers , John S. Crenshaw and William S. Parsons respectively . Both sons in law later became admirals .

Cluverius served at the Naval Academy on court martial duty and as commander of the torpedo boat USS Talbot . He became commander of the gunboat USS Alvarado in June 1901 and then the USS Sandoval in October . He joined the torpedo boat USS Stockton in 1902 . The next year he

was promoted to lieutenant and was posted to the battleship USS Maine , the namesake of the ship whose sinking he had survived in 1898 , as an engineering officer . He was involved with the 1904 sea trials of the cruisers USS Colorado and USS West Virginia before becoming senior engineer of the monitor USS Arkansas . In 1908 he became senior engineer of the newly commissioned USS Mississippi .

Shore duty followed in 1909 as a member of the Naval Examining Board of the Special Service Squadron . For a short time in 1910 , Cluverius was navigator of the USS Massachusetts , an old battleship now used as a training ship for midshipmen , before becoming Judge Advocate at the Court of Inquiry at the Philadelphia Navy Yard . He attended a conference of officers at the Naval War College in Newport , Rhode Island from May until August 1911 , and then became Inspection Officer at the New York Navy Yard .

Cluverius , now a lieutenant commander , was posted to the battleship USS North Dakota in March 1914 . From July to October 1914 , he took part in the United States occupation of Veracruz , commanding a battalion of bluejackets that was landed from the North Dakota . After returning to the ship he became its executive officer until July 1915 , when he became commander of the USS Dubuque . He was then posted back to the Naval Academy as an engineering instructor .

In November 1917 , Cluverius became responsible for the conversion of the steamer SS Massachusetts to a minelayer . The ship was commissioned on 7 December 1917 , and renamed USS Shawmut on 7 January 1918 . She steamed to Britain in June 1918 and spent the rest of World War I laying the anti @-@ submarine mine barrage across the North Sea . Shawmut laid 2 @,@ 970 anchored mines before returning to the United States In December 1918 , . He was awarded the Navy Distinguished Service Medal " , for exceptionally meritorious service in a duty of great responsibility as Commanding Officer of the USS Shawmut , engaged in laying mines in the North Sea " . He also became an Officer of the French Legion of Honor , and Officer of the Belgian Order of Leopold and a Commander of the Norwegian Order of St. Olav .

Cluverius commanded the cruiser USS Baltimore from February until June 1919 , when he became Commandant of Midshipmen at the Naval Academy , a post he held until 1921 , when he left to attend the Naval War College . After graduating in 1922 , he became Chief of Staff of Commander Base Force , Pacific Fleet . He commanded the cruiser USS Seattle from June to December 1923 , when , following the usual pattern of sea duty alternating with shore duty , he was posted to the office of the Chief of Naval Operations . He became aide to the Secretary of the Navy , Curtis D. Wilbur .

Sea duty followed in 1926 as captain of the cruiser USS West Virginia . In 1928 , he was promoted to rear admiral . He was one of only five captains promoted that year , the others being Arthur Japy Hepburn , Harry E. Yarnell , Albert Ware Marshall and Thomas Tingey Craven . He was Commandant of the Norfolk Navy Yard from 1928 to 1930 , and commanded Battleship Division Two (BatDiv2) of the Scouting Fleet from June to November 1930 . He then became Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief United States Fleet , Admiral Juhu V. Chase , who flew his flag from the battleship USS Texas , the ship on which his son in law Deak Parsons was also serving .

Cluverius was Commandant of the Ninth Naval District from 1932 to 1935 . As such , he was the US Navy representative at the Century of Progress World 's Fair in Chicago from 1933 to 1934 . His last sea command was the Base Force , United States Fleet , from 1935 to 1937 . In June 1937 he became Commandant Fourth Naval District and Philadelphia Navy Yard , a post he held until his retirement on 1 January 1939 .

= = Later life = =

In retirement , Cluverius became president of Worcester Polytechnic Institute , in succession to Rear Admiral Ralph Earle , a Naval Academy classmate who died in February 1939 . Cluverius announced that his priority would be to complete the building program envisaged by his predecessor . He began with a footbridge which was named in Earle 's memory .

Cluverius returned to active duty during World War II as secretary of the Naval office of Public Information and as a member of the Navy Board of Production Awards . In this capacity he was

involved in the conferring of Army @-@ Navy " E " Awards . In 1943 , Worcester was chosen as one of the colleges in the V @-@ 12 Navy College Training Program . He returned to Worcester in 1945 after the war ended . In 1951 , he oversaw the establishment of an ROTC unit on the campus .

On 28 October 1952 , Cluverius was returning by train from a Navy reunion in Philadelphia when he became so seriously ill that when the train stopped in New Haven he was taken to hospital , where he died . The last surviving officer of the USS Maine , he was buried in Arlington National Cemetery , with his wife Hannah , who died in 1938 . He was survived by his two daughters and his son .