

This Day in History... January 3, 1876

Birth of John McCloy

US Navy Lieutenant Commander John McCloy was born on January 3, 1876, in Brewster, New York. Serving with the Navy for 30 years, he's one of just 19 servicemen to receive two Medals of Honor.

McCloy joined the Merchant Marine when he was 15 years old, and later joined the US Navy on March 7, 1898. During his early career, he served aboard the USS *Columbia*, USS *Monterey*, *Manila*, *Gardoqui*, *Arayat*, and *Newark*.

McCloy was serving aboard the cruiser *Newark* in June 1900 when he took part in a landing force at Peking, China, during the Boxer Rebellion. He earned a Medal of Honor for his bravery, that stated, "In action with the relief expedition of the Allied forces in China, 13, 20, 21, and 22 June 1900. During this period and in the presence of the enemy, Coxswain McCloy distinguished himself by meritorious conduct." In the years that followed, he often downplayed his award, saying, "Every man in the company deserved a Medal of Honor."



McCloy earned Medals of Honor for his service during the Boxer Rebellion and Occupation of Vera Cruz.

dying, McCloy held his position for 48 hours commanding his troops while under constant attack. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for "eminent and conspicuous conduct" and "extraordinary heroism" at Vera Cruz. To date, he's one of only 19 servicemen to receive the Medal of Honor twice.

McCloy returned to the US to recover from his injuries, but returned to duty aboard the USS *Tennessee* and *Maine*. He served as Assistant to the Captain of the Yard at the Boston Navy Yard in Massachusetts and was temporarily made an ensign during World War I. During that conflict, he commanded the tugs *Ontario* and *Favorite*, again being temporarily promoted to lieutenant.



McCloy was a founding member of the first American Legion post in New Jersey.



McCloy stamp from the 2010 Distinguished Sailors issue

McCloy re-enlisted in 1901 and went on to serve aboard the *Manila*, *Alliance*, *Atlanra*, *Galveston*, *Hancock*, *Franklin*, and *Lebanon*. After a brief term at the Key West, Florida Naval Station, he was posted to the USS *Florida* in 1913.

A diplomatic incident called the Tampico Affair arose in 1914, leading to the US invasion of Vera Cruz. McCloy's orders as "Beachmaster" (officer in charge of a beach section) were to set up a signal station to coordinate the landings and evacuate the wounded. On April 22, 1914, McCloy was leading three picket launches (small boats carrying soldiers) onto the shore of Vera Cruz.

Mexican forces concentrated their fire on McCloy's position and inflicted heavy casualties. Shot in the thigh and surrounded by the dead and



McCloy earned the Navy Cross for minesweeping duties following World War I.

After the war, McCloy commanded the minesweeper *Curley*, clearing mines in the North Sea, for which he earned a Navy Cross. After receiving a permanent promotion to lieutenant, he commanded the minesweepers *Comorant* and *Lark*. His final post was aboard the destroyer tender *Dobbin* before he retired in October 1928.

During his career, McCloy served as national commander of the Legion of Valor, was a companion of the Naval Order of the United States, was active in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and founded the first American Legion post in New Jersey. He was a member of the Military Order of the Dragon and other awards during his career included the Sampson Medal, Spanish Campaign Medal, Philippine Campaign Medal, China Relief Expedition Medal, Mexican Service Medal, World War I Victory Medal, and Conspicuous Service Cross. McCloy died on May 24, 1945. In 1963, a destroyer escort, the USS *McCloy*, was named in his honor.

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