

= Edwin Taylor Pollock =

Edwin Taylor Pollock ( October 25 , 1870 ? June 4 , 1943 ) was a career officer in the United States Navy , serving in the Spanish ? American War and in World War I. He was later promoted to the rank of captain . Like many naval officers , his name was often abbreviated using initials : E. T. Pollock .

As a young ensign , Pollock served aboard USS New York during the Spanish ? American War . After the war , he rose through the ranks , served on several ships , and did important research into wireless communication . In 1917 , less than a week before the United States entered World War I , he won a race against a fellow officer to receive the U.S. Virgin Islands from Denmark , and served as the territory 's first acting governor . During the war , he was promoted to captain and a vessel under his command transported 60 @,@ 000 American soldiers to France , for which he was awarded a Navy Cross . Afterward , he was made the eighth Naval Governor of American Samoa and then the superintendent of the United States Naval Observatory , before retiring in 1927 .

= = Early career = =

Originally from Mount Gilead , Ohio , Pollock attended the United States Naval Academy and , as a midshipman , was assigned to USS Lancaster and USS Monocacy . He graduated with a rank of ensign in 1893 .

After graduation , Pollock returned to Ohio and married Beatrice E. Law Hale on December 5 . Two weeks later , he was assigned to the cruiser USS New York during its initial shake @-@ down . He was subsequently assigned to the gunboat USS Machias for an expedition to China . He remained in China for two and a half years as part of the Asiatic Squadron , then transferring to USS Detroit before returning home in 1897 . On his return home , the Spanish ? American War was heating up and he was reassigned to the New York , to see service in Cuba and Puerto Rico , eventually taking part in the Battle of Santiago de Cuba .

In January 1900 , he was promoted to lieutenant and assigned to USS Alliance . Over the following year he served on USS Dolphin and USS Buffalo . On board the Buffalo , he returned to the Asiatic Squadron near China and was finally transferred to USS Brooklyn , the squadron 's flagship . He remained on board the Brooklyn , until its return home in May 1902 . After a brief leave , Pollock was assigned to the USS Chesapeake ( as the watch and division officer ) , a position he held for more than one year . He was transferred to USS Cincinnati , serving for another year , and then to Cavite Naval Base . At Cavite , he was promoted to lieutenant commander in February 1906 .

His first duty as a lieutenant commander was on USS Alabama , as the navigator . In 1910 , Pollock was reassigned to USS Massachusetts , where he was promoted to commander in March 1911 .

On his promotion , Pollock commanded USS Virginia and USS Kearsarge , before being transferred to the United States Naval Observatory . During his command of the Kearsarge , Pollock briefly commanded USS Salem for a world @-@ record setting wireless experiment . For this feat , the Salem was outfitted with 16 different wireless telegraph technologies and sailed to Gibraltar , with Pollock commanding . On arrival , they tested these technologies and set a world @-@ record for longest wireless telegraph distance , 2 @,@ 400 miles ( 3 @,@ 900 km ) , using a " Poulsen Apparatus " , based on principles by Valdemar Poulsen . Experiments were also conducted to determine wireless characteristics during inclement weather and during both the day and night . In 1916 , he was put in command of USS Alabama , the ship on which he had been the navigator .

= = U.S. Virgin Islands = =

In the final days before the entrance of the United States into World War I , the US military was concerned that Germany was planning to purchase or seize the Danish West Indies for use as a submarine or zeppelin base . At the time , Charlotte Amalie on Saint Thomas was considered the best port in the Caribbean outside of Cuba , and Coral Bay on Saint John was considered the safest harbor in the area . Although the United States was not yet at war with Germany , the US signed a

treaty to purchase the territory from Denmark for 25 million dollars on March 28 , 1917 . President Woodrow Wilson nominated James Harrison Oliver to be the first military governor . The United States announced plans to build a naval base in the territory to aid in the protection of the Panama Canal .

Oliver was unable to travel immediately to the Islands and the honor of being the first Acting Governor of the United States Virgin Islands was decided in an unusual way . Both Pollock , commanding USS Hancock , and B. B. Blerer 's USS Olympia were dispatched to the Islands in a race . The commander of the ship that arrived first would officiate at the transfer ceremony and be acting governor . Pollock arrived first and the transfer ceremony took place on March 31 , 1917 , on Saint Thomas . Blerer officiated at a smaller ceremony on Saint Croix . Present for the handover was the crew of the Danish station cruiser Valkyrien and the former island legislature . The United States declared war on Germany on April 6 , less than a week after securing the islands . Oliver was confirmed by Congress on April 20 and relieved Pollock as governor .

= = World War I = =

During the war , Pollock was appointed as Captain on USS George Washington , a German cruise liner which was seized by the United States government for use as a military transport ship . She was rechristened George Washington in September 1917 and Pollock was given her command on October 1 , 1917 . That December , she set out with her first load of troops . During the war , Pollock successfully transported 60 @, @ 000 American soldiers to France in 18 round trips . In 1918 , the George Washington was tasked to deliver President Woodrow Wilson to the Paris Peace Conference , though Pollock would not make the trip . He was reassigned on September 29 , 1918 .

