

CAPTAIN MELISSA BERT

Chief of Staff

Seventh Coast Guard District

Captain Melissa Bert became the Coast Guard Seventh District Chief of Staff in June 2014, responsible for oversight of Coast Guard operations and in the Southeastern United States and Caribbean and the leadership of a combined active duty, reserve, civilian and volunteer workforce of 10,000 people.

Just prior, she served as the Chief of the Coast Guard's Maritime and International Law Division, supporting U.S. engagement with the International Maritime Organization and providing legal advice on Coast Guard maritime safety, security and stewardship policies – including drug and migrant interdiction, homeland security, search and rescue, pollution response, port and vessel safety and security, Outer Continental Shelf regulation, fisheries law enforcement, counter-terrorism and piracy initiatives, Arctic stewardship, and environmental protection.

Captain Bert's Coast Guard career has encompassed operational and legal tours. She served aboard two cutters, including as Executive Officer of the Cutter Red Birch in Baltimore, Maryland. During the attacks of 9/11, she was the Operations Officer for Coast Guard Sector Los Angeles/Long Beach, California, where she was responsible for port security, search and rescue, and law enforcement in the ports/coastline of Southern California.

From 2009 - 2011, she was the Commander of Coast Guard Sector Juneau and Captain of the Port for Southeastern Alaska. The Sector was responsible for overseeing a wide array of maritime operations and activities in Southeast Alaska. She previously served as the Deputy Staff Judge Advocate for the Seventh District in Miami, FL and was a Military Judge.

Captain Bert is a graduate of the Coast Guard Academy and George Washington University Law School. From 2008 – 2009, she was a national security fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School, where she focused on Arctic development and the Law of the Sea. She has taught as an adjunct professor at George Washington University and Florida International University. Captain Bert was also a military fellow with the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) in New York.

Her honors include the United Way American Values Award, a Legion of Merit, three Meritorious Service Medals, three CG Commendation Medals, an Achievement Medal, and a Voluntary Service Medal. She was awarded the Young Military Lawyer of the Year for the Coast Guard by the American Bar Association in 1997. In May 2006, she received the Judge Advocates Association Outstanding Career Armed Services Attorney Award. She is a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations and a Proctor in Admiralty in the United States Maritime Law Association.