

It is with deep regret I inform you of the passing of Rear Admiral (lower half) Robert Charles Jones, U.S. Navy (Retired) on 16 November 2021 at age 79. RDML Jones entered the Naval Reserve Officers' Training Corps in September 1959 and served as a Surface Line Officer until his retirement in 1993 as Commandant Naval District Washington. He served as one of the last U.S. Navy advisors to the Republic of Vietnam Navy. His commands included guided-missile destroyer USS MACDONOUGH (DDG-39,) and Naval Station Subic Bay.

Robert Jones became a midshipman in the Naval Reserve Officers' Training Corps (NROTC) at the University of North Carolina on 1 September 1959. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial and Labor Relations in 1963 and was commissioned an ensign on 3 June 1963 to date from 5 June 1963. Ensign Jones then reported to Newport, RI-based destroyer USS FORREST SHERMAN (DD-931,) serving as First Lieutenant and joining the ship during a Mediterranean deployment, and then later conducting a full Mediterranean deployment. In December 1964, Lieutenant (junior grade) Jones reported for training at the Naval Destroyer School Newport before assuming duty as Engineering Officer aboard Newport-based destroyer escort USS CROMWELL (DE-1014) in June 1965 for operations in the North Atlantic and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He was promoted to lieutenant in December 1966.

In February 1967, Lieutenant Jones reported Executive Officer to Norfolk-based ocean minesweeper USS DOMINANT (MSO-431) while the ship was deployed to the Mediterranean and then subsequent exercises off Venezuela. In July 1968, LT Jones reported to the NROTC Unit at the University of Colorado for duty under instruction before becoming an NROTC Instructor at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY in August 1968. He was promoted to lieutenant commander in February 1970. In July 1971, Lieutenant Commander Jones commenced study at the Naval War College, Newport RI, graduating in June 1972 and concurrently earning a Masters Degree in International Affairs from the George Washington University.

In June 1972, LCDR Jones was assigned to U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam and Naval Advisory Group, Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) as Off-Shore Training Administrator, during a particularly tumultuous period following the North Vietnamese Easter Offensive, resumption of U.S. bombing of North Vietnam (Operation Linebacker) and significant U.S. Navy combat operations in the Gulf of Tonkin, leading to the signing of the Paris "Peace Accords," in early 1973. In November 1973, LCDR Jones returned to the Naval Destroyer School at Newport before assuming duty as Executive Officer of USS TRIPPE (DE-1075) in December 1973, after the ship had been modified to operate the Light Airborne Multi-Purpose System (LAMPS) helicopter, for a Mediterranean deployment. LCDR Jones deployed again on TRIPPE in 1975; along with USS JOSEPH HEWES (FF-1078,) TRIPPE was the first U.S. Navy ship to operationally transit the Suez Canal when it re-opened after being closed since the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. TRIPPE's designation was also changed to FF-1075 mid-deployment. In April 1975, LCDR Jones reported to the Bureau of Naval Personnel in Washington DC as Head TEMADD Orders and Recall and Release Branches. He was promoted to commander in September 1976.

In March 1978, Commander Jones commenced a training track through Surface Warfare Officers Schools Command, Newport, Naval Guided Missile School, Dam Neck, VA and the staff of Commander Naval Surface Forces Atlantic. In June 1978, CDR Jones assumed command of Charleston-based guided-missile destroyer USS MACDONOUGH (DDG-39) for operations in the North Atlantic and preparations for an extended drydocking. In July 1980, CDR Jones attended the senior course at the Naval War College, graduating with distinction in July 1981. He was then assigned to the Office of the Secretary of Defense as Director of Compensation in ODASD (Military Personnel and Force Management.) He was promoted to captain in October 1982.

In July 1984, Captain Jones assumed command of Naval Station Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines during a period of major upheaval in the country in the wake of the assassination of opposition leader Senator Benigno, Aquino, Jr. and the subsequent "People Power" revolution led by his widow (and future President) Corazon Aquino that overthrew the 20-year authoritarian rule of President Ferdinand Marcos. In July 1986, CAPT Jones was assigned Director of Shore Facilities Management and then as Executive Assistant to the Commander-in-Chief U.S. Atlantic Fleet. In April 1989 he returned to Washington DC in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations as Assistant to the Vice CNO (OP-09B.) In May 1990, he was designated a rear admiral (lower half) for duty in a billet commensurate with that rank and was promoted to rear admiral (lower half) on 1 August 1990.

In September 1990, RDML Jones assumed duty as the Commandant of Naval District Washington. He commanded the Navy escort for President Bill Clinton's first inaugural. He also served on the board of directors of Ronald MacDonald House with former First Lady Barbara Bush. He retired on 1 August 1993.

Rear Admiral Jones' awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (three awards,) Meritorious Service Medal (two awards,) Navy Commendation Medal (two awards,) Navy Unit Commendation, Meritorious Unit Commendation, National Defense Service Medal (two awards,) Vietnam Service Medal with two bronze stars, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbin (two awards,) Vietnam Honor Medal First Class, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation, Republic of Vietnam Civil Actions Unit Citation, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with device.

Upon retiring from active duty, Rear Admiral Jones became City Manager of Pottstown, Pennsylvania for nine years. He was active in the Rotary Club and served as President of his local chapter in Virginia.

Most of Rear Admiral Jones' career was standard fare for Surface Warfare Officers – long years at sea on the far side of the world, away from family, and often eyeball-to-eyeball with Soviet ships, aircraft and submarines in a cold war that fortunately didn't turn hot. His overseas shore tours were noteworthy for being particularly strenuous, including service in Vietnam as an advisor to the South Vietnamese Navy when the North Vietnamese Easter Offensive of 1972 came perilously close to succeeding (thwarted in large measure thanks to U.S. carrier aviation, but the South Vietnamese Navy performed well, thanks to advisors like then-LCDR Jones.) His

command tour at Naval Station Subic Bay in the midst of a literal revolution in the Philippines was quite challenging. His superior leadership at sea and in crises led to his selection as Executive Assistant to Admiral Frank Kelso, CINCLANT/CINCLANTFLT and then Assistant to the VCNO, Admiral Leon Edney. Success in these high-visibility positions led to his selection for flag and selection as Commandant of Naval District Washington (a prestigious position that has existed in some form since 1800.) Rear Admiral Jones went wherever the Navy asked him, including a joint job in the OSD Office of Compensation, that most officers at that time probably would have tried to avoid as it wouldn't have been considered "career-enhancing." Nevertheless, he made the most of his opportunities and served our Navy and nation with great skill, dedication and leadership for which we should all be grateful, and remember, as well as the sacrifice of his family in the defense of our freedom.

Rest in Peace Admiral Jones

Very respectfully,

Sam

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