

NOTABLE DEATHS

GEORGE SABIN GIBBS, major general U. S. Army (retired), and business executive, died January 8, 1947, at Miami, Florida; born December 14, 1875, at Harlan, Iowa; graduated from the Harlan high school in 1892, from the State University of Iowa in 1897, taking his master's degree in 1901. Beginning his extended military service as a private in the U. S. army, later became a sergeant, then first lieutenant, signal officer, U. S. volunteers in the Philippine campaign in the Spanish-American war and during the Philippine insurrection. While a sergeant in the signal corps, he was cited for gallantry in action against the Spanish forces at Manila, in August, 1898, participating in twenty-eight engagements, or skirmishes, between August and December, 1899. In February 1901, he was appointed a first lieutenant in the signal corps of the U. S. regular army.

From 1901 to 1903 he was sent to Alaska, where he explored on snowshoes and with dog team three hundred miles of the Tanana river, completing over seven hundred miles of military telegraph lines in the Yukon and Tanana valleys. Returning to the United States he was stationed at various military posts in the office of the Chief signal officer.

He was awarded the following citations and decorations: War Dept. citation for gallantry in action at Manila, August 13, 1898; Commander of the Order of the Crown (Belgian); Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George (British); Commander of the Order of the Crown (Italian); and Officer of the Legion of Honor (French).

In October 1931, he was elected president of the Postal Telegraph Cable company, with headquarters in New York City. He became vice-president of the International Telephone and Telegraph corporation, in charge of its telegraph, cable and radio communications. At the date of his assumption of the duties of this office he was warmly commended in a letter to him for his long and faithful military service by General Douglas McArthur, chief of staff of the U. S. army.

Since 1943 he has been a director and vice-chairman of the Federal Telephone and Radio corporation, I. T. & T. manufacturing affiliate.

Three sons of Major General Gibbs served in World War II, one of them was commander of a cruiser that saw active combat service at Sicily and another, a colonel of field artillery, seriously wounded in action in Africa.

In 1906, General Gibbs, then a captain, saw service in Cuba with a signal corps company, later commanding signal corps companies at various posts in the U. S., and was at one time department signal officer in Hawaii. When trouble arose on the Mexican border in July, 1916, he was ordered to El Paso.

Upon the outbreak of World War I, he was ordered to service at Washington, D. C., in the office of the chief signal officer, and in September, 1917, he was ordered to France, given a temporary rank of colonel and later brigadier general, serving as assistant to the chief signal officer of the American Expeditionary Forces. In December, 1917, he was an observer with the British First Army, and later saw service in the Aisne-Marne and Meuse-Argonne offensives of the American forces.

Beginning in May, 1922, and until June, 1923, he was detailed as executive officer to the assistant secretary of war, in which detail he was ordered to temporary duty at The Hague, Holland, as assistant military advisor to John Bassett Moore, then attending the commission of jurists to consider revision of the rules of war. In 1924 he supervised completion of the Ketchikan-Seward cable in Alaskan waters. On January 9, 1928, he was appointed chief signal officer of the army with the rank of major general, and on June 30, 1931, he retired from the active list of the army, after thirty-two years of continuous service, being one of two or three men who rose from service as a private to the rank of major general in the American army.

He married the former Ruth Annis Hobby on October 9, 1899, and they had four children, Mrs. George K. Perkins, Robert H., George W. and David P. Gibbs, the last three being officers in the armed services.—Ed. S. White.

EARL E. MAY, seedman, nurseryman and broadcaster, of Shenandoah, Iowa, died in St. Mary's hospital, Duluth, Minnesota, December 18, 1946; born on a ranch near Hayes Center, Nebraska, March 21, 1888, the son of Richard May and Rosa Ernest May, pioneers; graduated from the Hayes Center high school in 1906; taught a rural school near Wauneta, Nebraska, entered the normal college at Fremont, Nebraska, completing the course in 1910, when he became principal of Hayes Center high school; entered University of Michigan law school, but in 1913, his junior year, was cut short by the illness of his father and he returned home to Hayes Center again becoming principal of the high school there; later entered the University of Nebraska and received his LL.B. degree in 1915; also received an honorary degree from Tarkio college in 1938; the practice of law not appealing to him, and having traveled for the

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.