



Did You Know?



Rear Admiral Presley Marion Rixey

The roster of Army Navy Country Club's Original Founder Life Members¹ includes several accomplished individuals with whom most are well familiar, such as John Phillip Sousa, S.R. Guggenheim and Bernard Baruch. One of the most accomplished Original Founding Life Members is little known, even in Arlington (then Alexandria) County, Virginia where he had a significant impact. That individual is Rear Admiral Presley Marion Rixey: Surgeon General of the Navy, White House Physician, and country club president.

Rear Admiral Presley Marion Rixey

Presley Marion Rixey was born on 14 July 1852 in Culpeper, Virginia. The older brother of John Franklin Rixey, who represented the 8th District of Virginia in the United States House of Representatives, Rixey earned his medical degree at the University of Virginia in 1873. He was commissioned Assistant Surgeon in the Navy on 28 January 1874 and served on six ships. He was promoted to Passed Assistant Surgeon on 18 April 1877, to Surgeon on 27 November 1888, and was commissioned as a Medical Inspector on 24 August 1900. Assigned as the personal physician to First Lady Ida McKinley in 1899, he was present when President McKinley was shot in Buffalo.



Rixey was appointed Surgeon General of the United States Navy on 15 February 1902 and served as Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, with the rank of rear admiral, until his retirement on 4 February 1910. In this later position, he was instrumental in establishing the Navy Nurse Corps (1908).

Rixey accompanied President Theodore Roosevelt during his November 1906 visit to the Panama Canal Zone and served as a member of the Naval Examining Board (1913-1917), presiding over it during the last four months of that period.

Admiral Rixey was also an influential member of the local community, not only as a major property owner but also as a founding member of the Washington Golf and Country Club. It was upon his former holdings that both Washington Golf and Marymount University exist today.²

¹ "Army Navy Country Club 1924-1989 Historical Review", pages 113-114.

² "The Life Story of Presley Marion Rixey, Surgeon General US Navy 1902 to 1910", Braisted, William C. & Bell, William H. (2004). Kessinger Publishing. [ISBN 0-926984-00-4](https://www.kessingerpublishing.com/ISBN-0-926984-00-4).

Rixey not only sold 90 acres of their current site to Washington Golf and Country Club but designed the original 9-hole course which was superseded by a Donald Ross design after the purchase of an additional 40 acres. Dr. Rixey was the Club's first life member and served as chairman of the Green Committee.

Marymount University is also located on property formerly owned by Admiral Rixey. This property came with four structures including the former Rixey mansion (now Marymount's Main House), stone guest house (the Lodge), and two cottages.

Rixey died at his home in Rosslyn, Virginia on 17 June 1928. He is interred in Arlington National Cemetery.



The Rixey family is memorialized by Rixeyville (an unincorporated area of Culpepper County) and Marymount University's new residence hall – “The Rixey” (pictured).

Note: According to the minutes of the September 10, 1934 Executive Committee meeting, Rixey's widow offered to present the Club with a portrait of Theodore Roosevelt. Whatever happened to the portrait is unknown.