

# COMMANDER CRUISE DESTROYER FLOTILLA THREE REAR ADMIRAL WALTER V. COMBS, USN



Rear Admiral Walter V. Combs, Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Flotilla Three, became the 20th admiral to embark in the world's largest heavy cruiser on October 9, 1967 in the Gulf of Tonkin. Admiral Combs transferred his command via a 3½ hour highline operation from the USS SAINT PAUL to NEWPORT NEWS while the two heavy cruisers steamed side by side off the coast of South Vietnam.

Rear Admiral Combs was in charge of Operation SEA DRAGON, and immediately after the transfer was complete NEWPORT NEWS headed for her first combat mission. Under his direction, the SEA DRAGON cruiser-destroyer group all but stopped the waterborne flow of enemy supplies southward.

A 1936 graduate of the Naval Academy, Admiral Combs holds a masters degree in International Relations from George Washington University. Most of his World War II service was on board two destroyers, the USS BUSH as Executive Officer and the USS HARRISON as Commanding Officer until the end of the war. It was during the latter tour of duty that Admiral Combs received the Silver Star Medal and the Bronze Star Medal with combat "V".

In mid November 1967 in Yokosuka, Japan Admiral Combs was relieved by Rear Admiral Kinney as Commander of the SEVENTH FLEET Cruiser Destroyer Group.