

# WWI Snapshot: Augustine Watchman Rieger, 1885-1933

By AMY ECKARD  
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FRIENDS OF FT. CASWELL RIFLE RANGE

Augustine "Gus" Watchman Rieger was born in Southport, NC, on Aug. 6, 1885. At the time of the 1900 census, he and his family were living in Town Creek. His father was a lawyer and owned a rice farm.

Gus was appointed to the United States Naval Academy in 1905, graduating in 1909. His photo appeared in the 1909 yearbook "Lucky Bag."

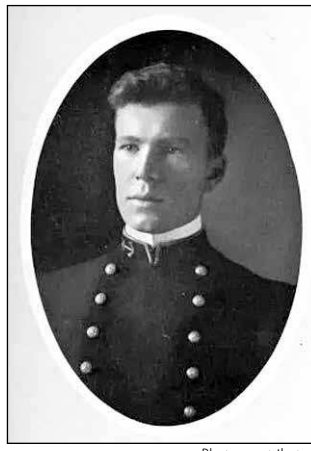
During WWI, he served as a lieutenant commander at the Naval Academy. His retirement was listed in the Sept. 4, 1931, issue of the Evening Star of Washington, D.C., on page 16.

Gus died suddenly on April 23, 1933, as detailed below.

### Comdr. Rieger Dies in Parked Auto

A heart attack suffered as he drove his automobile along Connecticut Avenue late Saturday night was fatal to Comdr. Augustine W. Rieger, U.S.N., retired, 47, who was found dead in his automobile early yesterday.

The car apparently had been hastily parked in a restricted zone just north of Taft Bridge, and the lights still were burning when the body was discovered by Sgt. W.P. Barnes of the 8th precinct, cruising in a police car. Dr. O.C. Foote, 5112 Connecticut Avenue, the retired officer's physician and close friend, said Comdr. Rieger had been under his care since his retirement because of heart trouble in 1931. He said he believed the officer had been dead at least six hours when found. A certificate of death from natural causes was issued by Acting Coroner A. Magruder MacDon-



Photos contributed

Augustine Watchman Rieger photo in 1909 U.S. Naval Academy yearbook.

ald. Comdr. Rieger was last seen Saturday night by relatives and an elevator boy at the Dupont Apartments, 1717 Twentieth St., where he lived.

Funeral services will be held at St. Alban's Church at 2 p.m. tomorrow, with Rev. Charles T. Warner officiating. Burial, with full military honors, will be in Arlington National Cemetery.

### Memphis navigator

Comdr. Rieger's last station was aboard the U.S.S. Memphis as a navigator. Prior to that, he had had an active sea career as well as of an executive ashore. During the World War, he was stationed at the Naval Academy, from which he graduated in 1909. He was a North Carolina native.

Rieger was laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery. The family headstone may be found in Old Smithville Cemetery in Southport, where his parents and one sister were laid to rest.

His mother's obituary in the Evening Star (Washington, D.C.) Dec. 5, 1937, p. A-21, details the family's history of military service. He is survived by his mother, Mrs. Sarah T. Rieger; a sister, Miss Florence M. Rieger, both of the Twentieth Street address, and another sister, Mrs.

### NORTH CAROLINA RITES FOR MRS. RIEGER, 82

Resident of Washington for 15 Years Buried in Southport, Her Former Home.

Mrs. Sarah Thompson Rieger, 82, who died last Tuesday in her home, 1717 Twentieth street N.W., was buried Wednesday at Southport, N. C., her former home. Funeral services were held there.

Mrs. Rieger, a resident here about 15 years, was the widow of Augustine W. Rieger, North Carolina rice planter, who died many years ago. Before coming to this city, Mrs. Rieger lived for awhile at Annapolis, Md., with her son, the late Comdr. Augustine W. Rieger, U. S. N.

