

## **Battle, Turner Westray** <sup>[1]</sup>

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by Dorothy Battle Wilkinson, 1979

**3 June 1899–1 Jan. 1944**

Turner Westray Battle, assistant to the U.S. secretary of labor <sup>[2]</sup>, was born in Rocky Mount, the son of Jacob <sup>[3]</sup> and Nell Gray Gupton Battle. The third Turner Westray Battle, he was a student at Staunton Military Academy <sup>[4]</sup> from 1913 to 1916 and was graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy <sup>[5]</sup> in 1919.

He served in the Pacific Fleet first as assistant engineer officer on the U.S.S. *Arkansas* <sup>[6]</sup>, then as chief engineer of the U.S.S. *Meyer*, and then as commanding officer of the U.S.S. *Duncan* <sup>[7]</sup>. After resigning from the Navy <sup>[8]</sup> in 1921, he became associated with the Socony Burner Corporation. He later was made a district manager of the International Combustion Engineering Corporation of New York.

In 1933, Battle was appointed executive assistant in the Department of Labor <sup>[2]</sup> under Frances Perkins <sup>[9]</sup>. Among his other assignments there, he served as president of the U.S. Housing Corporation, the representative of the secretary of labor on the Special Board for Public Works, a member of the Interdepartmental Shipping Policy Committee, a member of the Committee to Designate Airports of Entry, and the representative of the Labor Department on the Works Progress Board <sup>[10]</sup>.

However, soon after Pearl Harbor <sup>[11]</sup>, he enlisted in the Marine Corps <sup>[12]</sup> and early in 1942 was commissioned first lieutenant. He saw active duty in the South Pacific; while there, he was promoted to the rank of captain. He died at Camp Lejeune <sup>[13]</sup> and was interred in the old Battle burial ground near Cool Spring Plantation <sup>[14]</sup> in Edgecombe County <sup>[15]</sup>.

Battle was married twice. His first marriage, on 6 Nov. 1920, was to Helen Staats of Pasadena, Calif., daughter of William Richardson and Isabelle Lawton Staats. They had one son, Turner Westray Battle IV. Battle married, second, Mary Patton of Huntsville, Ala., on 9 Aug. 1936. He was a lifelong Episcopalian <sup>[16]</sup> and Democrat <sup>[17]</sup>.

#### **References:**

H. B. Battle et al., *The Battle Book* (1930).

Rocky Mount *Evening Telegram*, 3 Jan. 1944.

*Southern Churchman*, February 1944.

*Who's Who in America*, 1940–41.

#### **Additional Resources:**

Frank Porter Graham Papers, 1908-1990 (collection no. 01819). The Southern Historical Collection. Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.  
[http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/g/Graham,Frank\\_Porter.html](http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/g/Graham,Frank_Porter.html) <sup>[18]</sup> (accessed March 15, 2013).

Battle Family Papers, 1765-1955 (collection no. 03223). The Southern Historical Collection. Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. [http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/b/Battle\\_Family.html](http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/b/Battle_Family.html) <sup>[19]</sup> (accessed March 8, 2013).

The Battle book; a genealogy of the Battle family in America, with chapters illustrating certain phases of its history. By: H B Battle; Lois Yelverton; William James Battle, Montgomery, Ala., The Paragon Press, 1930:  
<https://www.worldcat.org/title/battle-book-a-genealogy-of-the-battle-family-in-america-with-chapters-illustrating-certain-phases-of-its-history/oclc/2579075> <sup>[20]</sup>

#### **Subjects:**

Biographies <sup>[21]</sup>

Public officials <sup>[22]</sup>

#### **Authors:**

Wilkinson, Dorothy B. <sup>[23]</sup>

#### **Origin - location:**

Nash County <sup>[24]</sup>

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