

*See revised updated sketch 12/75*

Biographical Sketch

~~REAR~~ VICE

ADMIRAL AUSTIN C. WAGNER  
U. S. COAST GUARD

Austin C. Wagner was born on May 24, 1919, in New York. He attended Mt. Vernon High School, Mt. Vernon, N. Y., Severna School, Severna Park, Maryland and Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pa.

He entered the U. S. Coast Guard Academy, New London, Conn., with an appointment as cadet on August 5, 1938, and was graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree and commissioned an Ensign on December 19, 1941, a few days after the United States entry into World War II.

Advancing through the various officer billets, he was promoted to the rank from the following dates: Lieutenant (jg), October 1, 1942; Lieutenant, May 25, 1943; Lieutenant Commander, October 3, 1945; Commander, June 1, 1956; Captain, July 1, 1963; Admiral, July 1, 1970.

His first assignment was to the Coast Guard Cutter CAMPBELL on North Atlantic convoy escort duty from January 1942 to June 1943, during which the cutter attacked four submarines and sank a fifth in February 1943, alone. He served the remainder of the war on board the Destroyer Escort USS RHODES (DE-384) in the North Atlantic first as Executive Officer and later as Commanding Officer. A Commendation Ribbon was awarded him for outstanding duty while in command of that vessel during the rescue of six survivors from oil and gasoline surface fires resulting from the collision between the steam tankers NASAULK and SAINT MIHIEL on April 9, 1945.

Between August 1945 and August 1948, he served with a Coast Guard Detachment in Korea in the capacity of advisor and instructor in the establishment of a Coast Guard for that government. The Korean Coast Guard became the Korean Navy upon the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950.

During the following two years, he was director of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and Recruiting Officer in the Chicago area of the 9th Coast Guard District. In September 1950, he became Executive Officer of the Coast Guard Cutter DEXTER, a 311-foot ocean station patrol vessel which operated out of Alameda, Calif.

From September 1951 to July 1955, he was stationed at the Coast Guard Academy as a Navigation and Seamanship Instructor and Coach of the Academy Sailing Team. He next commanded the 311-foot Cutter CASTLE ROCK out of Boston, Mass., on ocean station patrol and search and rescue duty in the North Atlantic until August 1957, when he was assigned to the First Coast Guard District office in Boston as Director of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and as Public Information Officer. While commanding the CASTLE ROCK, that vessel attained the highest grade of any Coast Guard vessel undergoing refresher training with the U. S. Navy.

In July 1960, he was transferred to Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D. C., where he first served as Assistant Chief, Special Services Division, in the Office of Personnel, then as Chief of that Division in May 1963. In this post Admiral Wagner's responsibilities included matters dealing with medals and awards, morale and discipline in the service, personnel security, survivors benefits, leadership training and others.

Admiral Wagner served his next tour of duty as Commandant of Cadets at the U. S. Coast Guard Academy from July 1964 until July 1967. During this period the Academy experienced an 80% increase in enrollment and underwent a large expansion program.

His next assignment was Commanding Officer of the Coast Guard Base on Governors Island, N. Y., the largest Coast Guard Base in the world. Since some 550 families reside on the Island, his responsibilities included the administration of town facilities for those people. The annual budget he administered in the operation of the services provided by the command amounted to 13 million dollars.

After nomination of the President on June 5, 1970, and approval of the Senate, he was appointed two-star flag officer to rank as permanent Rear Admiral from July 1, 1970. At that time he was designated Chief, Office of Boating Safety, U. S. Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D. C. For exceptionally meritorious achievement and superior performance of duties in that post he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal.

In June 1973, Rear Admiral Wagner was transferred to Miami, Fla. to assume the post of Commander, 7th Coast Guard District which covers Coast Guard activities in the states of South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, areas of the Gulf of Mexico and So. Atlantic, as well as the Caribbean including **Puerto Rico** and the Virgin Islands.

Admiral Wagner has been active in scouting since his boyhood. He is an Eagle Scout and has served on Troop Committees and was a Scout Master of a troop in Arlington, Va. While stationed in New York he was District Chairman of Roosevelt District in Manhattan, a District encompassing the area from the Battery to 138th Street. In this position he was intimately concerned with the social problems of the inner city.

Admiral Wagner is a member of the American Legion and in 1968 received the Outstanding Citizen Award awarded annually by the Richmond County (N.Y.) American Legion.

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Admiral Wagner was married on August 7, 1942, to the former Elaine C. Wagner (correct) of Delmar, N. Y., a graduate of the Connecticut College for Women. They have three sons, Keith, a Lieutenant in the U. S. Navy (born 2-16-44); Cort (12-10-49); Craig (3-24-51). *Admiral Wagner's present residence is in Fairfax, Virginia.*

Admiral Wagner's World War II campaign and service medals and ribbons include: Navy Commendation Medal; American Area; European-African-Middle Eastern Area (with three battle stars); Asiatic-Pacific Area, Navy Occupation for his Korean service. He also has the National Defense Service Medal and Ribbon, and the Meritorious Service Medal (1973).

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