



REAR ADMIRAL DAVID W. KUNKEL
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Commander, Seventh Coast Guard District
and
Director, Homeland Security Task Force South East



As the Seventh District Commander, Rear Admiral David W. Kunkel was responsible for all Coast Guard operations from South Carolina to Florida and throughout the Caribbean; including daily search and rescue, counter drug, port safety, and migrant interdiction operations. District Seven has over 5,000 active duty personnel and includes six sector commands in Charleston, Jacksonville, St. Petersburg, Miami, Key West, and San Juan. As the Director of Homeland Security Task Force - Southeast, Rear Admiral Kunkel was the DHS lead in coordinating federal, state, and local efforts in the event of a mass migration.

Rear Admiral Kunkel was born in Allentown, PA. He graduated Kutztown State College in 1971 with a degree in Secondary Education. He then enlisted in the Coast Guard and later he attended Officer Candidate School, earning a commission as an Ensign in January 1973. In 1988, he earned a MBA from National University in San Diego.



Rear Admiral Kunkel's first officer assignment was as the Captain of the Port's Representative in Kodiak, AK. In 1974, he entered flight training at Pensacola, FL and earned his wings in October 1975. From 1975-1991, he served in operational assignments at Coast Guard Air Stations New Orleans, Borinquen, Astoria, San Diego, and Clearwater. Though he logged the majority of his flight time in helicopters, including the HH-3F, HH-60J and the HH-65A, he also flew the HU-25 Falcon jet. Highlights of his aviation career include flying rescue and humanitarian missions during the Mariel/Cuban Boatlift of 1980 and flying drug interdiction missions for Operation Bahamas, Turks and Caicos from 1988-1991. Designated an Aviation Maintenance Officer in 1979, his first staff tour was as the Assistant Chief, Office of Aeronautical Engineering, Coast Guard Headquarters (1991-1994). During this tour he completed a one-year Department of Transportation Fellowship. From 1994-1997, he commanded Coast Guard Air Station/Group Astoria. Returning to Headquarters in 1997, he served as the Chief of Aeronautical Engineering and then later as the Chief, Office of Aviation Forces, where he implemented policy to arm Coast Guard helicopters to interdict drug traffickers. In 2000, he assumed the duties as the Chief of Operations, then later Chief of Staff for Commander, Coast Guard Pacific Area. Promoted to Rear Admiral in 2002, his first Flag assignment was as the Director of the Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) West in Alameda, California. As Commander of JIATF West, he directed all Department of Defense counter narco-terrorist efforts for the Commander, U.S. Pacific Command. Following his tour as Director of JIATF West, Rear Admiral Kunkel served one-and-a-half years as Director of Capabilities at Coast Guard Headquarters. In that capacity, he was responsible to the Assistant Commandant for Response for the allocation, distribution, management, and recapitalization of all Coast Guard operational forces and resources, including aircraft, cutters, boat forces, shore facilities, and operational command and control infrastructure.

His military awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (three awards), the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Meritorious Service Medal (three awards) and numerous other personal and unit awards. As the earliest designated U.S. Coast Guard Aviator on active duty, Rear Admiral Kunkel is the Coast Guard's 20th Ancient Albatross.

Rear Admiral Kunkel is married to the former Suzanne Chapman of Allentown, PA. They have been married since 1970 and have a daughter, Lisa, a son-in-law, Sean, and a grandson, Connor. Rear Admiral Kunkel retired in 2008 and returned to Allentown, PA.