

Vice Admiral Richard L. Conolly

PRESIDENT, 1 DECEMBER 1950 – 2 NOVEMBER 1953

Oil on Canvas

Commander Dwight Shepler, USNR, 1952

Naval War College Purchase

Ac. 1976.27.01



In World War One, Conolly earned the Navy Cross when his ship, the transport USS *Westerbridge*, was torpedoed in 1918. As a lieutenant commander, Richard Lansing Conolly (1892 - 1962) graduated from the Naval War College in 1931 and then went on for a year to teach strategy and tactics on the College's faculty. In 1942 - 1943, Conolly was assistant planning officer on the staff of Admiral Ernest J. King and planned the invasion of Guadalcanal and North Africa. In 1943, he served as Commander of Landing Craft and Bases during the invasions of North Africa and Italy, then commanded the Amphibious Assault Group at Kwajalein in 1944. His most famous assault was the successful recapture of Guam in July 1944. Later, he commanded landings in Lingayen Gulf on Leyte. One historian has written of him, "To the US Marines, Conolly was the most admired naval officer to emerge from the Pacific theater." After the war he was promoted to four stars as Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe, Eastern Atlantic, and Mediterranean (CINCNELM). As the twenty-eighth president of the Naval War College, Conolly reverted to three-star rank and made substantial and important reforms to build on the insights gained during World War Two, including reviving Admiral Spruance's recommendation to create visiting civilian faculty positions in history and political science. The Spruance class destroyer USS *Conolly* (DD 979) is named for him.