

## MILITARY ORDER OF THE LOYAL LEGION OF THE UNITED STATES



### *Loyal Legion Vignettes*



**REAR ADMIRAL OSCAR WALTER FARENHOLT, USN  
(1843 Texas - 1920 California)**

**Insignia Number 6503, Original Member of the California Commandery  
Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States**

**By**

**Douglas Niermeyer, Commander-in-Chief  
Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States**

**[momollus@sbcglobal.net](mailto:momollus@sbcglobal.net)**

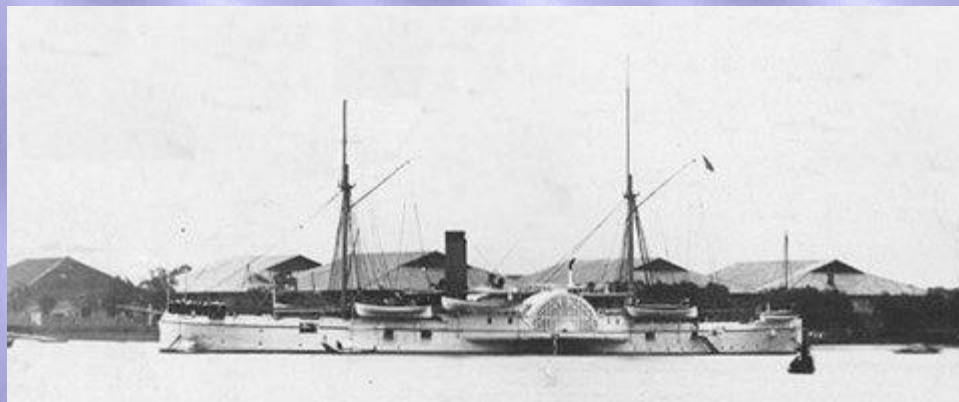
**(July 2005)**



**Rear Admiral Oscar Walter Farenholt, USN, was born May 2, 1843 in San Antonio, Texas. His parents were German immigrants who had settled on a ranch on the Salado River, near San Antonio, Texas in 1842, not many miles from the famous Alamo mission. Until he was eight years old, he spoke, and was taught, only in the German language. At the age of eight he was sent to New Orleans to a French school and there learned his first English. He remained in this school until he was twelve years old, and then entered the Preparatory University-school at Donaldsonville, near Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Some years later he got into a boyish scrape, and thinking it meant dismissal he went to New Orleans, and following the strong inclination he always had for the sea, shipped as a boy on board the American sailing ship *Saint Charles*, bound for New York with a load of cotton. He continued sailing as a merchant-sailor until the outbreak of the Civil War.**

He enlisted in the U.S. Navy as a Seaman in New York on April 18, 1861 after three years in the merchant service. Seaman Farenholt initially served on the frigate *USS Wabash*, consisting of three 12 pounder boat howitzers, which took part as artillery in amphibious operations all along the South Atlantic coast. He participated in engagements and battles at Fort Hatteras, North Carolina, Port Royal, South Carolina, Fort Pulaski, Georgia, etc. As an ordinary seaman on the gun crew he was severely wounded at the battle of Pocotaligo, South Carolina on October 22, 1862 and was discharged from the Navy. After recovering from his wounds he reentered the U.S. Navy in February, 1863, was assigned to the monitor *USS Catskill* and was in almost daily engagements with defences of Charleston, South Carolina from April 1863 to April 1864 and participated in the unsuccessful storming party of Fort Sumter in September, 1863. Distinguished service led to his appointment as Acting Ensign on August 19, 1864. He was in command of the mortar schooner *USS Henry James* attached to the squadron in the Sounds of North Carolina later that year, participating in the recapture of Plymouth, and several engagements on the Roanoke, Chowan, and Black Water rivers and capture of Fort Fisher, North Carolina.

After the Civil War he held various duties and was promoted to Command Ensign on March 12, 1868, Master on December 18, 1868, Lieutenant on March 21, 1870, Lieutenant Commander on May 11, 1882, in 1890 he was on sea duty attached to the *USS Pinta* which was in port in Sitka Borough, Alaska, and he was promoted to Commander on June 19, 1892. During the Spanish-American War, he was in command of the *USS Monocacy*, who acted as base of procurement at Shanghai for Dewey's fleet in the Spanish-American War. The *USS Monocacy*, had a wooden corvette, 1,370 tons; 850 horse-power; 11 knots speed. Armament—Two 60-pounder breech-loading rifles, four 8-inch smooth-bore guns, two small guns, eight Hotchkiss cannon and one Gatling.



USS Monocacy at Shanghai, 1898.

After Spanish-American War Oscar served at the Boston Navy Yard and at the Naval War College in February, 1899. He was promoted Captain in September, 1900, served as Commandant of the Navy Yard at Cavite in the Philippine Islands in 1901, was Commander of the monitor *USS Monadnock* in the Asiatic station during 1901, was promoted Rear Admiral September 1, 1901, the first enlisted man in the Navy to reach flag rank, and voluntarily retired after giving 40 years of active service.

Oscar married Miss Ella Mortimer Ames (born 1848 in Massachusetts). Rear Admiral Farenholt retired September 1, 1901 and died June 30, 1920 at Mare Island, California. Ella died March 21, 1925 in California and both are buried at the San Francisco National Cemetery.

