

Public Information Division  
U. S. Coast Guard Headquarters  
Washington, D. C., 20590

Biographical Sketch

VICE ADMIRAL BENJAMIN F. ENGEL, USCG  
COMMANDER, ATLANTIC AREA &  
3RD COAST GUARD DISTRICT  
(1970 - 1974)  
(RETIRED)

Benjamin Franklin Engel was born with his twin brother, Arthur, on May 1, 1914, at Grand Rapids, Mich., where the twins graduated together from Ottawa Hills High School in 1932.

With his twin, he entered the U. S. Coast Guard Academy, New London, Conn., with an appointment as cadet on August 1, 1934, and was graduated with a B. S. Degree and with a commission as Ensign on June 2, 1938.

Subsequently, he advanced in rank to Lieutenant (jg), June 2, 1941; Lieutenant, June 15, 1942; Lieut. Commander, June 1, 1943; Commander, July 1, 1950; Captain, September 1, 1959; Rear Admiral, May 1, 1967; Vice Admiral, October 14, 1972.

His earlier assignments, between June 1938 and August 1942 of the World War II period, included line and engineering duties on board the Coast Guard Cutters SEBAGO, MENDOTA, and BIBB, all operating out of Norfolk, Va.

In September 1942, he began flight training at the Naval Reserve Aviation Base, Grosse Isle, Mich., completing his training and winning his wings at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Fla., on April 23, 1943. During his first tour of duty as Coast Guard Aviator at the Coast Guard Air Station, Port Angeles, Wash., until June 1945, he also served as Executive Officer of that station, as Deputy Commander, Air-Sea Rescue Unit, and Air-Sea Rescue Controller. There also was an interim when he took training at the Coast Guard Air Station, Brooklyn, N. Y., to earn the designation of Helicopter Pilot No. 68.

His next assignment as Operations Officer at the Coast Guard Air Station, San Diego, Cal., was temporarily interrupted with a training course in Air-Sea Rescue procedures and techniques at the Coast Guard Air Station in St. Petersburg, Fla. In February 1947, he reported for duty in the Communications Division at Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D. C. Performing aeronautical communications committee and conference work while there, he represented the Coast Guard at international conferences as follows:

Member, U. S. Delegation to the International Civil Aviation  
Organization Caribbean Regional Air Navigation Com-  
munications meeting at Mexico City, Mexico in August

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Adviser, U. S. Delegation to the ICAO North Pacific Regional Air Navigation meeting at Seattle, Wash., in July 1948;

Member, U. S. Delegation to the third session of the ICAO Communications Division at Montreal, Canada, in January 1949.

Member, U. S. Delegation to the second North Atlantic Ocean Station Conference at London, England, in April 1949;

Adviser, U. S. Delegation to the ICAO Conference in Joint Financing and Operation of Air Navigation Services at London, England, in April 1949;

Adviser, U. S. Delegation to the ICAO Second Regional Air Navigation meeting for the Caribbean Region, and Special Combined Regional Frequency assignment Planning Meeting of Caribbean--South American--South Atlantic Regions, at Havana, Cuba, in April 1950;

Adviser, U. S. Delegation to the Fourth Session of the ICAO Communications Division at Montreal, Canada, in April 1959.

After serving as Executive Officer of the Coast Guard Air Station, Miami Fla., from July 1951 to July 1953, he commanded the Air Detachment at Kodiak, Alaska, and the Air Station at Traverse City, Mich., respectively, each for a period of two years. From July 1957 to July 1960, he was first a student and then an instructor at the Naval War College at Newport, R. I. During the following three years, he commanded the Coast Guard Air Station at Brooklyn, New York.

Returning to Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D. C. in July 1963, he first served as Chief, Aviation Units Division until June 1965, when he was named Deputy Chief, Office of Operations.

In July 1966, he became Chief of Operations, 14th Coast Guard District, Honolulu. By nomination of the President on December 15, 1966, and approval of the Senate, the then CAPT Engel was appointed a flag officer to rank as permanent Rear Admiral from May 1, 1967. His first duty as flag officer was in the post of Commander, 14th Coast Guard District (relieving RADM George D. Synon who retired 1 April). He was awarded the LEGION OF MERIT MEDAL for exceptionally meritorious performance of his duties during his three years in that post.

By July 1, 1970, Rear Admiral Engel transferred to New York to assume the dual post of Commander Eastern Area (changed to Atlantic Area in 1972), and Commander, 3rd Coast Guard District, N. Y.

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When the President signed the flag officer promotional legislation on October 2, 1972, that legislation elevated the posts of Area Commanders from Rear Admiral to three-star Vice Admiral. RADM Engel was confirmed by the Senate to rank as such from October 14, 1972. Vice Admiral Engel retired on July 1, 1974, with more than 35 years of service, and with a GOLD STAR in lieu of a Second LEGION OF MERIT.

VADM Engel's World War II campaign service medals and ribbons include the American Area; American Defense with fleet clasp; World War II Victory. Added to those is the more recent Legion of Merit Medal (presented in 1970), and a Gold Star in lieu of a Second Legion of Merit (presented in 1974).

VADM Engel's wife is the former Ruth Hendron of Seattle, Wash. They have three daughters: Robin Ruth (born March 11, 1946) "Miss Hawaii of 1967"; Penelope Ann (March 12, 1947); and Georgia Bright (July 28, 1948).

VADM Engel has a twin brother RADM Arthur B. Engel, USCG (Retired), who was nominated flag officer at the same time as Benjamin, and who served his first duty as flag officer in the post of Superintendent, U. S. Coast Guard Academy from June 1967 to July 1, 1970. At that time, Arthur retired to accept an appointment as head of the Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, New York.

Another brother, Carl D. Engel, lives at Newport, R. I. They are the sons of the late Mr. George Engel and Mrs. Helen M. Engel who lives at 2250 Riverside Dr., Grand Rapids, Mich.

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