

United States Coast Guard Promotes First African American Vice Admiral

By: CDR Adolph Keyes, USCG Retired



On 17 May 2010 in front of a majestic backdrop of two beautifully dressed Coast Guard cutters, CGC WAESCHE and CGC MORGENTHAU, and an audience of nearly 500, I witnessed history when the United States Coast Guard promoted its first African American vice admiral, VADM Manson K. Brown.

A native of Washington, DC, VADM Brown has served on active duty for 32 years. He is a 1978 graduate of the Coast Guard Academy and has earned a MS degree in Civil Engineering and a MS in National Resource Strategy.

Officiated by VADM David Pekoske, Coast Guard Vice Commandant and before a distinguished international audience that included senior Canadian and Mexican

maritime representatives, Alameda Mayor Beverly Johnson, Norman Mineta, former transportation secretary under President George W. Bush, and nearly 50 active duty, reserve, retired and auxiliary flag officers and senior federal, state, and local government officials, VADM Brown relieved VADM Jody Breckenridge, who retired with 34 years of military service, as Commander, U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area and U.S. Coast Guard Defense Force West.

VADM Brown's last assignment was as the Fourteenth District Commander, Honolulu, Hawaii. In his new assignment as PACAREA, VADM Brown's span of responsibility is 73 million square miles ranging from South America, north to the Arctic Circle and west to the Far East. PACAREA's cache of resources include 32,700 people, 3 national level commands – the Force Readiness Command, the Deployable Operations Group, and Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON) – 4 districts, 7 training centers, 2 training teams, 5 Afloat Training Groups, the Coast Guard Institute, the Training Quota Management Center, and a large fleet of ships, boats, and aircraft.