



P. DE VANSSAY DE BLAVOUS

## OBITUARY NOTICE

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### Ingénieur hydrographe général Pierre de VANSAY de BLAVOUS

(1869-1947)

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Born at Caen (Orne) on 15th January 1869, Ingénieur hydrographe général P. de Vansay de Blavous entered the "Ecole Polytechnique", Paris, in 1889. Having finished his training at this School he was nominated, in 1891, to the "Corps des ingénieurs hydrographes" of the French Navy, and in 1892 had joined the French Coast Hydrographic Commission which was then, under the leadership of Ingénieur F. Hannusse, carrying out operations between Le Croisic and St. Gildas, when he surveyed the estuary of the Loire, the approaches to St. Nazaire and the coast as far as the Fromentine Narrows.

In 1895, with Ingénieur J. Renaud he took part in the survey of the mouth of the River Seine and in the same year was Chief of a Magnetic Observations party in Senegal; he then participated in hydrographic surveys of the South Coast of France under the leadership, successively, of Ingénieurs Favé and Mion; during this period the following surveys were carried out :—

In 1896, from Bec de l'Aigle to Gien peninsula; in 1897, survey of the Hyères roads and of the coast from Cape Roux to the River Var including the Lérins Islands and the Golfe Juan roads.

In 1898 the same commission surveyed the South Coast of France from La Garoupe Point to Cap Martin with the approaches to Nice, Villefranche, Beaulieu, Monaco and Menton.


In 1901 and 1902, as Ingénieur hydrographe principal M. de Vansay de Blavous was Chief of the Madagascar Hydrographic Commission on board the surveying vessel *La Rance* (Cdt. : Commander Le Cannelier) when a survey was made of the coast and of Pracel Bank in the vicinity of Cape St. André and of the Mitsio Islands group on the North-West coast of the island. A survey of Ambavato Bay was also carried out and, near Antsirane, a plan of the "Baie des Amis".

On his return to France he was detached to the Brittany Coasts Hydrographic Commission, with Ingénieurs hydrographes Laporte and Rollet de l'Isle. From 1903 to 1905, this party was engaged in a survey from Penmarch' Point to Trévignon Point and in a detailed examination of Audierne Bay, of Loctudy and Bénodet Coves and the Glénan Islands.

From 1906 to 1907, Ingénieur de Vansay de Blavous was Chief of the Indo-China Hydrographic Commission on board the surveying vessel *La Manche* (cdt. : Commander Rageot de la Touche), making surveys, in Tonkin, of Halong Bay and "Ile des Merveilles" : in Cam-Ranh Bay, Annam; then, in Cochin-China, of the approaches to Cape St. Jacques and of the rivers flowing into the estuary.

From 1910 to 1911 he was Chief of a second Indo-China Hydrographic Commission, again on the surveying vessel *La Manche* (cdts. : Commanders Borsat de la Pérouse and Voisin). During this period the following surveys were made from Tonkin and Fai-Tsi-Long Islands: the approaches of Quan Lan Cape, Laï Tao Island, Cua Nuam Trieu Bar, entrance to Haiphong River; then the coasts of Annam, from Baké to Kéga Point and Nhatrang Bay : finally, in Cochin-China a survey of Cua Tieu estuary was made.

During the first world war, promoted to the rank of Ingénieur hydrographe en chef de deuxième classe on 18th January 1916, M. de Vansay de Blavous was detached to the Staff of an army on the French front where he was responsible for the cartographic services of the



« Groupe des canevass de tir ». During the last two years of the war (1917-1918), he was detached to Headquarters of the French Armies operating in Northern Italy.

In 1919 he was promoted to Ingénieur hydrographe en chef de première classe and was given charge of the General Hydrographic Division of the Central Hydrographic Office, Paris, which post he filled to the end of 1926; his duties there included the organization of French Hydrographic Commissions to the Colonies and the publication of charts of the French dependencies and foreign waters. In this year he was chosen as a Member of the French Delegation to the Second International Hydrographic Conference at Monaco and at the close of the Conference was elected Director of the International Hydrographic Bureau.

