



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

Alfred C. Richmond

1954-1962



Alfred Carroll Richmond was born at Waterloo, Iowa, on January 18, 1902, and at the age of 10 moved with his family to Cherrydale, Virginia. After receiving a certificate from the Massanutten Academy of Woodstock, Virginia, he entered the George Washington University college of engineering of Washington, D. C., at the age of 16. At the same time he was employed at the U. S. Naval Observatory.

He was appointed a cadet at the U. S. Coast Guard Academy, New London, Connecticut, in July 1922, and was graduated senior man in his class and commissioned an Ensign on October 1, 1924. Subsequently he advanced in rank to Lieutenant (jg), October 1, 1926; Lieutenant, October 1, 1928; Lieut. Commander, October 16, 1932; Commander, July 17, 1942; Captain, June 1, 1943; Rear Admiral (when he took oath of office as Assistant Commandant) March 10, 1950 Vice Admiral and Commandant, June 1, 1954; Admiral, June 1, 1960. He retired June 1, 1962.

From November 1924 to September 1926, he served as aide to the Commandant of the Coast Guard at headquarters in Washington, D. C. During this time he also performed temporary duty from May to July of 1925 as an aide to the commanding officer of the Special Patrol Force operating against "rum runners" off the coast of New York, and of the Special Service Squadron off the coast of Massachusetts. He was commended for efficient work in this connection.

Beginning in September 1926 he was assigned for two years as a member of the Coast Guard Academy staff. During this period he served temporarily with the Cutter MOJAVE from June to September of 1927, and took part in the cadet practice cruise aboard the Destroyer SHAW during the summer of 1928. In October 1928 he was assigned a course of instructions at the Sperry Gyro Compass School at Brooklyn, N.Y., after which he became navigator aboard the Cutter PONTCHARTRAIN stationed at Quincy, Mass. From July to November of 1930, he served as executive officer of the Coast Guard destroyer WAINWRIGHT in the Gulf Division.

He then reported to the Coast Guard Representative at Philadelphia Navy Yard, and was assigned as executive officer of the Destroyer HERNDON, Flagship of Division III, Destroyer Force, when the ship was commissioned and assigned to Boston for permanent station.

In May 1932 he transferred to Coast Guard Headquarters to undertake duties in connection with the small arms training of a Coast Guard Detachment which he helped assemble at Camp Curtis Guild, Wakefield, Mass., then later accompanied to such places as Cascade, Maryland, and Quantico, Va., for the National Rifle Association regional shooting matches and the national matches held at Ft. Sheridan, Illinois. Completing this tour in August he returned to Headquarters and two months later became executive officer of the Cutter HAIDA stationed at Cordova, Alaska, in which he performed patrol duty in the Bering Sea and Arctic waters.



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In September 1935 he again was assigned to Coast Guard Headquarters at which time he began taking a resident law course at the George Washington University. He was graduated on June 8, 1938, and awarded a degree of Juris Doctor "with distinction." Thereupon he was assigned duties in Headquarters' Office of Operations, with collateral duties of assisting in the preparation of certain law enforcement education material, and of assisting the Engineer—in-Chief in the preparation of permanent land records for property held by the government for Coast Guard use. He served also as a representative of the Treasury Department and as a delegate of the United States at the International Whaling Conference convened at London, England, on July 17, 1939.

A transfer in May 1941 sent him to the Bethlehem Steel Co. at Baltimore, Maryland, for duties in connection with the outfitting of the new Coast Guard vessel AMERICAN SAILOR which was destined to be used for training maritime personnel, which was the responsibility of the Coast Guard at that time. After placing the ship into commission, he commanded it from her assigned station at Port Hueneme, California, where, in addition, he commanded the Maritime Service Training Station (assuming charge in February 1942).

