



**George P. Koch, Rear Admiral, USN**

George Price Koch was born in Cresson, Pennsylvania, attended schools in Chester, Pennsylvania, and in 1929 entered the Naval Academy. Graduated with the Class of 1933, he was not commissioned until the next year due to previous legislation limiting the number of commissions in 1933. In the interim (1933-1934), he had flight training at the Army's Randolph and Kelly Fields (Texas).

He was designated Naval Aviator in July 1934, and after further training at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, had assignments as Personnel and Gunnery Officer on board the cruiser *Tuscaloosa*; Personnel Officer of Torpedo Squadron 7, attached to the aircraft carrier *Enterprise* and Personnel and Gunnery Officer of Patrol Squadron 3. In July 1940 he joined Patrol Bombing Squadron, 74, and was serving with that squadron, operating with the British in Iceland, when the United States entered World War II. He is entitled to the Ribbon for and a facsimile of the Navy Unit Commendation awarded Patrol Bombing Squadron 74.

He commanded Headquarters Squadron 5 during 1942 and 1943, and after duty in connection with material on the Staff of the Commander in Chief, United States Fleet, assumed command in July 1944, of the USS *Humboldt*. He commanded that seaplane tender throughout the remaining was period.

Transferred to the USS *Leyte* in September 1945 he served as Navigator and Operations Officer of that aircraft carrier until the summer of 1947. Completing the Senior Course (Strategy and Tactics) at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, he reported in June 1946 as Executive Officer of the Naval Air Technical Training Center, Memphis, TN. For two years he was Executive Officer of the Naval Station Kodiak, Alaska, and in February 1953 was assigned to the

Staff of Commander Fleet Air Wings, Atlantic, for successive duty as Operations Officer and Chief of Staff.

He was Head of the War Plans Branch, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, between 1953 and 1955, and following command of the Naval Air Station, Barbers Point, Oahu, T.H., he reported in September 1957 as Chief of Staff to the Commander Fleet Air, Quonset, with headquarters at the Naval Air Station, Quonset Point, RI. In May 1956 he became Commander Fleet Air Wing 3, and in December 1959, assumed command of the Naval Air Station, Norfolk, VA.

His selection for the rank of Rear Admiral was approved by the President in July 1960, and in March 1961 he assumed command of Carrier Division EIGHTEEN. In that capacity, he was in charge of the first astronaut pick-up on board the USS *Lake Champlain* in 1961. In June 1962 he became Commander Fleet Air Wings, U. S. Atlantic Fleet., with additional duty as Commander Fleet Air Wing 5. He served as such until July 1963, when he reported as Chief of Naval Air Reserve Training, with headquarters at the Naval Air Station, Glenview, Illinois. That nationwide command included eighteen subordinate commands throughout the United States from Los Angeles to Boston and from Jacksonville to Seattle. "For exceptionally meritorious service from July 28, 1963 to September 28, 1965..." he was awarded the Legion of Merit.

On October 28, 1965 he took command of Carrier Division SIX and in January 1967 reported as Commander U. S. Navy Forces, Southern Command/Commandant of the Fifteenth Naval District, headquartered at Fort Amador, Canal, Zone, with additional duty as Commander Panama, Sector, Caribbean Sea Frontier and Commander Panama Sector, Western Sea Frontier. "For exceptionally meritorious service..." in that capacity, he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of Second Legion of Merit. In June 1969 he became Commandant of the Naval District, Washington, D. C., and "for exceptionally meritorious service..." in that capacity was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Third Legion of Merit. On August 11, 1971 he was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy. In November 1969 he became the 20th "Gray Eagle" of Naval Aviation.

He married Virginia Vredenburg of Winchester, Virginia, on 5 June 1937. They had four children: George P. Jr.; James Peter (Lt. (jg), USN, Deceased); Richard Alexander and Virginia K. Cabell.

**DECORATIONS AND MEDALS:**

- Legion of Merit
- Gold Star in lieu of the Second Legion of Merit
- Gold Star in lieu of the Third Legion of Merit
- Navy Unit Commendation (Patrol Bombing Squadron 74)
- American Defense Service Medal-
- American Campaign Medal
- European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal
- World War II Victory Medal
- Navy Occupation Service Medal, Europe Clasp
- National Defense Service Medal with bronze star

CITATIONS:

Legion of Merit: "For exceptionally meritorious service from July 28, 1963 to September 28, 1965 as Chief of Naval Air Reserve Training. During this period, (he) carried out his responsibilities with a high degree of professional skill, leadership and resourcefulness. Many problems of long standing have been solved and many other are well on the way to solution. Several new and very important programs have been instituted and other existing programs have been expanded or improved. Rear Admiral Koch's outstanding successful tenure is directly attributable to his flawless Judgment, discerning and farsighted perception, and unrelenting tenacity. His accomplishments are of particular significance in view of the importance of our Naval Air Reserve to the total defense effort...."

