

OBITUARY NOTICE

Rear Admiral Johan Marie PHAFF

(1857-1945)

Rear Admiral Johan Marie Phaff died on 23rd July 1945 at the age of 89.

Born on 19th February 1857 he entered the Royal Netherlands Navy in 1876 and during his service at sea took an effective part in the surveys of the Netherlands coasts and the Dutch Colonies.

He entered the Hydrographic Service of the Ministry of Marine in 1892, appointed Assistant to the Chief of the Hydrographic Service in 1899, head of the Netherlands Hydrographic Service in 1914 he occupied this post until 1920 upon retiring from active service.

As Chief of the Netherlands Hydrographic Service Captain J.M. Phaff attended the 1st International Hydrographic Conference, held in London in 1919, as Delegate. He was elected Member of the Directing Committee of the International Hydrographic Bureau in 1921 and as such contributed to establish in the Principality of Monaco, this new international organism of which he undertook the first activities and became 2nd President thereof in 1926 after the death of Sir John Parry.

He organised also the 2nd International Hydrographic Conference of Monaco in November 1926 and soon after retired in the vicinity, at Beau-soleil (Alpes-Maritimes).

He specialised in the study of tides and Johan Marie Phaff made analyses of the very numerous current observations systematically collected on board light-vessels all along the Netherlands coasts, from the mouth of the Schelde to the Frisian Islands (*Bijdrage tot de Kennis der Getijden in de Noordzee* — A study on North Sea Currents, 1898). He was the Author of the *Hydrographische Tafelen* published in 1902.

Protagonist of the Harmonic method of Van der Stock, in 1926 he drew up a Manual on Investigation of Harmonic Constants, Prediction of Tides and Currents, and their description by means of these Constants (Special Publication n° 12 of the International Hydrographic Bureau, Monaco) accompanied by Tables for their calculation.

A study was also made by Admiral Phaff on *International Low Water*, i.e. : the most suitable level for sounding reduction on charts when the local tide are of the diurnal, the semi-diurnal or mixed system—this study was published in the *Hydrographic Review*, Vol. II, n° 2, Monaco 1925.

The first volumes of the *Hydrographic Review* also contain numerous articles by Admiral Phaff on tides and currents, on the visibility of lights at sea deducted from reciprocal observations collected at light stations and on the so much argued question of the standardisation of buoyage off the coasts and in coastal waterways.

Johan Marie Phaff was married to Hester Christina Broers who died in 1937. His son is Johan Jacob Aernout Phaff, Inspector of the Registration and Domanial Administration at Amsterdam, his daughter Johanna Huberta Phaff married to Major W.F.A.C. van Woerden of the Netherlands Army at Naarden, and he had grand-children from his predeceased daughter Françoise Wilhelmina Phaff, wife of P. S. R. Boom, Insurance-broker at Baarn.

His collaborators were very much attached to him for his good nature and kindness.

He passed away after several months illness which obliged him to remain in his residence at Beausoleil. Although separated from his children owing to war conditions, a circle of a few faithful friends and the devoted attention from his grand-daughter were a great help to him during his loneliness and an appeasement to his suffering, at the last.

Admiral Phaff was a Commander of the Order of Saint Charles. Knight of the Order of the Netherlands Lion, of the Order of Orange-Nassau Knighthood, decorated of the Atjah Expeditionary Medal and of the Active Service XL Cross.

H. B.