He took office as Director of the International Hydrographic Bureau, Monaco, on 1st February 1927 and from 1929 to 1932, as a result of the death of Rear-Admiral Niblack, U.S.N., he exercised the functions of President of the Directing Committee of this international institution.

Twice his mandate as Director of the International Hydrographic Bureau was renewed: in 1932 and in 1937 by the International Hydrographic Conferences then held.

Ingénieur hydrographe général de Vanssay de Blavous had just completed his third mandate to the Directorship of the International Hydrographic Bureau and was preparing to retire when he died as the result of an operation on 19th August 1947 at Autun (Saône-et-Loire) where he was spending his period of leave.

Ingénieur hydrographe général de Vanssay de Blavous had taken part in France in numerous Nautical Commissions for the study of the improvement of sea-Ports. He was a Member of the Hydrographic Committee; Member of the National Committee on Geodesy and Geophysics (Sections of Oceanography, Terrestrial Magnetism and Atmospheric Electricity); Member of the International Commission for the Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean Sea; "Lauréat de l'Académie des Sciences"; Correspondent of the "Institut" and Member of the "Académie Méditerranéenne".

He represented the International Hydrographic Bureau at the International Congress of Oceanography, Marine Hydrography and Continental Hydrology held at Seville in 1929 and at the Conference of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics held at Stockholm in 1930.

The following honorary distinctions had been conferred upon him :—

Commander of the "Légion d'honneur"; French "Croix de Guerre" (1914-1918) with palm; "Officier d'Académie"; Commemorative Medal of the Great War (1914-1918); Victory Medal; Commemorative Medal of Madagascar Campaign (1895); Companion of the British Order of St. Michael and St. George; Officer of the Order of the Italian Crown; Commander of the Order of the Sacred Treasure of Japan.

He was the author of the following publications :—

French Charts drawn up from Surveys made under the leadership of M. de Vanssay de Blavous : Nos. 5240, 5241, 5506 (Madagascar) ; Nos. 5428, 5430, 5495, 5427, 5564, 5414, 5489 (Indo-China).

Report on the Survey carried out in Madagascar (*Annales Hydrographiques*, 1906).

Reports on the Surveys carried out in Indo-China (*Annales Hydrographiques*, 1913).

Reports on Nautical Commissions (*Recherches Hydrographiques sur le régime des côtes*, Volumes 17, 18 and 19).

Complete Report on the Magnetic Surveys organized by the « Bureau des Longitudes » in 1895-1896 (*Annales du Bureau des Longitudes*).

Note on the Determination of Absolute Values of Magnetic Elements (Printed by the « Service hydrographique »).

Note on the Use of Aerial Photography in connection with Cartography (*Annales Hydrographiques*, 1917).

Note on the Adjustment of a Chain of Triangles (*Annales Hydrographiques*, 1925-1926).

Growth and Purpose of the International Hydrographic Bureau (communicated to the « Académie de Marine », 11th September, 1918, Vol. VII).

Among his contributions to the *Hydrographic Review* are the following :—

Use of Aircraft for Surveying (various articles, 1927-1940).

Conformal Projections of the Ellipsoid (1939-1940).

Use of the Properties of the Arc containing an Angle (position line) in Navigation and in Hydrographic Surveys (1930).

The Position at Sea by Radiogoniometric Bearings (1933-1935).

Slope Corrections for Echo Soundings (with tables and diagrams) (1933).

Systems of Plane Projection for plotting Hydrographic Surveys (1930).

Calculation of the Geographical Coordinates on the International Ellipsoid (1929).

Ellipse of Errors in the Determination of Geodetic Points (1936).

Compensation of a Polygon with a Central Station (1932).

On Refraction and Refraction Tables (1944).

Generalization of the Conformal Conic Projection and the Double Circular Projection of the Sphere (1937).

Table of the Stereographic Polar Projection between Latitudes 39° and 51° (1941).

Change of Projection by a Projective Transformation (1946).

The Epicentres of Earthquakes in relation to the Mid-Atlantic Ridge and the Carlsberg Ridge in the Indian Ocean (1939).

Ingénieur hydrographe général P. de Vanssay de Blavous took part in drawing up the following publications of the International Hydrographic Bureau :—

“Manual of Symbols and Abbreviations” (Special Publication No. 22).

