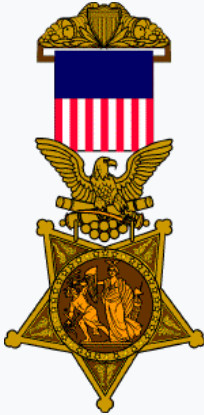


George F. Brock



Born	October 18, 1872 Cleveland, Ohio
Died	October 12, 1914 San Marin County, California
Allegiance	United States of America
Service/branch	United States Navy
Years of service	c. 1905 - c. 1910
Rank	Carpenter's Mate Second Class
Unit	USS <i>Bennington</i>
Battles/wars	Peacetime award
Awards	Medal of Honor

George Frederick Brock (born October 18, 1872 in Cleveland, Ohio) was a United States Navy Carpenter's Mate received the Medal of Honor for actions on board the USS *Bennington* off San Diego, California during a boiler explosion which killed 62 enlisted men and one officer.

USS *Bennington* (Gunboat No. 4/PG-43) was a member of the *Yorktown* class of steel-hulled, twin-screw gunboats in the United States Navy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. She was the first U.S. Navy ship named in honor of the town of Bennington, Vermont, site of the Battle of Bennington in the American Revolutionary War.

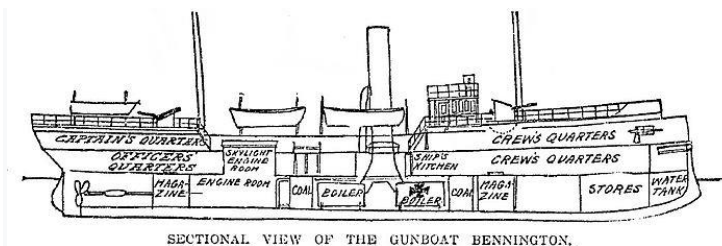
On the morning of 21 July 1905, *Bennington's* crew was preparing her to sail to the aid of the monitor *Wyoming* which had broken down and was in need of a tow. After her crew had finished the difficult task of coaling the ship that morning, most of them were below decks cleaning themselves from the dirty job. Unbeknownst to anyone on board, three problems with one of *Bennington's* boilers – oily feed water, an improperly closed steam valve, and a faulty steam gauge – were conspiring against them. At about 10:30, excessive steam pressure in the boiler resulted in a boiler explosion that rocked the ship, sending men and equipment flying into the air. The escaping steam sprayed through the living compartments and decks. The explosion opened *Bennington's* hull to the sea, and she began to list to starboard. Quick actions by the tug *Santa Fe* — taking *Bennington* under tow and beaching her – almost certainly saved the gunboat from sinking.

The combination of the explosion and the scalding steam killed a number of men outright and left others mortally wounded; the final death toll was one officer and sixty-five men, making it one of the U.S. Navy's worst peacetime disasters. Nearly all of the forty-six who

survived had an injury of some sort; eleven of the survivors were awarded the Medal of Honor for "extraordinary heroism displayed at the time of the explosion". One of the survivors was John Henry Turpin, who had also survived the explosion of *Maine* in Havana in February 1898 and was, reportedly, the only man to survive both explosions. The sheer number of casualties – the death toll exceeded the U.S. Navy's death toll for the entirety of the Spanish–American War – overwhelmed San Diego's medical facilities, and many burn victims had to be cared for in makeshift facilities tended by volunteers.



In spite of rumors of misconduct by *Bennington's* engineering crewmen, an official investigation concluded that the explosion was not due to negligence on the part of the crew.



For his actions, Brock received the Medal of Honor on January 5, 1906.

Rank and organization: Carpenter's Mate Second Class, U.S. Navy. Born: October 18, 1872, Cleveland, Ohio. Accredited to: California. G.O. No.: 13, January 5, 1906.

Citation:

Serving on board the U.S.S. Bennington for extraordinary heroism displayed at the time of the explosion of that vessel at San Diego, Calif., 21 July 1905.

He died on October 12, 1914 and is buried at the San Francisco National Cemetery.



As the original marker in the San Francisco National Cemetery is considered historic, it has not been replaced to correct the spelling of his surname.