

Public Information Division
U. S. Coast Guard Headquarters
Washington 25, D. C.

Biographical Data

REAR ADMIRAL JOSEPH A. KERRINS, U. S. COAST GUARD

Joseph Arthur Kerrins was born to Mr. and Mrs. Joseph and Julia Kerrins on May 21, 1906, at Boston, Mass., and was graduated from Everett (Mass.) High School in 1923. He entered the U. S. Coast Guard Academy with an appointment as a cadet on May 21, 1924, and was graduated and commissioned an Ensign in the U. S. Coast Guard on March 8, 1927.

Subsequently, he advanced to Lieutenant (jg), March 8, 1929; Lieutenant, March 8, 1931; Lieut. Commander, May 25, 1940; Commander, September 1, 1942; Captain, August 14, 1945; Rear Admiral, August 1, 1956.

After concluding his first assignment aboard the Cutter SENECA of the New York Division, he served aboard the Destroyers TERRY and AMMEN of the New York Division of the Destroyer Force operated by the Coast Guard between 1924 and 1934 in an all out suppression of smuggling. In June 1930, he reported to the Cutter GRESHAM, based at Mobile, Ala., and in October 1931 became executive officer of the Cutter TUSCARORA, based at St. Petersburg, Fla.

In April 1932, he became executive officer of Coast Guard Base Six in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. He attended flight training classes at the Naval Air Station in Pensacola, Fla., and during 1933 was on the staff of the Commander, Eastern Area, in New York City.

From January 1934 to September 1936, he served as executive officer aboard the Cutter APACHE, based at Baltimore, Md. Assigned next to George Washington University Law School in Washington, D. C., he was awarded a Bachelor of Law Degree in 1939, and was admitted to the District of Columbia Bar. After a tour of duty as law instructor at the U. S. Coast Guard Academy, he served as executive officer of the Maritime Service Training Ship AMERICAN SAILOR, based at Port Hueneme, Calif., from July 1941 to July 1942, during the outset of World War II.

He then commanded the Cutter MOJAVE on convoy escort operations with the Greenland Patrol for a year and also served as Escort Commander of Task Unit 24, Greenland Patrol. He was awarded the Navy Commendation Ribbon for his service aboard the MOJAVE.

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RADM JOSEPH A. KERRINS, USCG (Cont'd)

In July 1943, a Commander at the time, he was transferred to the Mediterranean Area as Senior Officer, Merchant Marine Hearing Units, at Oran, Algeria, and Naples, Italy. He returned to the United States in September 1944, to serve at Coast Guard Headquarters in the Marine Safety Division and as Secretary of the Merchant Marine Council during the remaining war months and until August 1949. While acting in this capacity he served as a member of the board of investigation convened at Galveston, April 1947, to inquire into the Texas City fire disaster, after which he later served for several months as Chairman of the Inter Agency Committee on the Hazards of Ammonium Nitrate. He presided at a public hearing in New Orleans in the fall of 1947 to learn of problems incident to off-shore drilling. In the spring of 1949, he delivered a paper in Houston before the American Petroleum Institute setting forth Coast Guard views on off-shore drilling.

During the ensuing four years, he served as Chief, Marine Safety Division in the Fifth Coast Guard District office at Norfolk, Va. From August 1953 to March 1956, he commanded the Greater Antilles Section and the U. S. Coast Guard Base at San Juan, P. R., and was also Captain-of-the-Port, Greater Antilles Section. He was then designated Chief of Staff of the Twelfth Coast Guard District, with office in San Francisco. With the retirement of Rear Admiral Raymond T. McElligott on May 1, 1956, he assumed the additional duties of Acting Commander, Twelfth Coast Guard District and Acting Commander, Western Area.

On May 9, 1956, the nomination of Captain Kerrins for the rank of permanent Rear Admiral was signed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. The Senate confirmed it on May 24th and made it effective as of August 1, 1956. Effective also that date, Rear Admiral Kerrins became the Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District, with offices in New Orleans.

In October 1958, he transferred his Flag to Cleveland, O., to become Commander of the Ninth Coast Guard District with charge of Coast Guard operations in states and waters of the Great Lakes region. He held that post until May 1960, when he reported as Chief, Office of Operations at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D. C.

On April 3, 1961, he was designated Chief of Staff, U. S. Coast Guard, and Flag Officer in charge of the Coast Guard Reserve, also Coast Guard member of the Reserve Armed Forces Policy Board. This was his last assignment before retiring on July 1, 1961.

Rear Admiral Kerrins' World War II campaign and service medals and ribbons include, in addition to the Navy Commendation Ribbon, the American Defense Medal with sea clasp, American Area, European-African-Middle Eastern Area, and World War II Victory.

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RADM JOSEPH A. KERRINS, USCG (Cont'd)

He is a member of Phi Alpha Delta, a legal fraternity. Rear Admiral Kerrins is married to Alice Buckley of Lowell, Mass. They have one daughter, Joan Marie, a graduate of Mary Washington College, Va., who is married to Lieutenant John B. Friel, USCG.

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