

Iowa's Notable Dead

DR. ROBERT GAYLORD DAVIS, rear admiral U. S. Navy, retired, died at San Diego, California, November 8, 1948; born on a farm near Indianola, Iowa, May 31, 1883, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Bert Davis, long-time residents of the county; attended Mt. Hope district school, Indianola high school, and graduated from Simpson college in 1905, of which class his brother, Commander John G. Davis, of Indianola, was also a member; graduated from a four-year course at Rush Medical college, Chicago; served his internship in the Presbyterian hospital in Chicago; practiced medicine a year in Des Moines, and entered the U. S. navy as surgeon in 1912; the brother, John G., also becoming interested in military medicine, took a medical course, and joined the navy two years later; their grandfather, Gen. John G. Moore, served as surgeon general of the U. S. army from 1886 to 1900.

While in Chicago Dr. Gaylord Davis in 1910 married Vera Harpley, of Rockford, Illinois, who survives him; ranking as commander in World War I, distinguished himself as chief naval officer of the transport Northern Pacific, returning convalescent soldiers and sailors to the United States, struck a rock in outer New York harbor and sank; but Dr. Davis brought every patient off the vessel and ashore unharmed; advanced to the rank of captain he was one of the first naval medical men to be assigned to the naval air corps; in 1941 assigned to command of the naval hospital at Cavite in Manila bay, and on duty when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and Manila; taken prisoner he set up medical services for American prisoners at Bilibid prison, spent three years in Jap prison camps in the Philippines, Formosa, Japan and Manchuria, in one the companion of General Wainwright and other American officers; released by the Russians August 20, 1945, taken by plane to India, Africa and home across the Atlantic, retiring as captain shortly after; recognized a year ago by advancement to rank of rear admiral in retirement, a rank seldom attained by naval medical men; residing at San Diego he became critically ill a few months ago, the result of malaria contracted in prison camps, one lung being removed, but in his weakened condition, could not recover; besides his brother, Commander John G. Davis, who attended him, is survived by the widow, and two sisters, Miss Elsie and Miss Blanche Davis, also of Indianola.

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