Gold Star in lieu of the Second Legion of Merit: "For exceptionally meritorious service from January 17, 1967 to June 10, 1969 as Commander, U. S. Naval Forces, Southern Command...Rear Admiral Koch developed a strong rapport with military and civil government leaders of many Central and South American countries, thereby enhancing the cooperative security and defense of the Western Hemisphere. As a result of his encouragement and advice.. the doctrine adopted by many Latin American navies has been closely patterned on United States Navy doctrine, tactics and techniques. (He) provided expert technical assistance and professional advice to the navies of Latin America which permitted them to undertake realistic efforts to modernize and standardize their equipment, and thereby materially increase the effectiveness of their navies. Additionally, he was instrumental in encouraging, participation of Latin American naval units with United States naval units in the following joint/combined exercises: HALCON VISTA II, UNITAS VIII, HALCON VISTA III, UNITAS IX and NICARAO. Under his expert guidance, these exercises provided a highly beneficial Navy to Navy association which laid the cornerstone for the vital requirements of cooperative action for contingencies or war. (His) assistance to the Commander in Chief, United States Southern Command contributed immeasurably to the security of the Panama Canal and to the maintenance of harmonious United States-Panama relations..."

Gold Star in lieu of the Third Legion of Merit: "...An outstandingly competent and resourceful leader, Rear Admiral Koch initiated and directed to successful completion three plans which were instrumental in the accomplishment of assigned missions. As a result of his development of a Navy/Marine Corps National Capital Region Plan, the Navy was assigned the task of developing a similar plan for all Department of Defense activities in the National Capital Region. Through his initiative and guidance, the Naval Station was merged with the Headquarters Staff with resultant savings in personnel and resources and a substantial reduction in administrative effort and overhead. Recognizing a need to provide adequate recreational facilities for naval personnel, (he) formulated and successfully achieved approval of a comprehensive plan to acquire and improve facilities at Solomons Island, thereby enhancing command, morale..."

Navy Unit Commendation (Patrol Bombing Squadron 74): "For outstanding heroism during operations against enemy forces in Atlantic Waters, from June 7, 1942 to July 31, 1943. Undaunted by the perils of weather and sea conditions and the ever present danger of being forced down in the broad expanses of the Atlantic Ocean while fulfilling an extremely vital assignment in connection with anti-submarine warfare, Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTY-FOUR compiled an imposing record, In the sighting of 29 hostile submarines, in attacking 16, in destroying 5 and in inflicting damage upon two others. Individually courageous, and operating as a smoothly functioning team, its pilots and aircrewmembers effected numerous hazardous open-sea landings to rescue 220 stranded airmen and mariners, and in addition, dropped supplies to survivors Of merchant disasters and directed surface craft to their rescue. The outstanding record of service and combat achievement attained by this gallant fighting unit contributed notably to the Allied success in crushing the U-boat menace..."

TRANSCRIPT OF NAVAL SERVICE:

- 7/33-7/34 Randolph and Kelly Fields, TX (Army Air Corps. Student).
- 7/34 -1/35 NAS, Pensacola, FL.. (Student).
- 1/35-1/37 USS *Tuscaloosa* (Pers. & Gunnery Officer).
- 137-6/38 USS *Enterprise*, VT 7 (Personnel Officer).
- 6/38 -7/940 Patrol Squadron 3 (Pers. & Gunnery Officer).
- 7/40-8/42 Patrol Bombing Squadron 74 (Material & XO)
- 8/42-5/43 Headquarters Squadron 5 (CO).
- 5/43-7/44 CINCLANTFLT (Material Officer).
- 7/44-9/45 USS *Humbolt* (CO).
- 9/45-7/47 USS *Leyte* (Navigator & Operations Officer).
- 7/47-6/48 Naval War College, Newport, R. I. (Student).
- 6/48-1/50 Naval Air Technical Training Center, Memphis, TN, (Executive Officer).
- 1/50-1/52 Naval Station, Kodiak, Alaska (XO).
- 2/52-3/53 Staff, Commander Fleet Air Wings, Atlantic (Operations, Officer).
- 4/53 -6/53 Staff, Commander Fleet Air Wings, Atlantic (Chief of Staff).
- 6/53-8/55 OPNAV (Head, War Plans Branch).
- 9/55-8/57 NAS, Barbers Point, Oahu, T. H. (CO).
- 9/57-4/58 Staff, COMFAIR, Quonset (Chief of Staff).
- 5/58-12/59 Commander Fleet Air Wing 3.
- 12/59-3/61 Naval Air Station, Norfolk, VA. (CO).
- 3/61-4/62 Commander Carrier Division 18.
- 6/62-7/63 COMFAIRWINGSLANT with additional duty as Commander Fleet Air Wing 5.
- 7/63-10/65 Chief, Naval Air Reserve Training, Naval Air Station, Glenview, Illinois.
- 10/65-12/66 Commander Carrier Division SIX.
- 1/67 Commander U. S. Navy Forces, Southern Command/Commandant 15th Naval District, Fort Amador, C.Z., with additional duty as Commander Panama Sector, Caribbean Sea Frontier and Commander Panama Sector, Western Sea Frontier.
- 6/69 Commandant, Naval District, Wash., D C.
- 8/1/71 Transferred to the Retired List.