

MILITARY ORDER OF THE LOYAL LEGION OF THE UNITED STATES



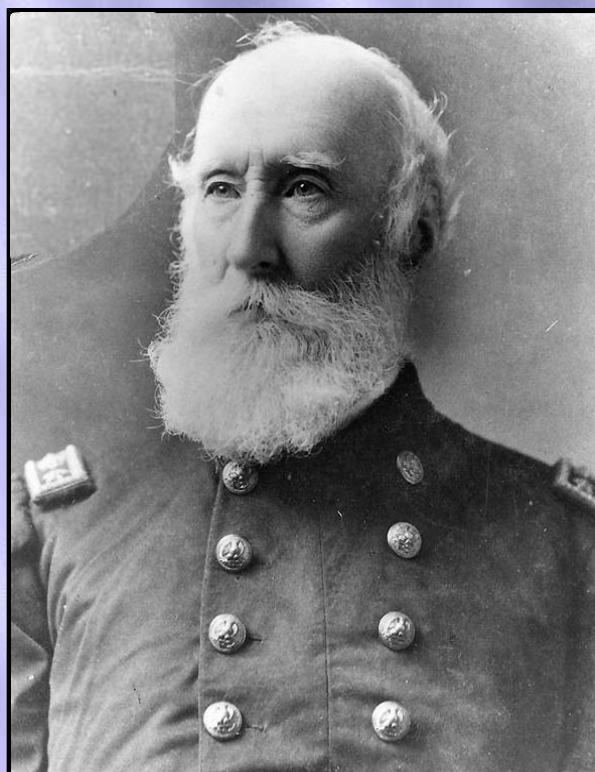
Loyal Legion Vignettes



**REAR ADMIRAL GEORGE BEALL BALCH JR.
(1821 Tennessee - 1908 North Carolina)**

**Superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy, at Annapolis, Maryland (1879 - 1881)
Insignia Number 702, Original Member of the Maryland Commandery
Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States**

**By
Douglas Niermeyer, Past Commander-in-Chief
Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States
momollus@sbcglobal.net
(September 2006)**



(Photographed circa 1878 - 1883)

U.S. Naval Historical Center Photograph NH56075

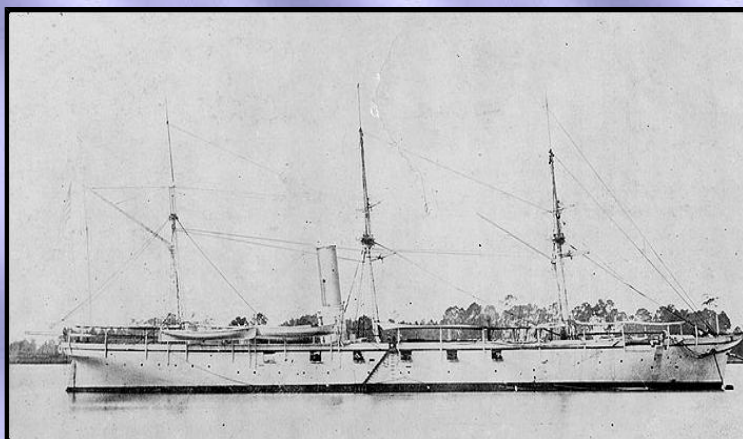
George Beall Balch Jr. was born on January 3, 1821 in Shelbyville, Tennessee, the son of George Beall Balch Sr. (1789 - 1831) and Martha Rogers Balch. George was appointed as a U.S. Navy Midshipman from the state of Alabama in late 1837, his assignments during the next dozen years included several ships, some of them serving with the African and Mediterranean Squadrons. He also took part in combat operations along the Mexican east coast during 1846 - 1847 and had two periods of duty in Washington, D.C., the last at the Naval Observatory.

He was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant in August 1850. In 1851 - 1855, he was an officer on the sloop of war *USS Plymouth* in the Far East. In April 1854, during that tour, he was wounded in action at Shanghai, China. After briefly serving in the Great Lakes' gunboat *USS Michigan* in 1855, Lieutenant Balch was assigned to the Washington Navy Yard, D.C. for nearly two years. He went back to sea in the *USS Plymouth* in 1857, when it was part of the Home Squadron, transferring to the sloop of war *USS Jamestown* later in the year. From late 1858 until October 1860, he served in the sloop of war *USS St. Mary's* on the Pacific Squadron.

As the political crisis of 1860 - 1861 developed into Civil War, Lieutenant Balch was ashore at the Naval Academy and the Naval Observatory. From mid-1861 to mid-1862, he was commanding officer of the steam sloop *USS Pocahontas*, an active blockader along the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia, and received promotion to the rank of Commander during this time. He spent most of the rest of the Civil War in command of the *USS Pawnee*, which was also employed along the Confederacy's south Atlantic coast.

