

Admiral Russell Randolph Waesche

*A*DMIRAL RUSSELL RANDOLPH WAESCHE was born January 6, 1886, in Thurmont, Maryland. He received his early education in the public schools of Maryland, and later at Purdue University. He was appointed a cadet to the U. S. Coast Guard Academy on May 19, 1904, and received his commission as Ensign on October 27, 1906.

During the early years of his service career he served on the Great Lakes, Alaskan and Arctic waters, and the Pacific Coast, in such famous Coast Guard ships as the MOHAWK, MORRILL, TAHOMA, PERRY, and RUSH.

In March, 1926, he was assigned to duty in connection with reconditioning and outfitting Navy destroyers, which were to be transferred to the Coast Guard. He subsequently was assigned to command of the TUCKER and of Division Four of the Destroyer Force.

After a brief tour of duty as Force Gunnery Officer on the staff of the Commander of the Destroyer Force, he was assigned to Coast Guard Headquarters as Ordnance Officer. While serving in this capacity he organized the first Coast Guard teams that competed in the national rifle and pistol matches, and under his leadership gunnery and small arms activities of the Coast Guard attained their present high standard of efficiency.

He was appointed Commandant of the Coast Guard with rank of Rear Admiral on June 1, 1936. He was twice subsequently reappointed Commandant and promoted to the rank of full Admiral April 4, 1945.

Admiral Waesche, though largely responsible for the efficient expansion of the Service which permitted operations all over the globe, expanded the traditional functions of the Coast Guard to an increasingly effective point. Under his administration increased emphasis has been placed on such responsibilities of the Service as maritime safety, ice breaking, and aids to navigation.

Under wartime conditions, Admiral Waesche presided over the greatest expansion of the Service in its history. His service record credits him with originating the Coast Guard Institute and Correspondence School, reorganization of Coast Guard field forces, transfer and integration of the Lighthouse Service in the Coast Guard, the organization of formation of the Women's Reserve.

Admiral Waesche received an honorary degree of Doctor in Engineering, in February, 1944, from Purdue University. In May, 1944, he was elected president of the Society of American Military Engineers.