

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

REAR ADMIRAL JAMES R. AHERN, SUPPLY CORPS, UNITED STATES NAVY

James Richard Ahern was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on April 3, 1923. He attended Muhlenburg College, Allentown, Pennsylvania, for two years and on May 16, 1943 enlisted in the Navy. He had instruction and was an Athletic Instructor at the Naval Training Center, Bainbridge, Maryland, until June 1944, then entered the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, on appointment from his native state. Graduated on June 6, 1947 with the Class of 1948 (accelerated course due to World War II), he was commissioned Ensign in the Supply Corps. He subsequently advanced in rank to that of Captain, to date from July 1, 1968. His selection for the rank of Rear Admiral was approved by the President on January 30, 1974.

Following graduation from the Naval Academy in 1947, he had instruction at the Naval Supply Corps School, Bayonne, New Jersey until April 1948, then joined the USS GRAND CANYON (AD-28) as Assistant for Dibursing. From April 1949 to March 1950 he was assigned as Stores, Commissary and Disbursing Officer on board the USS HENLEY (DD-762), after which he served as Assistant for Purchasing for six months, then Officer in Charge of the Material Branch at the Naval Air Development Center, Johnsville, Pennsylvania.

In July 1952 he joined Fleet Aircraft Service Squadron ONE HUNDRED FOUR as Supply Officer and in May 1954 was detached for duty as Assistant Professor of Naval Science and Supply Officer at the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey. He remained there until June 1956 and the next month became Stores Officer on board the USS LAKE CHAMPLAIN (CVA-39). In September 1957 he reported for instruction at the Harvard School of Business, Cambridge, Massachusetts, from which he received the degree of Master of Arts in Business Administration with distinction in June 1959.

He was Special Assistant to the Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts for Planning, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., until July 1962, after which he served as Assistant Fleet and Force Supply Officer on the Staff of Commander Service Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet. In August 1965 he reported as Executive Assistant and Aide to the Chief of the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts (redesignated in May 1966 Commander Naval Supply Systems Command), Navy Department. "For meritorious service from August 1965 to July 1967..." he was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal. The citation further states in part:

"...Commander Ahern served with distinction in a position of significant importance within the Naval Supply Systems Command. As a result of an extended field trip to the Western Pacific supply activities, he personally initiated and monitored a series of forty projects directed at improvement of all critical phases of supply support to Southeast Asia..."

He reported in September 1967 for instruction at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Washington, D. C. and after completing the course in June 1968 was assigned to the Naval Supply Center, San Diego, California, where he served as Planning Officer and Comptroller until August 1969, then Executive Officer. He also had duty as Interim Commanding Officer during the period May 1 to June 26, 1970. He was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal and cited in part as follows:

"For outstanding meritorious service...from July 6, 1968 to July 15, 1971. An exceptionally productive manager, innovator and leader, Captain Ahern served ships and stations in the San Diego area with distinction during a period of demanding Southeast Asia requirements and sharply reduced resources...(His) exemplary leadership qualities and his concern for the well-being of employees were recognized by his receipt of one of the six National American Federation of Government Employee's Citations for Distinguished Management-Union Relations awarded in 1971..."

Assigned in August 1971 to the Naval Supply Systems Command, Navy Department, he was Deputy Commander for Planning and Policy until January 1973, then became Deputy Commander for Plans, Programs and Financial Management.

In addition to the Meritorious Service Medal and the Navy Commendation Medal, Rear Admiral Ahern has the American Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Europe Clasp and the National Defense Service Medal with bronze star.

Navy Office of Information
Biographies Branch (OI-0111)
25 April 1974