While back at the Washington Navy Yard in 1865-1868, Balch was promoted to Captain. He commanded the *USS Contoocook* (renamed the *USS Albany* in 1869) during 1868-1870, then returned to the nation's capital for several assignments during the 1870s and in mid-decade was Governor of the Naval Asylum, at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After attaining the rank of Rear Admiral in June 1878, he became the Superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy, at Annapolis, Maryland (1879 - 1881). He later commanded the Pacific Station until he retired from active duty in January 1883.

George Beall Balch Jr. was married twice, first to Julia Grace Vinson, and had the following five children: George Vinsen Balch; Stephen Bloomer Balch; Julia Grace Balch; Margaret Cassandra Balch; and Harriett Ann Balch. After Julia's death, he remarried a second time to Mary Ellen Booth, and they had the following five children: Mary Ellen Balch; Alfred Balch; Anna Balch; Francis DuPont Balch; and Amy Rogers Balch. George was elected an original companion of the Maryland Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States and was an active member the rest of his life. Rear Admiral George Beall Balch Jr. died at Raleigh, North Carolina, on April 16, 1908. He is buried at the U.S. Naval Academy Cemetery.



USS Pawnee (1860 - 1884)

(Off Charleston, South Carolina, circa 1864 - 1865.
The bow is fitted with what appears to be a spar torpedo).
U.S. Naval Historical Center Photograph NH45362

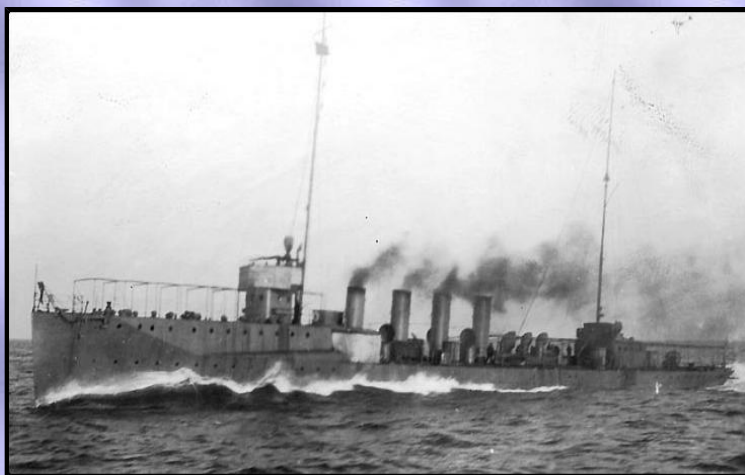
The *USS Pawnee*, a 1533-ton (displacement) light-draft steam sloop of war, was built at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, Pennsylvania. Commissioned in June 1860, the *USS Pawnee* operated off Mexico in October and November of that year, then returned to the U.S. In April 1861, the *USS Pawnee* was sent to assist in the relief of Fort Sumter, at the entrance to Charleston harbor, South Carolina, but arrived after the fort had surrendered. On April 20, the ship towed the sailing warship, the *USS Cumberland* away from the Norfolk Navy Yard, Virginia, as the facility was falling into Confederate hands. For the rest of the spring and into the summer, the *USS Pawnee* served on the Potomac River, assisting with the defense of Washington, D.C., and participating in the North's initial offensive operations against the river's Virginia shore. Among the ship's activities during this time were the occupation of Alexandria on May 24 and engagements with Confederate artillery batteries at Aquia Creek in late May and early June.

In late August 1861, the *USS Pawnee* was part of the fleet that landed troops to capture Hatteras Inlet, North Carolina. The *USS Pawnee* repeated that kind of amphibious attack in November, when Port Royal, South Carolina, was taken to provide a base for further operations against the Confederacy's Atlantic seaboard. While engaging enemy forces there, the *USS Pawnee* was hit several times and suffered the loss of two crewmen.

The *USS Pawnee* was active in South Carolina, Georgia, and northern Florida waters for the rest of the Civil War, ultimately focusing on the siege of Charleston, South Carolina. The ship participated in the capture of Fernandia, Florida, in March 1862, was a participant in several expeditions into South Carolina's coastal rivers, helped enforce the blockade, and at times served as flagship for the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

With the war at an end, in late July 1865, the *USS Pawnee* was decommissioned for repairs. The ship was recommissioned at the beginning of 1867 and, from April of that year until May 1869, operated with the Brazil Squadron off eastern South America. Again decommissioned in July 1869, the ship's engines were removed and it was fitted for use as a floating hospital and storeship. The *USS Pawnee* returned to commissioned service in those roles in December 1870 and was stationed at Key West, Florida, from early 1871 until the spring of 1875. The *USS Pawnee* was then transferred to Port Royal, South Carolina, remaining there some seven years. The *USS Pawnee* decommissioned for the final time in November 1882 and was sold in May 1884.

