



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations



Rear Admiral Robert F. Duncan

Rear Admiral Robert F. Duncan, was Commander of the Eighth Coast Guard District and Commander of Maritime Defense Command Eight, headquartered in New Orleans, Louisiana. As District Commander, RADM Duncan was responsible for U.S. Coast Guard operations covering 26 states, over 1,200 miles of coastline and 10,300 miles of inland waterways from Florida to Mexico and including the entire navigable lengths of the Mississippi, Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, and Tennessee River Systems

RADM Duncan, a 1972 graduate of the United States Coast Guard Academy, earned his Master of Science degree from the State University of New York, Maritime College in 1978. Upon commissioning, RADM Duncan served as a Deck Watch Officer (DWO) in USCGC CITRUS, homeported in Kodiak, Alaska. He was next assigned to the Coast Guard Third District operations staff in New York City, followed by a tour as Executive Officer of USCGC HORNBEAM, homeported in Cape May, New Jersey.

Following graduation from Boston College Law School, with the degree of Juris Doctor, *magna cum laude*, RADM Duncan served as the Assistant Legal Officer on the staff of the Commander, First Coast Guard District, in Boston, Massachusetts. In 1987, he assumed command of Coast Guard Group and Coast Guard Base Charleston, South Carolina. There, he led the Coast Guard's response to Hurricane Hugo and was honored with the South Carolina Order of the Palmetto, that State's highest honor. He joined the faculty of the Naval War College in 1990 as Assistant Director of the Oceans Law and Policy. RADM Duncan next appointment was as Deputy Chief in the Office of General Law at Coast Guard Headquarters.

During OPERATION DESERT STORM, RADM Duncan served on the staff of Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Central Command, as Attorney for the Maritime Interception Forces and as Assistant Officer-in-Charge, U.S. Coast Guard Forces, Middle East, embarked in USS LASALLE (AGF-3) and USS LONG BEACH (CGN-9), operating in the Arabian Gulf.

In 1994, RADM Duncan served as Fellow to the Chief of Naval Operations, on CNO Strategic Studies Group XIV. He next commanded Coast Guard Group Woods Hole, Massachusetts; served as Chief of Staff, First Coast Guard



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District; and then as Assistant Superintendent, United States Coast Guard Academy. Upon promotion to Flag rank, RADM Duncan served as Chief Counsel and the Service's first military Judge Advocate General of the Coast Guard, and led the Coast Guard Homeland Security Task Force in response to the 9/11 attacks.

RADM Duncan is a graduate of National Defense University's Pinnacle Course for Flag and General Officers.

In January 2005, he was appointed by Secretary Ridge and served as the Federal Coordinator for the Iraqi Overseas Registration and Voting for the southern region of the United States. In August and September 2005, Rear Admiral Duncan led the Coast Guard's rescue and recovery efforts in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

For his leadership of those historic rescue and recovery operations, he was commended by President Bush, and the United States Senate. On behalf of the President, Secretary Chertof awarded Admiral Duncan the Distinguished Service Medal, noting in the accompanying citation that this historic response addressed "the worst natural disaster in our nation's history". Similarly, Rear Admiral Duncan was formally commended by Governor Blanco and in a Concurrent Resolution of the Louisiana Senate and House of Representatives. Rear Admiral Duncan was awarded the Louisiana Legion of Merit and commended for his heroism by a Proclamation from the City Council of New Orleans. Additionally, Secretary Colin Powell presented Rear Admiral Duncan with the American Spirit Gold Medallion, an award conferred annually by the National World War II Museum. Admiral Duncan was also presented the City of New Orleans highest recognition; the Sieur de Bienville Founder's Award.

Other personal awards of RADM Duncan's are; Distinguished Service Medal (second), Legion of Merit (two awards), the Meritorious Service Medal (five awards), the Coast Guard Commendation Medal (two awards), and the Coast Guard Achievement Medal (three awards).

After a distinguished career in the United States Coast Guard spanning 34 years, Admiral Duncan led several telecoms ventures focusing on improving disaster communications between 'first responders' and assumed leadership service on several charitable and professional Boards of Directors; including the Navy Safe Harbor/Wounded Warrior Foundation, the Women in Military Service for America Foundation, and the Judge Advocates Association (as President).

An author, frequent panelist, and sought-after speaker, Admiral Duncan continues to contribute to the national, and international, dialogue on Homeland Security, emergency operations, and crisis leadership and was honored by the American Security Council Foundation with their 2015 Lifetime Achievement Award for distinguished leadership in National Response and Homeland Security.