

CAPTAIN ROBERT E. BASSLER
CIVIL ENGINEER CORPS, U. S. NAVY, RETIRED

Robert Edward Bassler was born in Brooklyn, New York, on January 21, 1893, son of John and Salome Becherick Bassler. He was graduated from Manual Training High School in Brooklyn in 1911, and after working for a year and a half won a state scholarship to Cornell University, from which he was graduated with the degree of Civil Engineer in 1917. At college he was a member of the Freshman Track Team, played inter-college soccer and belonged to the Cornell Engineering Society.

He was appointed Lieutenant (jg) in the Civil Engineer Corps of the U. S. Navy on August 30, 1921, the result of competitive examination, after completing four years' service as a civilian employee (Aeronautical Engineer) in the Aviation Section, and later the Contract Section, of the Bureau of Construction and Repair. He subsequently advanced to the rank of Captain in June 1943, to date from June 20, 1942, and was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy, in that rank, on June 30, 1952.

Captain Bassler's assignment to the Bureau of Construction and Repair, first in the Aviation Contracts Section, later in charge of the Technical Information Section, following World War I, resulted in the invention of an aircraft arresting device which was patented by the Navy Department in his name, # 1,502,653, issued July 29, 1924. When the Bureau of Aeronautics was established in 1921, he entered the Corps of Engineers and was immediately assigned to the Bureau of Yards and Docks. In October 1923, he was transferred to the New York Navy Yard, Brooklyn, New York, where he served as Transportation Superintendent until May 1926.

He next served as Public Works Officer at the Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and from August 1928 until June 1932, was located at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, first as Power Superintendent at the Navy Yard, and the last three years, as Plant Superintendent at the Naval Aircraft Factory. He then had consecutive service as Public Works Officer at the Fleet Air Base, Balboa, Canal Zone, and the Submarine Base, New London, Connecticut. He returned to the Philadelphia Navy Yard on July 1, 1939, for duty as Assistant Public Works Officer and Maintenance Superintendent, and in December of the same year, was assigned to the Fourth Naval District for contract work and preparation of war plans.

At the outbreak of World War II, he was serving as Public Works Officer of the Naval Operating Base, Newport, Rhode Island, and on January 26, 1942, reported to the Navy Yard, Norfolk, Virginia, for duty as Contract Superintendent. In June of the same year, he was sent to Argentia, Newfoundland, to serve as Public Works Officer and as Officer in Charge of Construction. After a year there, he returned to the Naval Operating Base, Norfolk, Virginia, for duty as Officer in Charge of the Civil Engineer Corps Officers' Indoctrination School, and later had similar service at

the Naval Construction Training Centers at Davisville, Rhode Island, and Port Hueneme, California. All told, about 1300 officers were graduated from the school for Public Works duty, and over 7000 for duty with construction battalions and stevedore and maintenance units.

From October 1946 to October 1948 he was Public Works Officer and Officer in Charge of Construction, Fifteenth Naval District, with Headquarters at Balboa, Canal Zone; and during the two years to follow was Public Works Officer for the Naval Air Bases, Fifth Naval District, Headquarters at Norfolk. While in the latter assignment, he had additional duty in 1950 as a member of the CEC Selection Board. On May 19, 1951, he reported as District Public Works Officer, Eighth Naval District, and during that tour of duty had temporary additional duty at various places in the states of Oklahoma, Louisiana and Arkansas, and at Davisville, Rhode Island. He was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy on June 30, 1952, but remained on active duty in the Eighth Naval District, (inspection tours and conferences) until March 1953.

Captain Bassler has the American Defense Service Medal; the American Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal. He received a Commendatory Letter from the Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks for suggesting special fuel oil and gasoline storage in the Pacific Area during World War II. He is the author of articles published in various magazines, including "Aviation and Aeronautical Engineering", "Our Navy", and others. He is a member of the U. S. Naval Institute, National Geographic Society, American Society of Military Engineers, National Sojourners, and Tau Beta Pi, Honorary Engineering Society, Cornell University.