

## OBITUARY

### INGÉNIEUR GÉNÉRAL HYDROGRAPHE Guy CHATEL (1906-1990)

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Ingénieur Général Hydrographe (Reserve List) Guy CHATEL passed away on 19 December 1990 in his 85th year, at Versailles (France).

Born on 10 September 1906 at Morlaix, of a family having Breton origins, Guy CHATEL entered the Ecole Polytechnique in 1927 and, on leaving in 1929, opted for the Hydrographic Engineers' Corps, starting out on a long career of 43 years in the service of hydrography.



After a period of training at the 'Ecole d'Application du Service Hydrographique' (in Paris and on board the B.H. UTILE), and then on the cruiser-training-school vessel ('croiseur-école d'application des enseignes de vaisseau') DUQUESNE, he took part for four years (1931-1935), on board the B.H. GASTON RIVIER and UTILE, in hydrographic surveys and dredging off the northern coast of Brittany and in the Straits of Dover. When a confirmed Hydrographer, he was in charge, as Ingénieur de 1<sup>ère</sup> classe, of the Hydrographic Mission in Indochina on board the ANTARES and later on board the ALTAIR

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(1935-1936), then as Ingénieur Principal of the Hydrographic Mission of Tunisia on board the YPRES (1939). In between these missions, he was assigned to various sectors of the Hydrographic Office and became interested, in addition to his main duties, in the 'coastal regime' in which he became a renowned specialist and lecturer at the 'Ecole d'application du Service Hydrographique'.

His purely hydrographic career was interrupted by the war. He was in charge of the Service of magnetic mine-sweeping for coastal defence at Le Havre when the mine-sweeper JEAN FRANÇOIS, on which he was serving, was blown up by a mine (1940). He was successively assigned to Cherbourg, Brest, Casablanca, Paris and Toulon, and then was put in charge of the Hydrographic and Oceanographic Mission of the Côte d'Ivoire (1942-1943), which had as its objective to study the piercing of the Lagoon of Abidjan and the project of exploiting the thermal energy of the seas on the promising site of the 'Trou sans fond'. He then returned to Casablanca where, as a young Chief Engineer, he became Deputy Director of the branch of the Hydrographic Office with the function of supplying the Free French Naval Forces with nautical documents (1943-1944).

After the war, apart from his assignment as Chief of Mission to the Hydrographic Mission of the Coasts of France (1947-1949) on board the AMIRAL MOUCHEZ, Guy CHATEL took up his duties at the Central Hydrographic Service in Paris, successively as Deputy to the Head of the Mission Section (1944-1947 and 1949-1954), as Head of the Section Workshops and Stores (1954-1963), as Deputy Director (1963-1964), as Ingénieur Général de 2<sup>ème</sup> classe, and finally as Director (1964-1967), as Ingénieur Général de 1<sup>ère</sup> classe.

His professional experience and equally great human values, as well as his complete devotion to the Service guided him faultlessly to the ultimate Directorship of the Hydrographic Office. He assumed responsibility, under very difficult conditions at times, for the most important changes hydrography had known since BEAUTEMPS BEAUPRÉ. The post-war technical revolution, the increase and diversification of military and civil requirements, convinced him of the need to strengthen international collaboration between Hydrographic Offices. Thus he became a candidate for and was elected President of the Directing Committee of the International Hydrographic Bureau at the IXth International Hydrographic Conference in 1967. During his five-year term of office (September 1967 to September 1972) highlighted by the coming into being in 1971 of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), he put into effect the new ideas which were spreading through the various Hydrographic Offices and whose success would be assured by the grouping together of individual efforts, and a desire for standardization: starting up the work on international charts, promotion of the metric system, creation of regional hydrographic commissions, centralisation and exchange of tidal data as well as development of the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO), etc.

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After he left active service in 1972, Guy CHATEL belonged to numerous scientific societies and received important honours: 'Commandeur de la Légion d'Honneur, Croix de Guerre 1939-1945, Commandeur du Mérite Maritime, Officier des Palmes Académiques, Commandeur de l'Etoile Noire, Chevalier du Dragon d'Annam'. He leaves behind him the memory of a sincere and competent man, very demanding with himself, kindled with justice and goodness, both in his work and in his role of exemplary father and husband.

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