The Navy has named two destroyers in honor of Rear Admiral George B. Balch: *USS Balch* (Destroyer # 50, later DD-50), 1914 - 1935; and *USS Balch* (DD-363), 1936 - 1946.



USS Balch (Destroyer # 50) Renamed DD-50 in 1933 (1914 - 1935)

(Underway at high speed, while running trials, probably on February 22, 1914)

Lieutenant Commander Abraham DeSomer, USN Collection.

U.S. Naval Historical Center Photograph NH103740

The *USS Balch*, a 1036-ton Aylwin class destroyer built at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was placed in commission in March 1914. The ship served along the U.S. Atlantic Coast during the next three years. In October and November 1917, several months after the United States entered World War I, the *USS Balch* steamed across the Atlantic to Queenstown, Ireland. Based at that port during the remainder of the conflict, the ship conducted convoy and patrol operations in southwestern British waters, helping to protect shipping against German U-boats. In January and May 1918, the destroyer twice engaged enemy submarines and in November of that year rescued survivors of a sinking merchant ship. The *USS Balch* was also damaged aft in a October 20, 1918 collision with the *USS Paulding* but was repaired in a few weeks.

The *USS Balch* returned to the U.S. soon after the November 11, 1918 Armistice brought the fighting to an end. Though not usually active during the post-war years, in the spring of 1919, the *USS Balch* took part in fleet maneuvers in the Caribbean and in 1921 operated along the Atlantic coast. Decommissioned in June 1922, the *USS Balch* was laid up at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. The *USS Balch* lost its name in November 1933, becoming just DD-50, and was scrapped in 1935.



USS Balch (DD-363) (1936 - 1946)

(At anchor, circa the later 1930s)

U.S. Naval Historical Center Photograph NH97951

The *USS Balch*, a 1825-ton Porter class destroyer, was built at Quincy, Massachusetts. The ship was commissioned in October 1936 and operated in the Atlantic until sent to the Pacific a year later. During the remaining peacetime years, the *USS Balch* participated in fleet exercises and training in the waters off the west coast and in the Hawaiian area. The *USS Balch* was at sea during the December 7, 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and took an active role in the great Pacific War that followed.

The *USS Balch* was part of the carrier task force that raided the Marshall Islands and Wake in February 1942. The ship accompanied the *USS Enterprise* during the Doolittle Raid on Japan in April and the Battle of Midway in early June 1942. In the latter action, the *USS Balch* was detached to support the *USS Yorktown* and was present when that aircraft carrier sank on the morning of June 7. The *USS Balch* was again in the *USS Enterprise's* screen during the invasion of Guadalcanal and Tulagi in early August 1942 and the Battle of the Eastern Solomons later in that month.

In 1943, The *USS Balch* went north to take part in the campaign to drive the Japanese out of the Aleutian Islands. The ship returned to warmer territory in time to join the operation that seized

northern New Guinea in the spring of 1944. The following July the *USS Balch* was transferred to the Atlantic and was thereafter employed escorting convoys between the United States and North Africa. Inactive after June 1945, the *USS Balch* was placed out of commission in October and broken up for scrap in 1946.

Descendants of George Beall Balch Jr. and descendants of his siblings, are eligible for hereditary membership in the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (MOLLUS - founded by Civil War officers on April 15, 1865) and the Dames of the Loyal Legion of the United States (founded in 1899 as the auxiliary to the MOLLUS). For more information on either or both organizations, please visit each organization's national website:

[Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States](#)

[Dames of the Loyal Legion of the United States](#)

Visit the Homepage of the
[Missouri Commandery, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States](#)

Sources:

- 1) Membership Records of the Military Order of the United States.
- 2) Naval Historical Center: Rear Admiral George B. Balch, USN, (1821 - 1908)
(<http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/pers-us/uspers-b/g-balch.htm>)
- 3) Naval Historical Center: *USS Pawnee* (1860 - 1884)
(<http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/sh-usn/usnsh-p/pawnee.htm>)
- 4) Naval Historical Center: *USS Balch* (Destroyer #50, later DD-50) (1914 - 1935)
(<http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/sh-usn/usnsh-b/dd50.htm>)
- 5) Naval Historical Center: *USS Balch* (DD-363) (1936 - 1946)
(<http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/sh-usn/usnsh-b/dd363.htm>)
- 6) RootsWeb's WorldConnect Project: *The Johnson - Freeburn Genealogy*. St. Mary's County, Maryland & Dauphin County, Pennsylvania & Related Families
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