

VICE ADMIRAL WILLIAM F. REA, III,
U. S. COAST GUARD

Born on October 8, 1918, at Philadelphia, Pa., William Freeland Rea, III, graduated from Carr Central High School, Vicksburg, Miss., in 1936, following which he attended Mississippi State College for two years.

He graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, New London, Conn., with a B.S. Degree in Marine Engineering and with a commission of Ensign on December 19, 1941, shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Because of the war emergency his years as a cadet were shortened to three and a half rather than the usual four-year term.

From the Academy he served on the war-time Greenland Patrol, first as Watch Officer on board the Cutter NORTH STAR for eight months and then as Navigator on board the Cutter STORIS from September 1942 to August 1943. During the remainder of the war period he was assigned as Deck Inspector at the Marine Inspection Office at Norfolk, Va.

From September 1946 to April 1947, he was attached to the U. S. Military Government in Korea assisting in the organization and training of a Korean Coast Guard. He then returned to his former duty as Deck Inspector at the Norfolk Marine Inspection Office. In October 1948, he was ordered to a year of merchant marine industry training with The Texas Co. at Port Arthur, Texas. That was followed by a tour of duty as Deck Inspector at the Coast Guard Marine Inspection Office at Port Arthur from October 1949 to September 1952.

During his next tour of duty he served first as Executive Officer and then as Commanding Officer of the destroyer escort KOINER (WDE-431) on ocean station patrol in the Pacific out of Seattle, Wash. From June 1954 until July 1958, he served as Deck Inspector and Senior Investigating Officer at the Marine Inspection Office at New Orleans, following which he commanded the Cutter TAMAROA out of New York for two years.

While next stationed at Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D. C., from August 1960 to January 1964, he was Chief of the Vessel Inspection and Manning Requirements Branch for two years after which he became Assistant Chief of the Merchant Vessel Inspection Division. During his last eight months at Headquarters in that period, he was Acting Chief of that Division. He then worked on a special project as Traveling Vessel Inspector for seven months.

After completing a duty tour of three years as Officer-in-Charge of the Marine Inspection Office, New York, in July 1967, he returned to Coast Guard Headquarters to first serve a month as Chief, Merchant Vessel Inspection Division, and then as Deputy Chief, Office of Merchant Marine Safety.

By nomination of the President on November 30, 1967, and approval of the Senate, the then CAPT. Rea was appointed two-star flag officer to rank as permanent Rear Admiral from July 1, 1968. At that time he became Commander, Ninth Coast Guard District, Cleveland, who has operational jurisdiction over Coast Guard activities in the Great Lakes region. For that tour of duty, which lasted two years, he was awarded the MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL.

VADM Rea next assumed the post of Chief, Office of Merchant Marine Safety early in July of 1970, marking his third tour of duty at Headquarters. (He filled the vacancy left by RADM Charles P. Murphy who retired Feb. 1, 1970) In December 1973, VADM Rea was awarded the Legion of Merit for services in that post. VADM Rea was promoted to Vice Admiral and assumed command of the Atlantic Area and the Third Coast Guard District on Governors Island on 1 July 1974.

VADM Rea's World War II service medals and ribbons include the following: American Defense; American Area; European-African-Middle Eastern Area; and World War II Victory. In addition he has the National Defense Service, Korean Occupation and the United Nations Medals, as well as the Meritorious Service Medal (presented Oct. 1970), and the Legion of Merit (Dec. 1973).

VADM Rea advanced in rank as follows: Cadet, August 5, 1938; Ensign, December 19, 1941; Lieutenant (jg), October 1, 1942; Lieutenant, May 15, 1943; Lieutenant Commander, October 3, 1945; Commander, June 1, 1956; Captain, July 1, 1963; Rear Admiral, July 1, 1968; Vice Admiral, July 1, 1974.

He holds memberships in the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers, the U. S. Naval Institute, and the Propeller Club.

VADM Rea's wife is the former Ruth Jackson Friend of Sardis, Miss., who attended Mississippi State College for Women. They have three children, Bernadine F. (born May 4, 1947); Amelia R. (March 13, 1952); William S. (Feb. 4, 1953).