

John Frederick Andrews  
Novels of the Great War



Colonel Albertus Catlin, right, with MG Omar Bundy

Albertus Wright Catlin was born on 12/1/1868 in Gowanda, NY. At some point his family moved to Minnesota. He was appointed from that state to the United States Naval Academy in 1886. He was a halfback on the football team for three years and graduated in 1890. He then had two years of sea duty as a midshipman on the USS Charleston. Upon his return, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the United States Marine Corp on 7/1/1892.

Catlin was promoted to first lieutenant in April of 1893. He first served at the Marine Barracks on League Island in the Philadelphia Naval Yard, then served on the USS Cincinnati beginning in 1895. He commanded the Marine Guard on the USS Maine when the ship blew up in Havana harbor in February, 1898. Twenty-eight of his men were killed in the explosion. He then served on the USS St. Louis and led the first Marines to land on Cuba.

He was promoted to captain in March, 1899 and then major in 1905. He served in New York, South Carolina, the Philippines, and became the first commanding officer of the Marine Barracks in Hawaii. He served twice at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

He commanded a battalion of Marines aboard the USS Wyoming, and led them in the battle of Vera Cruz in 1914. Catlin was awarded the Medal of Honor on 12/4/1915: "For distinguished conduct in battle, engagement of Vera Cruz, 22 April 1914. Eminent and conspicuous in command of his battalion, Maj. Catlin exhibited courage and skill in leading his men through the action of the 22nd and in the final occupation of the city." He was promoted to lieutenant colonel in 1915. Catlin then studied at the National War College at Fort Leavenworth. James Harbord was among his classmates, all of whom were Army officers except for one other Marine. Catlin was promoted to colonel in 1916 and graduated from the War College in May, 1917.

With the US entry into World War I, a new Marine camp was established at Quantico, Virginia, with Colonel Catlin in command. He was sent to France in command of the newly formed 6th Marine Regiment. Catlin was shot through the right chest while exposed to fire as he led his men into battle on 6/6/1918. He was initially paralyzed on his right side, but recovered. He was evacuated to American Red Cross Military Hospital Number 2 in Paris where he slowly recovered from a wound that would have killed many. He did not return to the Great War.

Catlin was promoted to Brigadier General on 8/30/1918 and was awarded the French Legion of Honor and two Croix de Guerre, one with a gilt star and the other with palms.

Catlin was a big man who had an imposing presence. He was six-foot-four-inches tall and about 215 pounds when he commanded the 6th Regiment. He was a demanding leader with a strong-jawed face, who loved his men. He was proud of the number of "college men" among his Marines, many of them serving in the ranks. In his memoir, he often referred to his men as "my lads".

He recuperated in Hot Springs, Virginia, after his hospital discharge in Paris. He returned to active duty to serve at Marine Corps Headquarters in Washington and then to the Marine Barracks at Quantico, Virginia. In November, 1918 he commanded the 1st Brigade of Marines, in Haiti, until September, 1919, and retired in December, 1919. He suffered from after effects of his chest wound, and died in Culpeper, Virginia on 5/31/1933. He is

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buried in Section 7, Site 10038, Arlington National Cemetery with  
his wife, Martha.



Albertus Wright Catlin  
From Jean-Bernard Passemard, obtained 11.11.2016

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From [www.history.navy.mil/jpg](http://www.history.navy.mil/jpg)  
<https://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/us-people/c/catlin-albertus-w.html>.  
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