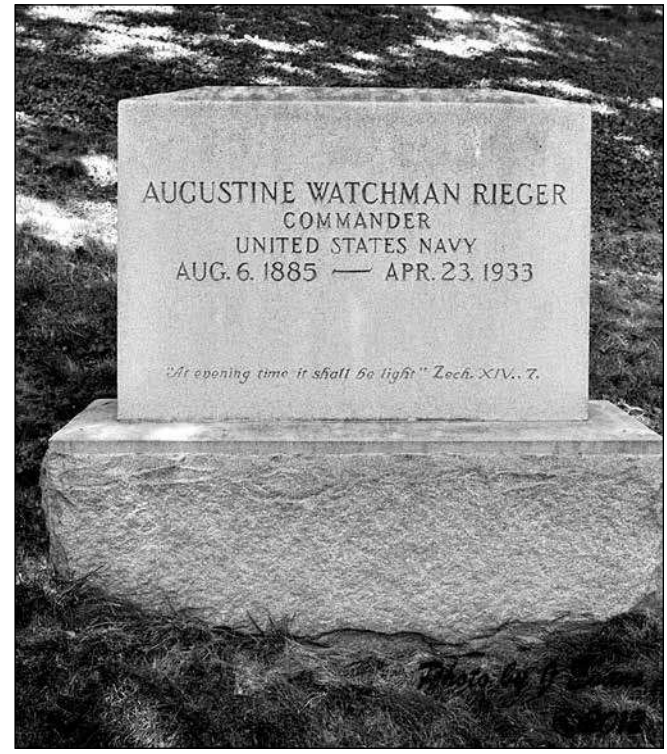
Surviving are two daughters, Mrs. H. J. Stockum of Baltimore and Miss Florence Rieger, with whom she lived here; four sisters, Mrs. Harry Phelps, this city, the widow of Commodore Phelps, U. S. N.; Mrs. H. K. White of Southport, widow of Col. White, Marine Corps; Mrs. J. M. Boyette of Southport, and Mrs. E. I. Brown of Richmond, Va., wife of Col. Brown, U. S. A., and a brother, J. W. Thompson of Southport. She also leaves a granddaughter, Patricia Stockum.

### Obit of Rieger's mother buried in Southport details the family's history of military service.

H.J. Stockum of Baltimore. (Source: Evening Star of Washington, D.C.) April 24, 1933, p. A-9

If you would like to help honor Rieger or another Brunswick County WWI veteran, email the Friends of Ft. Caswell Rifle Range at [ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com](mailto:ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com) or go to [caswellriflerange.com](http://caswellriflerange.com).

We have been hard at work with Daniel Norris from SlapDash Publishing on the book we plan to offer this year, "Brunswick County in the Great War: Preserving the 1918 Fort Caswell Rifle Range and the Legacies of the Men



Headstone of Augustine Watchman Rieger in Arlington National Cemetery.

### and Women Who Served."

The book covers the history and future preservation of the rifle range, and includes profiles and snapshots of all of the courageous men and women from Brunswick County who served in WWI and have been featured on the website and in the Beacon for nearly three years. Please help.

Included in the book is the list of Brunswick County WWI veterans. Alongside each name is

the name of the generous supporter who honored that veteran with a donation of any amount. As the thermometer on the right side of the website shows, 574 veterans have been honored, which leaves 144 with no recognition. Please consider donating any amount to honor the remaining 144 Brunswick County WWI veterans. Send donations to Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range, 5 Foxfire Trace, Caswell Beach, NC.

N328-IW 1030

Brunswick

Name	Rieger, Augustine Watchman	Duty Assignments	Duty at Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md. - During entire period of hostilities.
Date of Birth	Aug. 6, 1885		
Place of Birth	Southport, N. Car.		
Appointed from	North Carolina		
Home Address	Wilmington, N.C.		
Date of Appointment	May 6, 1905	Final Disposition	Now in service
Rank on Appointment	Midshipman		
Promotions			
	Lieutenant(jg)(Permanent)	-	6/5/14
	Lieutenant(Permanent)	- -	6/5/17
	Lieut-Commander(Temporary)		7/1/18

NC Service Card of Augustine Watchman Rieger.