Oscar and Ella (Ames) Farenholt has one child, Ammen C. Farenholt, RADM USN(MC), who was born on December 9, 1871 in Norfolk, Virginia. He was also a hereditary member of the California Commandery of the MOLLUS, Insignia Number 9999. Ammen graduated from Harvard in 1893 with an MD and entered the naval service as an assistant surgeon May 29, 1894, and was promoted to the grade of passed assistant surgeon May 29, 1897. He served with Dewey at Manila, in the Philippine Insurrection, and on the China Coast serving on many ships including the *USS Baltimore*, *USS Oregon*, *USS Maryland*, *USS Independence*, etc. He attained the rank of Lieutenant on December



26, 1900, and was a passed Assistant Surgeon in the Navy with the rank of Lieutenant. From December 26, 1900, to April 12, 1901, he was on sea duty attached to the *USS Concord*. From April 12, 1901, to July 27, 1901, he was on sea duty attached to the *USS Oregon*. In 1920, he was stationed in Vallejo, California at the Navy Yard on Mare Island. He was Commander of the Hospital Ship *Mercy* in 1921 and later the Commanding Officer of the U.S. Naval Hospitals on Mare Island, California, at Great Lakes, Illinois in the 1920s, and Puget Sound, Washington. He was promoted to Rear Admiral December 7, 1926, was the Medical Inspector of Naval Medical Corps activities on the East Coast in 1930, and Assistant to the Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in Washington. He was appointed Inspector of the Medical Department activities of the West Coast August 24, 1931 and retired January 1, 1936. In addition to MOLLUS he was a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, a member of the American Medical Association, the New York Yacht Club, a contributor to the Naval Medical Bulletin and Naval Institute, received campaign awards, and a citation for services in World War I.

Ammen was married on August 11, 1927 in New York, New York to Mrs. William H. Whiting (Henrietta Petronilla Afong). She was born 1870 in Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii the daughter of Chun Afong and Julia Hope Kamakaia Paaikamokulani-O-Kinau Fairweather. During his life, Ammen donated many photographs and artifacts to Naval History Department including a photograph of the iron-clad *CSS Albemarle*, which was later used to help create the working scale model. A street at the Naval Medical Center in San Diego bears his name as well. Henrietta died February 11, 1940 in San Diego, California, and Ammen died February 12, 1956 in San Diego, California. Both are buried at the San Francisco National Cemetery.



Naval History Center Photograph #42368, Staff of Great Lakes Naval Hospital, Great Lakes, Illinois, Circa 1924 - 27

[Front Row Center: Ammen C. Farenholt, RADM USN(MC) Commanding Officer of the U.S. Naval Hospital]

Rear Admiral Oscar Walter Farenholt was a member (Insignia Number 6503) of the California Commandery of the MOLLUS and, as such, gave the following MOLLUS WAR Papers on his personal experiences during the Civil War:

***FROM ORDINARY SEAMAN TO REAR ADMIRAL***

By Commander Oscar Walter Farenholt, Rear Admiral USN

**THE MONITOR "CATSKILL", A YEAR'S REMINISCENCES 1863-1864**

**By Commander Oscar Walter Farenholt, Rear Admiral USN**

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**SHIPS NAMED FOR REAR ADMIRAL OSCAR WALTER FARENHOLT**



*USS Farenholt DD-332*

The *USS Farenholt DD-332* was launched on March 9, 1921 by the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation, San Francisco, California. It was sponsored by Mrs. Richard H. Fairweather. The ship was commissioned May 10, 1921 with Commander N.W. Post in command. The *Farenholt* had a distinguished service from 1921 to 1929 in the Pacific and the Caribbean playing a part in the development of naval warfare which was to later made possible the great victories of World War II. She was decommissioned February 20, 1930, and after scrapping, was sold as a hulk June 10, 1931, in accordance with the terms of the London Treaty limiting naval armament (see *USS Farenholt DD-332* for more ship history).



*USS Farenholt DD-491*

The *USS Farenholt DD-491* was launched on November 19, 1941 by Bethlehem Steel Company, Staten Island, New York. It was sponsored by Miss N. L. Garland, great-grandniece of Admiral Farenholt. The ship was commissioned April 2, 1942 with Lieutenant Commander E. T. Seaward in command. The *Farenholt* had a very distinguished service from 1941 to 1945 in the Pacific during World War II and received 11 battle stars for World War II service. On December 8, 1945 she arrived in Charleston, South Carolina and was placed out of commission in reserve at Charleston April 26, 1946 (see *USS Farenholt DD-491* for more ship history).



**Visit the Transcribed War Papers of the  
[Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States](#)**

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**Sources:**

1. Membership Records of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States.
2. *Who's Who*, Oscar (v.1, p.384) and Ammen (v.5, p.224).
3. *USS Farenholt DD-491* (<http://www.domeisland.com/benson-gleavesclass/ussfarenholt/namesake491.html>)
4. *USS Farenholt DD-332* (<http://www.historycentral.com/navy/destroyer/Farenholtdd332.html>)
5. USS Farenholt DD-491 Association (<http://www.geocities.com/farenholt/index.html>)
6. *USS Monocacy* (<http://www.ls.net/~newriver/spanam/usn1898.htm>)
7. Civil War Naval Chronology 1861-1865  
(<http://www.civilwarlandscapes.org/cwla/chr/calendar/1862/621022.htm>)
8. Naval History Center (<http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/prs-tpic/nurses/nrs-g.htm>)
9. San Francisco National Cemetery ([http://128.121.240.77/data/us/ca/sanfran/sfnat/san\\_fran\\_fanfis.htm](http://128.121.240.77/data/us/ca/sanfran/sfnat/san_fran_fanfis.htm))
10. *CSS Albemarle, Ironclad* (<http://www.livinghistoryweekend.com/new%20site/albemarle.htm>)

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