While on board the George Washington , Pollock and Chaplain Paul F. Bloomhardt edited a daily newspaper . After the war , stories from the paper were assembled and published in 1919 by J. J. Little & Ives co. as Hatchet of the United States Ship " George Washington " . A short review of the work by Outlook magazine called the book " readable " and " admirably illustrated " . It " abounds in clever bits of fun , queer and notable incidents , and sound and patriotic editorials . " After the war , he was eventually reassigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma , to serve in the Pacific fleet . On November 10 , 1920 , Pollock was awarded a Navy Cross for his services during the war .

= = American Samoa = =

On November 30 , 1921 , Pollock was transferred from command of the Oklahoma to become the Military Governor of American Samoa . Events both personal and political had led to a previous governor , Warren Terhune 's , suicide on November 3 , 1920 , and the appointment of Governor Waldo A. Evans to conduct a court of inquiry into the situation and to restore order . Pollock succeeded Evans , who had successfully restored the government and productivity of the islands after a period of unrest . At this time, American Samoa was administered by a team of twelve officers and a governor , with a total population of approximately 8 @, @ 000 people . The islands were primarily important due to the excellent harbor at Pago Pago .

Beginning in 1920 , a Mau movement , from the Samoan word for " opposition " , was forming in American Samoa in protest of several Naval government policies , some of which had been implemented by Terhune but which were not revoked following his death , which natives ( and some non @-@ natives ) found heavy @-@ handed . The movement itself may have been inspired by a different and older Mau movement in nearby Western Samoa , against the German and then New Zealand colonial powers . Some of the initial grievances of the movement included the quality of roads in the territory , a marriage law which largely forbade natives from marrying non @-@ natives , and a justice system which discriminated against locals in part because laws were not often available in Samoan . In addition , the United States Navy also prohibited an assembly of Samoan chiefs , whom the movement considered the real government of the territory . Surprisingly , the movement had grown to include several prominent officers of former Governor Terhune 's staff , including his executive officer . It culminated in a proclamation by Samuel S. Ripley , an American

Samoa from an afakasi or mixed @-@ blood Samoan family , with large communal property in the islands , that he was the leader of a legitimate successor government to pre @-@ 1899 Samoa . Evans also met with the high chiefs and secured their assent to continued Naval government . Ripley , who had traveled to Washington to meet with Secretary of the Navy Edwin C. Denby , was not permitted by Evans to enter the port at American Samoa and returned to exile in California , where he later became the mayor of Richmond .

After being appointed as governor , Pollock 's continued the colonization work started by his predecessor . Prior to traveling to the territory , he met with Ripley in San Francisco , California . Although Ripley maintained that American " occupation " of Samoa was usurpation , he agreed to allow Pollock to govern unfettered and to provide him with copies of his letters . Almost immediately after arriving on the island , Pollock and Secretary of Native Affairs S. D. Hall met with representatives of the Mau , becoming the first governor to do so . Shortly afterwards , some members of the Mau disbanded , though the movement would continue in some form for another 13 years .

Pollock 's remaining time as governor was less eventful . While exploring Tonga in May 1923 , he discovered a turtle which had been branded by Captain Cook on his expedition there in 1773 . The turtle was thus known to have lived more than 150 years . He was ordered home on July 26 , 1923 .

= = United States Naval Observatory = =

Immediately on leaving Samoa , Pollock was appointed superintendent of the United States Naval Observatory in Washington , D.C. , replacing outgoing Rear Admiral William D. MacDougal .

On August 22 , 1924 , Mars came within 34 @,@ 630 @,@ 000 miles ( 55 @,@ 730 @,@ 000 km ) of Earth . The US Naval Observatory made no formal observations of the planet , but Pollock and the son of astronomer Asaph Hall ceremonially re @-@ enacted Hall 's 1877 discoveries of the moons Phobos and Deimos with his original 17 @-@ inch ( 430 mm ) telescope . They also made observations to calculate the masses of the two moons .

On January 24 , 1925 , Pollock commanded the dirigible USS Los Angeles on a flight from Lakehurst , New Jersey , to photograph a solar eclipse from an altitude of 8 @,@ 000 feet ( 2 @,@ 400 m ) . This was the first time an eclipse had been photographed from the air .

= = After retirement = =

Pollock retired from service in 1927 and was replaced as superintendent by Captain Charles F. Freeman . In 1930 , Pollock and his wife purchased a summer home in Jamestown , Rhode Island , while continuing to maintain their main residence in Washington , D.C. In 1932 , he was made a director of the Jamestown Historical Society . He also became interested in genealogy and published several works on his family 's history through the 1930s . He died on June 4 , 1943 , after a long illness and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery on June 7 , 1943 .

= = Works = =

Hatchet of the United States Ship " George Washington " , edited by Pollock and Paul F. Bloomhardt . A compilation of stories from The Hatchet , a daily printed on board the George Washington during the First World War . Published 1919 .