



REAR ADMIRAL JOHN W. BITOFF
UNITED STATES NAVY
RETIRED

Rear Admiral John W. Bitoff, USN, was born in Brooklyn, NY, son of John and Elizabeth (Sullivan) Bitoff. He was commissioned an Ensign in June 1958 following graduation from the Maine Maritime Academy. He initially served in the Merchant Marine, participating in Operation Deep Freeze in the Antarctic during the International Geophysical Year 1958-59. He spent the major portion of his early career in sea duty assignments which included: USS Spiegel Grove (LSD 32), USS Springfield (CLG 7) flagship of the U.S. SIXTH Fleet; USS Bristol (DD 857); USS Delong (DE 684) as Commanding Officer; USS Charles P. Cecil (DD 835) as Executive officer and the USS Blakely (FF 1012) as commanding officer.

In January 1970 he began his first shore assignment in the Pentagon as an Operations Briefer to the CNO and SECNAV. Later that year, he was among the first group of lieutenant commanders early selected to command ships in what was known during the Admiral Zumwalt era as the "Mod Squad" concept. He was early selected for the senior course at the Naval War College as well, but chose instead to delay in order to return to sea in command. Then Lieutenant Commander Bitoff was ordered as CO USS Blakely (FF 1072). Following his destroyer command tour, he attended the National War College and graduated in the Class of 1976. He returned to the Pentagon in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (ISA). With the renewed emphasis on NATO in 1978, Commander Bitoff was called back to the Navy staff where he headed the NATO Office. Upon promotion to captain he was reassigned as Director of the CNO's Strategy and Concepts branch.

In the summer of 1980 he received orders as Executive Assistant and Senior Aide to the Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces Southern Europe in Naples, Italy. A year later, when CINCSOUTH was assigned a national hat and assumed the dual responsibility for U.S. Naval Forces in Europe, then Captain Bitoff was given the delicate task of coordinating the integration of the U.S. Navy staff at AFSOUTH in Italy with the CINCUSNAVEUR staff in London. In October 1983 he returned to the U.S. and assumed command of the Fleet Combat Training Center, Atlantic at Dam Neck Virginia. In July 1985 he was ordered to Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii as Executive Assistant to the U.S. Commander-in-Chief Pacific Command. This tour was interrupted in September, when he was ordered to Washington, D.C. as Executive Assistant to Admiral William J. Crowe, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In November of 1985 he was selected for promotion to Rear Admiral. Admiral Bitoff reported to Headquarters, U.S. European Command, Stuttgart, Germany in November 1986 and became Director of Plans and Policy (J-5). One of his primary responsibilities was the implementation of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with the Soviet Union. He designed the implementation modalities for the on-site inspections of treaty limited items at the INF bases in Italy, Germany, Belgium and the U.K. The successful conclusion of his efforts resulted in a second award of the Defense Distinguished Service Medal. From January 1989 to October 1991

Admiral Bitoff served as Commander, Combat Logistics Group ONE and Commander, Naval Base San Francisco. It was during this assignment that he was responsible for implementing the "Women at Sea Program" where he integrated women aboard U.S. Third Fleet logistics ships. He also led the Navy's rescue and recovery operations in the greater Bay Area following the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake.

In addition to his year of study at the National Defense University (MS International Security Policy), Admiral Bitoff did graduate work at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. and subsequently earned an MS from Golden Gate University. The University later conferred upon him the Degree of Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa for his "contributions to the nation as a soldier statesman".

His personal military awards include: the Defense Distinguished Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster; Defense Superior Service Medal; Legion of Merit with two Gold Stars; Defense Meritorious Service Medal; Navy Commendation Medal with one Gold Star and a Navy Meritorious Unit Citation with a Bronze Star.

Admiral Bitoff and his wife Maureen have one daughter, Elizabeth who is married to a U.S. Army Brigadier General.

Upon retirement from the Navy, the Mayor of San Francisco appointed him Director of Emergency Services where he was responsible for the coordination of police, fire and emergency medical services. Following the 101 California Street shootings the mayor tasked him to investigate the 9-1-1 organization which led to the complete restructuring of the system and the building of a modern Command and Communications System. Six years later he was recruited by the Superintendent of Schools where he served as an Executive Director.

Civilian honors and awards include:

- Selected from a category of "Community Heroes" to carry the Olympic Torch (last torch from San Francisco onto the Golden Gate Bridge) in preparation for the Summer Games in Atlanta (May 1996)
- Maine Maritime Academy Outstanding Alumni and Distinguished Graduate Awards
- Golden Gate University Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree
- Life Membership award from The Salvation Army (San Francisco) Advisory Board for "outstanding service and concern for his fellow man". (2008)