



Rear Admiral James C. Olson

Commander, Seventeenth Coast Guard
District



Rear Admiral Olson directs Coast Guard operations including search and rescue, maritime safety, environmental protection, fisheries law enforcement and military readiness in Alaska and the North Pacific. Units and personnel under his command patrol over 3.8 million square miles of ocean and 33,000 miles of coastline, including some of the most treacherous waters in the world. More than 950,000 square miles off the Alaskan coast are monitored to enforce the U.S. 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone. An even larger area of the North Pacific is patrolled to stop illegal, large scale, high seas drift netting. Maritime safety and environmental protection are priority missions. The Port of Valdez is the trans-shipment point for 17 percent of the oil that America produces every day. Preventing spills and accidents is a major task. Alaska is also the world's second most popular cruise destination, bringing 700,000 passengers to its waters every year. Safety of these ships and passengers and protection of these pristine waters is a critical mission.

Rear Admiral Olson's operational assignments include: deck watch officer aboard Coast Guard Cutter DUANE; search and rescue pilot at Coast Guard Station Astoria, Oregon; flight safety officer, and instructor pilot at Air Stations Brooklyn, New York and Cape Cod, Massachusetts; and Operations Officer at Air Station Sitka, Alaska, a unit he later commanded. In the summer of 1994, Rear Admiral Olson took command of one of the Coast Guard's largest Air Stations at Kodiak, Alaska. He has over 5,000 accident-free hours in HH-52, HH-3F, and HH60J Helicopters.

Rear Admiral Olson most recently served as Chief of Operations Capability where he was responsible for allocation, distribution, and recapitalization of Coast Guard aircraft, vessels, shore facilities and operational command infrastructure as well as the administration of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. His first flag assignment was as Director of Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) West. Other staff assignments include Chief of Operations and Chief of Staff for the Coast Guard's 13th District in Seattle, Washington. He also served at Coast Guard Headquarters in the Office of Programs, and on the Coordinating Council Staff in the Chief of Staff's Office. While in the 7th District in Miami, Florida, he served as the Chief of Intelligence and Investigations, and directed the Maritime Intelligence Center.

A 1970 graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, Rear Admiral Olson earned a Masters Degree in Business Administration in his off duty time while serving at Air Station Brooklyn, New York. He was designated as a naval aviator following training completed in 1972, and is a 1990 graduate of the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.