“Geographical Positions” (Special Publications Nos, 24-24a).

“Catalogue of Original Charts” (Special Publication No. 25).

“Information concerning the Preparation of the Third Edition of the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans” (Special Publication No. 30).

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## OBITUARY NOTICE

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### Rear-Admiral D. León HERRERO Y GARCIA Hydrographer of the Spanish Navy (1862-1947)

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Rear-Admiral D. León Herrero y Garcia, former Director of the Naval Institute and Observatory, Cadiz, and Chief of the Spanish Hydrographic Office, died recently at San Fernando at the age of 84.

Born at Soria in 1862, Rear-Admiral Herrero started his naval career in January 1882 when he entered the Military Naval School, at that time installed on the frigate *Asturias*. In 1884 he was assigned to the Naval Station on the Philippine Islands as midshipman.

From 1884 to 1887 he navigated through the Eastern Seas on sailing-and on steam-vessels and in December, 1887, returned to Spain for his final examinations after which, in July 1888, he was promoted Lieutenant. As Lieutenant he rendered his first services in metropolitan waters on board the cruiser *Castilla*. In 1889 he was sent to Cuba where he remained until 1891 serving first on the *Fernando el Católico*, then on the *D. Jorge Juan*, both coastguard vessels on which, on several occasions, he took part in action against the insurgents of the first Cuban war.

In September, 1891, he obtained a scholarship at the Higher School of the Naval Institute and Observatory where he took several courses dealing with special studies in hydrography; he showed himself to be a particularly distinguished student and was granted the certificate of hydrographer in 1894. As Hydrographic Engineer he was ordered to Puerto Rico and participated in numerous hydrographic operations, receiving in this connection the White Cross for Naval Merit.

Back in Spain he was assigned to the Military Naval School as Naval Instructor, which post he held up to the year 1906, treating the various branches skilfully, and it is to him that many of the Flag-Officers of our national navy owe their successful instruction.

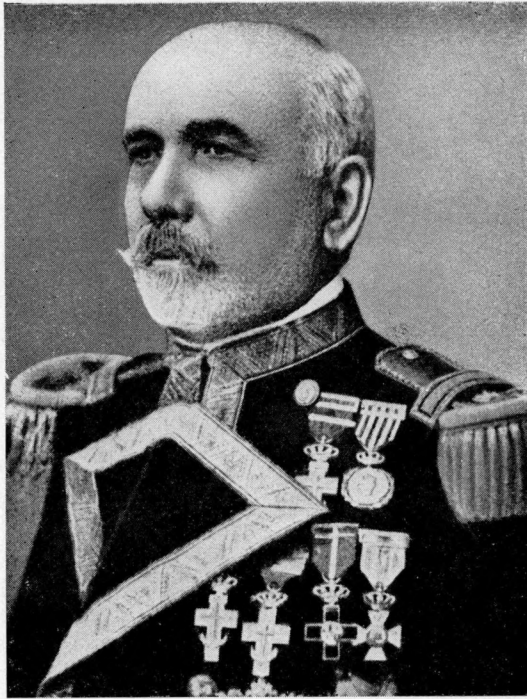
In December 1906 he joined the *Urania* of the Hydrographic Commission; and during the long period spent on this vessel he took part in various hydrographic surveys along the Spanish coasts.

In 1915 he was appointed Director of the Hydrographic School to the Instructors Staff of which he had already belonged since 1914. Simultaneously he was entrusted with the command of the Hydrographic Sub-Commission of Northern Spain in La Coruña.

Under his expert direction the plans and charts of the Galician coast were prepared. The Naval Department rewarded his services in this achievement and he was promoted Captain in 1918.

In 1921, he was appointed Director of the Naval Institute and Observatory at San Fernando and continued in this post till 1940 when he retired from active service with the rank of Rear-Admiral to which he had been promoted in 1931 in recognition of his high merits and exceptional qualities.

During the long period of his direction he developed an intense activity, both astronomical and hydrographical, collaborating with foreign observatories in the preparation of the Star Chart. In 1927 the Hydrographic Service was transferred from Madrid to the Naval Observatory at San Fernando, and Rear-Admiral Herrero then assumed the Direction of this



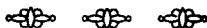
CONTRE-AMIRAL D. LEÓN HERRERO Y GARCIA



Service together with that of the Astronomical Observatory. It was under his direction that the *Tofiño* and the *Malaspina*, the first Spanish ships specially designed for hydrographic purposes, were planned and built.