From September 1942 (when the AMERICAN SAILOR with the Maritime Service was transferred to the War Shipping Administration) until February 1943 during World War II, he served as commanding officer of the Cutter HAIDA, stationed at Juneau, Alaska, for convoy escort duty. He was then assigned to the Merchant Marine Inspection Office of the Third Coast Guard District in New York City. His duties there included those of examining officer and hearing officer.

Transferred overseas in July 1943, he became Senior Coast Guard Officer in charge of the U. S. Coast Guard Merchant Marine Hearing Unit in London, England. His duties there included that of administering and enforcing laws and regulations relating to the functions of Coast Guard vessels and personnel, and as examining and hearing officer administering laws and regulations governing investigations of accidents and casualties involving United States vessels and personnel with the U. S. Naval Forces in Europe.

Later he received the Bronze Star Medal "for meritorious service as Senior Coast Guard Officer on the Staff of the Commander, United States Naval Forces in Europe" during and after the Normandy Invasion, when he assisted in organizing Coast Guard Forces preparing for the invasion and contributed to the efficiency of the merchant marine ships sailing invasion routes. Meanwhile the French Government awarded him the Croix de Guerre "for exceptional services rendered in the liberation of France."

In May 1945, he was assigned to duty at Headquarters as Chief, Supply Division. The following month he was designated Chief, Program Planning Division, while in August he became Chief, Budgets and Requirements and Assistant Chief, Planning and Control. On March 9, 1950, with the advice of the President and consent of the Senate, he was appointed Assistant Commandant of the Coast Guard with the rank of Rear Admiral for a four-year term. Effective May 1, 1951, with a reorganization of the Coast Guard, he assumed the additional duties of Chief of Staff.



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He was appointed Commandant of the Coast Guard with the rank of Vice Admiral on May 13, 1954, to succeed Vice Admiral Merlin O'Neill upon his retirement. He took his oath of office on June 1, 1954. On April 22, 1958, the Senate confirmed a second four-year term for Admiral Richmond as Commandant, effective on June 1, 1958. Effective as of June 1, 1960 he was appointed to the rank of full Admiral by the President with confirmation from the Senate under authority provided by Act of May 14, 1960, Public Law 86-474, which pertains to a reorganization of top commands, amending Title 14, U.S. Code Section 41 and 44. (Whereas previously only two Commandants had ever attained the rank of full Admiral while in office, the new Act provides that all Commandants shall hereon serve in the rank of full Admiral.)

He was active in international affairs, particularly in the maritime field. In January of 1959 he was a principal delegate to the First Assembly of the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization, and has represented the United States on four other occasions as head of the United States representation to the Maritime Safety Committee of IMCO. He was head of the United States delegation to the Safety of Life at Sea Convention in London in 1960, for which services he was presented the Distinguished Service Medal. In 1961 he was delegate to the Second Assembly meeting of IMCO. In addition to the above, he was president of the 1960 Sixth International Lighthouse Conference, and president of the Executive Committee of the International Association of Lighthouse Authorities. He was also chairman of the National Committee for Prevention of Pollution of Seas by Oil, and was designated to head the United States delegation to the 1962 conference. Admiral Richmond was installed in the GW Letterman Hall of Fame which was inaugurated at George Washington University in November 1959. He won his letter in football. Admiral Richmond retired effective as of June 1, 1962.

He turned over his official duties as Commandant of the Coast Guard, to his successor, Admiral Edwin J. Roland, USCG, in a formal change-of-command ceremonies held aboard the Coast Guard Cutter CAMPBELL on the Potomac River, Washington, D. C., May 31. Admiral Richmond received a Gold Star in lieu of a Second Distinguished Service Medal for "exceptionally meritorious service" performed as Commandant from June 1, 1954 to May 31, 1962. Admiral and Mrs. Richmond, the former Gretchen C. Campbell, lived at 4105 La Junta Drive, Piedmont Mesa, Claremont, California. They had two sons, John Mason, and Alfred Carroll, Jr.

Admiral Richmond crossed the bar on March 15 1984. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.