

Public Information Division
U. S. Coast Guard Headquarters
Washington 25, D. C.

Biographical Sketch

KENNETH S. HARRISON
REAR ADMIRAL, U. S. COAST GUARD RESERVE (RETIRED)

Kenneth Stevens Harrison, a leading legal authority for the U. S. Coast Guard as civilian Chief Counsel and as a Coast Guard Reserve officer, was born on April 19, 1900, in Templeville (Queen Anne Co.), Maryland.

He received his early education at Public School No. 81 in Baltimore, and was graduated from St. Michael's High School, St. Michael's, Maryland, in 1917. After serving a brief period as a private in the Army in 1918 during World War I, he attended (1919) St. John's College in Annapolis, Md., where he belonged to the Student's Army Training Corps. Moving to Washington, D. C., he began a civil service career in the Federal Government and enrolled in evening classes at Georgetown University Law School. He was awarded an LL.B. Degree there and a license from the District Bar in 1922, and an LL.M. Degree in 1923. In 1927 he received an A.B. Degree from the National University.

Subsequently he was admitted to law practice before the Court of Customs and Patent Appeals in 1933, the U. S. Supreme Court in 1938, and the U. S. Court of Military Appeals in 1950.

He was first employed as a civil servant in the War Department from 1919 to 1930. Starting as a Clerk-Stenographer in the Finance Office, he moved to a position as Law Clerk (1922-1927), then worked as Special Attorney in the Real Estate Section of the Quartermaster General's office. During the following eight years he was Special Attorney and Assistant Chief, Enforcement Division of the Bureau of Customs, Treasury Department.

In October 1938, he transferred to U. S. Coast Guard Headquarters to take the post of Chief Counsel and Chief of the Legal Division which he has kept since.

During World War II, he fulfilled these duties in the status of a commissioned officer on active duty in the U. S. Coast Guard Reserve. His first appointment as such was to Lieut. Commander, on May 30, 1942, then Commander, June 15, 1942, and Captain on May 24, 1943. He received a Navy Commendation Ribbon and was cited as follows for his war-time work as Chief Counsel:

"Responsible for many complex legal matters arising from the unprecedented expansion of the Service, Captain Harrison supervised extensive legal work concerning emergency legislation and executive orders effecting the Coast Guard and as a measure to expedite legal activities in the field, established and directed a series of law offices in 15 Coast Guard districts. In addition he aided in administering military justice, counseled the Commandant on various questions of law and handled the legal problems caused by the Coast Guard's assumption of the functions of the Marine Inspection and Navigation Bureau."

(more)

He returned to civilian status as Chief Counsel in April 1946. Aside from these duties he retained his Captain's commission in the Reserve and served on temporary active duty annually, usually in the Legal Office, Captain-of-the-Port Office, or Marine Inspection Office under the Commander, Fifth Coast Guard District, Norfolk, and served on Reserve Promotion Boards at Headquarters.

As senior Reserve officer in the capital area, he commanded the Coast Guard Reserve Voluntary Legal and Intelligence Unit 05-8 in Washington, D. C., from the time of its formation in September 1949 until September 1960. During that period he devised training courses in military justice and legal procedures for the weekly drill sessions of the Unit. Later he developed similar courses for commanding officers and executive officers of Organized Reserve Training Units at the Coast Guard Reserve Training Center at Yorktown, Va.

On approval of the President and confirmation of the Senate, he was appointed permanent Rear Admiral on June 28, 1956, and as such became the first officer in Coast Guard Reserve history to attain this rank. He retired as Rear Admiral from the Reserve on March 1, 1961, with more than 18 years of service.

For 16 years prior to World War II, he held the commissions of 1st Lieutenant (1923-30), and of Captain (1930-39) in the Army Finance Officers Reserve Corps. His combined military service totals more than 34 years.

In his status as Chief Counsel, RADM Harrison's duties have primarily involved maritime matters which has made him a familiar figure to the maritime industry and brought him in touch with the Admiralty Bar many times.

Rear Admiral Harrison is married to Anita Bales of Alexandria, Va. They reside at 5610 Colorado Avenue, NW, Washington, D. C.

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