

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

Biographical Data

REAR ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER COPELAND KNAPP, U. S. COAST GUARD

Christopher Copeland Knapp was born on April 1, 1908, at Bethlehem, Pa. After graduating from high school in Albany, N. Y. (1926), he studied mechanical engineering at Rennselaer Polytechnic Institute at Troy, N. Y.

He entered the U. S. Coast Guard Academy, New London, Conn., as a cadet in August 1928, and was graduated and commissioned an Ensign on May 15, 1931. Subsequently he advanced in rank to Lieutenant (jg), May 15, 1934; Lieutenant, May 16, 1936; Lieut. Commander, June 26, 1942; Commander, December 21, 1943; Captain, August 6, 1951; Rear Admiral, July 1, 1960.

From the Academy he was assigned to the Cutter Apache and later to the Cutter Pontchartrain in which he made the 1932 International Ice Patrol. In the fall of 1932, he was assigned to the Destroyer Wilkes of the Boston Division of the Destroyer Force (operated by the Coast Guard between 1924 and 1934 in suppression of smuggling). With this vessel he took part in naval operations for the protection of United States citizens in the 1933 Cuban Revolution.

In the spring of 1934, he was assigned to the Cutter Aurora, based at San Pedro, Calif. During 1935, he served aboard the Cutter Cyane out of Ketchikan, Alaska. He sailed with the Cutter Northland on the 1936 and 1937 Bering Sea Patrols. This vessel was based at Seattle, Wash. The fall of 1937 saw him reassigned to the Cutter Itasca, based at San Diego, Calif. He served in all officer billets including that of Executive Officer aboard this cutter.

From June to September 1938, he was assigned to instruction courses at the University of Chicago after which he reported to the Coast Guard Academy for duty as an instructor of Physics, Chemistry, Ordnance-Gunnery and Chemical Warfare and as athletic coach.

World War II:

Detached from the Academy in July 1943, he was assigned to a command course of instructions at the Sub-Chase Training School in Miami, and in October 1943, assumed command of the Destroyer USS Lurant (DE-389) of Destroyer Escort Division 45, Atlantic Fleet. He advanced to Commander of that Escort Division in March 1945, having as flagship the Destroyer USS Vance (DE-387). During this period of the war his division escorted convoys in the North Atlantic and to Mediterranean ports, engaging in combat action against enemy submarines. In November 1945, he was located at Green Cove Springs, Fla., as Coast Guard Representative, Florida Group, Sixteenth Fleet, where he commanded the demobilization and inactivation of Coast Guard-manned vessels of the fleet.

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RADM Knapp's World War II campaign and service medals and ribbons include the Navy Commendation Ribbon with Combat Distinguishing Device and Navy Commendation Metal Pendant; American Defense Service with Fleet Clasp; American Area; European-African-Middle Eastern Area (with star); Asiatic-Pacific Area; World War II Victory. He also has the Expert Rifle and Expert Pistol Medals.

POST WAR:

From July 1946 to July 1947, he was Assistant Chief, Enlisted Personnel Division at Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D. C., and then attended the Naval War College in Newport, R. I., for a year. He returned to Headquarters in June 1948, to duty under the Chief, Planning and Control Staff, and from February 1949 to November 1951, he was Coast Guard Liaison Officer for Plans and Operations in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations in Washington.

After next commanding the Coast Guard Cutter Kukui, a large cargo ship providing logistics services to Loran stations in the Pacific, until October 1953, he was assigned as Assistant Chief of Operations at the 14th Coast Guard District office at Honolulu. In November 1954, he became Commanding Officer of the Coast Guard Base, Sand Island, Hawaii.

From June 1955 to June 1958, he was assigned at the Coast Guard Academy first as Head, Gunnery, Law and Tactics Department (to June 1957), then as Officer-in-Charge of the Reserve Officer Candidate School. (The latter was moved from the Academy location in July 1959.)

He was next transferred to duty as Chief, Operations Divisions in the 13th Coast Guard District office in Seattle. While stationed there on January 27, 1960, the then Captain Knapp was nominated by the President for the permanent rank of Rear Admiral. With confirmation by the Senate, the appointment became effective as of July 1, 1960. Meanwhile in June 1960, he had assumed the post of Commander, 17th Coast Guard District, Alaska, with office in Juneau.

In June 1962, RADM Knapp became Commander, 14th Coast Guard District with offices in Honolulu, Hawaii. In July 1964, he assumed the dual post of Commander, Western Area, and Commander, 12th Coast Guard District, San Francisco. He retired from that post on July 1, 1966.

Rear Admiral Knapp is married to Evelyn Swanson of Fullerton, Nebraska. They have two daughters, Carol C., and Linda.

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