

HENRY WINSLOW FITCH  
CHIEF ENGINEER, U. S. NAVY, DECEASED

Henry Winslow Fitch was born in Nantucket, Massachusetts on April 11, 1833. He was appointed Third Assistant Engineer in the U. S. Navy on May 3, 1859, and was promoted as follows: Second Assistant Engineer, October 3, 1861; First Assistant Engineer, May 20, 1863; Chief Engineer, with relative rank of Lieutenant Commander, to date from March 4, 1871; and Chief Engineer with rank of Commander, February 28, 1889. He was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy, for incapacity resulting from an incident of service (Section 1453-R.S.), on September 29, 1894, after thirty-five years and five months in the Naval Service, and in 1906, was advanced to Chief Engineer, with relative rank of Captain, on the Retired List.

Accepting his appointment as Third Assistant Engineer from Fairhaven, Massachusetts, on May 9, 1859, he was assigned special duty at the Boston Locomotive Works, reporting on May 12. He was detached on September 24 of the same year and ordered to the USS NARRAGANSETT, a steam sloop which, after her commissioning at the Boston Navy Yard on November 6, sailed for Norfolk, Virginia, thence to Pacific Station, reaching her destination on March 31, 1860. He was detached on September 20, 1861, with orders home. After examination for his first promotion, he had brief duty at Novelty Iron Works, New York, New York.

He next served on board the U. S. Gunboat KENNEBEC, a unit of West Gulf Blockading Squadron, and in that vessel participated in the attack on the fort at Grand Gulf, Mississippi, on July 22, 1862, during the early period of the Civil War. On December 31, 1863, he was detached from the KENNEBEC for duty on board the USS PENSACOLA, Receiving Ship at New Orleans, Louisiana. He served in that steam sloop until April 25, 1864, and on May 14 was again assigned special duty at the Novelty Iron Works.

On April 14, 1865, he was ordered to the USS PROLIC, operating from European Station. Remaining in European waters for four years, he then returned to the United States and on June 19, 1869 was assigned special duty at Ead's Gun Carriage, Fort Hamilton, New York. On June 1, 1871 he was detached and granted leave for one year. Under orders of April 20, 1872, he departed for Asiatic Station to join the USS LACKAWANNA. That steam sloop was flagship of the Station from December 1872 through March 1873. When detached in May 1875, he returned home, and soon reported as Coal Inspector at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He remained in Philadelphia until December 29, 1877, with duty from September 16, 1875, as a Member of the Board of Examining Engineers.

Reporting to the Navy Department, Washington, D. C., for a tour of duty in the Bureau of Steam Engineering, he served as Acting Chief of the Bureau from July 1 to August 15, 1881. In August 1882 he joined the U. S. Steam Sloop POWHATAN, on North Atlantic Station. After three years' service at sea, he returned to the Board of Examining Engineers for further duty, and from November 1886 to March 1888 served as its President.

His next special duty, at William Cramp and Sons, Philadelphia, was concerned with the inspection of Cruiser No. 1, which was later named USS NEWARK and commissioned on February 2, 1891. This preceded a tour of duty from August 1888 until September 1893, as Head of the Department of Steam Engineering at the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland. On October 29, 1893, he was ordered to the USS SAN FRANCISCO, then operating from South American Station. He was invalided home on January 13, 1894, arriving February 4, and upon recommendation of the Retiring Board was granted six months' sick leave, dating from March 20, that year.

After his retirement on September 29, 1894, he had active duty during the Spanish-American War, reporting on May 14, 1898, for duty in connection with the Coast Defense System at New York, later called the Auxiliary Naval Force. He was relieved of all active duty on August 26, 1898. He was entitled to the Civil War Medal and the Spanish Campaign Medal.