

U.S. Coast Guard History Program

Vice Admiral Robert T. Nelson Vice Commandant United States Coast Guard

Vice Admiral Robert T. Nelson assumed duties as the Vice Commandant of the United States Coast Guard at United States Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, DC in June 1992. He was nominated for the position while serving as Chief of Staff, United States Coast Guard and Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

A native of East Liverpool, Ohio, he graduated from Youngstown, Ohio High School and is a 1958 graduate of the Coast Guard Academy. He earned a Masters in Business Administration from the George Washington University in 1967.



Admiral Nelson was promoted to flag rank in 1986 and served as Commander of the Second Coast Guard District headquartered in St. Louis where he directed Coast Guard operations on the navigable rivers throughout the 22 states inland region. In 1988, he assumed the duties as Chief of the Office of Navigation Safety and Waterway Services at Coast Guard Headquarters. His duties in that position included program director for search and rescue, aids to navigation, recreational boating and Auxiliary activities, ice operations and vessel traffic services. In June 1990 he became the Coast Guard Chief of Staff.

Admiral Nelson's sea service includes three tours on polar icebreakers with operations in the Arctic and Antarctic polar regions, and on the Great Lakes. He served as commanding officer of the Coast Guard Icebreaker WESTWIND. As a junior officer he served as commanding officer of Coast Guard Cutter CAPE CURRENT, Ocracoke, North Carolina, and then as commanding officer of Coast Guard Cutter POINT GLOVER, he conducted interdiction patrols along the Vietnam coast. Admiral Nelson's staff assignments include Chief of Staff Third Coast Guard District, Governors Island, New

York and Comptroller, Twelfth and Seventeenth Coast Guard Districts, headquartered in San Francisco, California and Juneau, Alaska He also served as Chief of the Budget and Programs Divisions in the Office of Chief of Staff, Coast Guard Headquarters.

Admiral Nelson's awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, two Legions of Merit, the Bronze Star with Combat Device, two Meritorious Service Medals, Coast Guard Commendation and Achievement Medals with Operational Distinguishing Device. He is also authorized to wear the Cutterman's Insignia.

Admiral Nelson is married to the former Patricia Bennett of Youngstown, Ohio. They have two daughters, Karen and Katherine, and a son, Robert Jr.

Admiral Nelson retired in 1994.