Rear-Admiral Herrero was a member of the International Commission for Research of the Mediterranean (Maritime Meteorological Commission) and attended the meetings held in Paris (1923) and in Malaga (1929). He was Vice-President of the Oceanographic Section to the International Exhibition of Seville (1929); he was present at the General Assembly of the International Astronomic Union at Leyden (1928); he took part in the 1926 and 1929 Conferences of the International Hydrographic Bureau and was a member of the Polar Year Commission.

Rear-Admiral Herrero was in possession of several Spanish and foreign medals and Orders.





## OBITUARY NOTICE

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### Commander G. B. SPICER-SIMSON, D.S.O., R.N. (1876-1947)

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Commander Geoffrey Basil SPICER-SIMSON, died at Courtenay, British Columbia on 29th January at the age of 71.

Born on 15th January 1876 he entered the Royal British Navy in 1890. Promoted to the rank of Sub-Lieutenant in 1896 he was employed in Hydrographic Surveying more or less continuously from 1897, being promoted Lieutenant in 1898 and Lieut.-Commander in 1906. He was Director of the Survey of the River Gambia from 1910 to 1914 and Boundary Commissioner of the Senegal-Gambia Boundary Commission 1911. During the First World War he was appointed in Command of a British Naval expedition to transport two gun-boats in sections across Africa to Lake Tanganyka, assemble them and engage German Naval Forces there. This he most successfully carried out, being specially promoted Commander in 1915 and receiving the honour of a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order (British); also Commander of the Order of the Crown (Belgium). From 1918-1919 he was Assistant Director of Naval Intelligence at the Admiralty, London, and in 1919 was one of the British Naval Delegates at the Peace Conference, Paris. In June 1919 the First International Hydrographic Conference was held in London and Commander Spicer-Simson, in view of his exceptional knowledge of the French language, was appointed Official Interpreter. At this Conference the French Delegation proposed the creation of an International Hydrographic Bureau and this having been unanimously agreed to, a Committee of three consisting of Rear-Admiral Sir John Parry, Ingénieur hydrographe général J. Renaud and Captain E. Simpson, Hydrographers of Great Britain, France and U.S.A. respectively, was elected "to take the necessary steps for the formation of the permanent Bureau". The International Hydrographic Bureau was accordingly created in 1921 with its seat in Monaco whose Reigning Prince Albert I had offered to supply all the buildings necessary for the installation of the Bureau in his Principality. Commander Spicer-Simson was elected its first Secretary-General and held this post continuously for close on sixteen years until he left in 1937 to reside, with his wife, in British Columbia. The valuable work he carried out in the Bureau towards the advancement of Hydrography will long be remembered by all those with whom he collaborated.

He is survived by his widow Mrs. Amy Spicer-Simson.





COMMANDER G. B. SPICER-SIMSON



## OBITUARY NOTICE

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### Mr. John G. KELLAR U. S. A. Hydrographic Office

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The International Hydrographic Bureau regrets to announce the death on 21 October 1947, of Mr. John G. Kellar, former Chief of the Survey Section of the Hydrographic Office of the United States Navy.

Mr. Kellar was a graduate of Dartmouth College and of the University of Colorado. While in college he received special honors in mathematics, and was elected to the Phi Beta Kappa honorary society.

He was internationally known for his "Hydrographic and Geodetic Surveying Manual" (H.O. Publication No. 215) which embodies over thirty years of extensive experience in these fields of engineering. During his many tours of field duty on board U.S. Navy Survey vessels, he developed a number of methods, outstanding among which is his procedure for determining local sidereal time by measuring horizontal angles between stars.

In addition to his contributions in the fields of surveying and cartography, he also developed a number of methods for easily identifying or plotting the positions of stars.

During his Navy service, Mr. Kellar received numerous commendations for his outstanding work and service, which was climaxed by a letter from the Secretary of the U.S. Navy at the time of his retirement in June, 1943.

