

Public Information Office  
17th Coast Guard District  
P.O. Box 3-5000  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

REAR ADMIRAL JAMES A. PALMER  
U. S. COAST GUARD

James Alexander Palmer was born on Jan. 23, 1917, at Climax Springs, Mo., and was reared in Los Angeles, where he was graduated from John C. Fremont High School in 1935.

Entering the U. S. Coast Guard Academy, New London, Conn., with an appointment as cadet in July 1937, he was graduated with a B. S. Degree in Engineering and a commission as Ensign in May 1941.

From the Academy he was assigned to anti-submarine patrol and escort duty in the Caribbean, first as Watch Officer and Ordnance Officer on board the cutter UNALGA at San Juan, P. R., and then as Commanding Officer of the cutter MARION, based at St. Thomas, V. I., from June to October of 1942.

Assigned next as a flight student, he graduated from the Naval Air Training Station, Pensacola, Fla., with the designation of Coast Guard Aviator in August 1943. During the remainder of the war he was stationed at the Coast Guard Air Station, Port Angeles, Wash., piloting aircraft on anti-submarine patrol and on search and rescue missions. While there he also served as pilot in charge of electronics test aircraft in the Aleutians and as Operations Officer of the air station.

He returned to Puerto Rico in July 1946 to command the Coast Guard Air Station at San Juan for one year. Following that he served as Operations Officer at the Coast Guard Air Station, Brooklyn, N. Y., from July 1947 to July 1949. After completing one year as a student of Applied Communications at the Naval Academy Post-Graduate School in July 1950, he served for one year as Operations Officer at the Coast Guard Air Station, Miami, Fla.

From July 1951 to July 1955 he headed the Aviation Section of the Communications Division, Coast Guard Headquarters. He then was transferred to Sangley Point, R. P., where he held the dual post as Commander, Philippine Section, and Commanding Officer of the Coast Guard Air Detachment there. From January to July 1958 he commanded the Coast Guard Air Station at Traverse City, Mich. He then returned to Coast Guard Headquarters to serve a three-year term as Operations Specialist and Project Officer with the Airways Modernization Board and the Bureau of Research and Development of the Federal Aviation Agency.

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He commanded the Coast Guard Air Station at Miami from August 1961 to May 1963, and then served as Chief, Search and Rescue Branch at the 5th Coast Guard District Office, Portsmouth, Va., until July 1966. He then commanded the Charleston, S. C., Coast Guard Base for one year.

In July 1967, the then Captain Palmer assumed the post of Assistant Superintendent of the U. S. Coast Guard Academy. He held that post for three years.

Then, on Jan. 25, 1970, President Nixon nominated Capt. Palmer for promotion to Rear Admiral. The Senate approved and he was appointed two-star admiral with date of rank of June 1, 1970. Simultaneously he was assigned as Commander, 17th Coast Guard District, Juneau, Alaska, effective July 20, 1970.

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RADM Palmer is authorized to wear the following medals and ribbons: American Defense with bronze combat star; American Area; Asiatic-Pacific; World War II Victory; National Defense Service Medal with bronze star; Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; U. S. Coast Guard Expert Pistol Shot Medal.

His history of appointments: Ensign, May 19, 1941; Lt.(j.g.), Sept. 27, 1942; Lt., May 25, 1943; Lt. Comdr., Aug. 19, 1945; Comdr., Sept. 1, 1954; Capt. July 1, 1962; Rear Adm., June 1, 1970.

RADM Palmer's wife, Amelia, is formerly of San Juan, P. R., where they met during his tour there at the onset of World War II. She is a graduate of the University of Puerto Rico. They were married April 4, 1942. They have four daughters: Mrs. James DeFord (DOB July 28, 1943) of Los Angeles; Mrs. K. Templeton (DOB June 28, 1945) of Spencer, N. C.; Jo Ann (DOB Oct. 28, 1950); and Amy (DOB April 26, 1954.)

RADM Palmer is the son of the late Mrs. Cornelia Parker, and Mr. Lloyd K. Palmer, who is living at 807 S. Westlake Ave., in Los Angeles.

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