

Louis Malesherbes Goldsborough

(- 20 Feb 1877)

Goldsborough. On Tuesday, February 20, 1877 at 5 minutes past 8 o'clock a.m., Rear Admiral Louis M. Goldsborough, U.S. Navy. His funeral will take place from the new Ascension Church, corner of 12th street and Massachusetts avenue at noon, Thursday, the 22d inst.

The Evening Star, February 20, 1877

Death of Rear Admiral Goldsborough



Since the opening of the year 1877, six rear admirals of the U.S. navy have departed this life, a remarkable coincidence of fatality, considering the small number of these officers on the list. The last of the six was Rear Admiral Louis M. Goldsborough, who died at the Hamilton House, in this city, at four minutes past 8 o'clock this morning. Louis Malesherbes Goldsborough was born in this city in 1805. He was appointed midshipman in 1822 and was made lieutenant in 1825. During the Seminole war he commanded a company of mounted volunteers, and also an armed steamer. He was made commander in 1841, took part in the Mexican war, and was afterward senior naval officer of a joint army and navy commission on the Pacific coast. He became captain in 1855, and from 1853 to 1857 was superintendent of the naval academy at Annapolis. In 1861 he was placed in command of the naval part of Burnside's expedition to North Carolina. He was made rear admiral in 1862, commanded the European squadron in 1865-67 and subsequently the Washington navy yard.

His funeral will take place from the new Ascension church, corner 12th street and Massachusetts avenue, on Thursday at noon.

The Evening Star, February 21, 1877

The Large Death List of the Navy

The death of Rear Admiral Goldsborough yesterday was the sixth of that grade in the navy within fifteen days. Those preceding him were Rear Admirals Joseph Smith, Charles Wilkes, James Alden, Theodore Bailey, and Charles H. Davis. They were all on the retired list except Davis, who had an extension of ten years on account of a special act of Congress. The demise of these officers creates no vacancies. The naval necrology for the year shows twenty-seven deaths, as follows: Eight rear admirals, two commodores, three captains, four commanders, one lieutenant commander, one lieutenant, one midshipman, three cadet midshipmen, two medical directors, three pay directors, one assistant paymaster, one past assistant engineer, three boatswains, and two captains in the marine corps. During 1876 there were fifty resignations in the navy and fifteen dismissals, the latter ranking as follows: One lieutenant commander, one ensign, one pay inspector, nine cadet midshipmen, one assistant engineer, one boatswain, and one acting boatswain.

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Goldsborough, Louis Malesherbes, naval officer, was born in Washington, D.C., Feb. 18, 1805, son of Charles Washington and Catharine (Roberts) Goldsborough. His father was the author of "U.S. Naval Chronicle" (1824). Louis was admitted as midshipman in the U.S. navy in 1812, when seven years of age and entered active service in 1816, serving under Bainbridge and Stewart in the Mediterranean and Pacific. He was promoted lieutenant in 1825, passed two years in study in Paris, France, and in 1827 joined the frigate North Carolina in the Mediterranean and was detailed with the schooner Porpoise to cruise in the Grecian archipelago and while commanding a night expedition with four boats and thirty-five men, rescued the English bark Comet which had been captured by Greek pirates. In the combat ninety of the pirates were killed. Lieutenant Goldsborough received the thanks of the English government for this exploit. He then obtained leave of absence and married Nov. 1, 1831, to Elizabeth G. daughter of William Wirt of Virginia, and settled in Florida where he established a colony of Germans on land belonging to his father-in-law. He took part in the Seminole war as captain of a company of Florida volunteers, and afterward as commander of an armed steamer. He was promoted commander in the U.S. navy in 1841 and served during the Mexican war as executive officer of the frigate Ohio. In 1849 he was senior member of the joint commission of the army and navy appointed to explore California and Oregon. He was superintendent of the U.S. naval academy, 1853-57 was commissioned captain in 1855 commanded the Levant in the Mediterranean and the Congress in the Brazil squadron, 1858-60 was made flag officer of the North Atlantic squadron and commanded the Minnesota, 1861 directed the naval forces in the Burnside expedition to North Carolina in 1862, and gained possession of the entire sea coast except Wilmington. For his services he received the thanks of congress and promotion to the rank of rear-admiral, July 1862. He commanded the European squadron, 1865-67, and was retired in 1873. He died in Washington, D.C., Feb. 20, 1877.

Goldsborough, Louis Malesherbes (18085-1877), naval officer. Born in Washington, D.C., on February 18, 1805, Goldsborough was warranted a midshipman at the age of seven and actually entered service four years later. He made cruises in the Mediterranean and the Pacific and was promoted to lieutenant in January 1825. For two years he studied in Paris, and in 1827 was assigned to the Porpoise, from which he led a volunteer boat expedition to recapture a British brig from Greek pirates. In 1830 he took charge of the newly established Depot of Charts and Instruments in Washington. Early in the second Seminole War (1835-1842) he led a volunteer company of cavalry. On returning to naval service he was promoted to commander in September 1841. He commanded the Ohio during the Mexican War and in April 1847 Commodore Matthew C. Perry's squadron in an attack on Tuxpan. During 1849-1850 he served as senior naval member of a commission exploring California. In 1853 he was appointed superintendent of the Naval Academy, where he remained for four years, receiving promotion in 1855 to captain. During 1859-1861 he was in command of the Brazil station. In September 1861 he was appointed flag-officer in command of the Atlantic Blockading Squadron, remaining with the North Atlantic Squadron when two commands were created a month later. In February 1862 he commanded an expedition to land some 12,000 troops under Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside on Roanoke Island, North Carolina. The landing was accomplished on February 7, and on that and the next two days the gunboat force under Commander Stephen C. Rowan destroyed a Confederate gunboat fleet under Flag-Officer William F. Lynch. Goldsborough returned to Hampton Roads, Virginia in March, after the battle of the Monitor and the Virginia (ex-Merrimac) there, and in April organized naval support for Gen. George B. McClellan's Peninsular campaign. He conceived as his principal responsibility the protection of McClellan's base on the peninsula and the sea lines to it, and to that end he devoted much of his effort to keeping the Virginia bottled up in the Elizabeth River. That he did, refusing McClellan's repeated requests that he leave Hampton Roads and split his forces to attack Yorktown from the water and also move up the James River. McClellan finally succeeded, through President Abraham Lincoln, in getting a flotilla under Commander John Rodgers sent up the James on May 7. The flotilla was halted at Drewry's

Bluff on May 15. Meanwhile Norfolk navy yard had been captured and the Virginia, left without a base, was destroyed by her captain, Flag-Officer Josiah Tattnall, on May 11. Goldsborough cooperated with McClellan in shifting the army's base to the James River and in covering the withdrawal from the peninsula in late June. In July he was promoted to rear admiral, but the separation of the James River flotilla from his command, coupled with public criticism of his actions, led him to request being relieved of his command in September 1862. He served in an administrative capacity in Washington until 1865, commanded the European Squadron from 1865 to 1867, and was then again in Washington until his retirement in 1873. Goldsborough died in Washington, D.C., on February 20, 1877.