



NEWS! From the NAVAL OBSERVATORY

U.S. NAVAL OBSERVATORY

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**U.S. Naval Observatory
Press Release**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAPT Hartwell F. “Rip” Coke, USN becomes 58th Superintendent, USNO

In a time-honored Change-of-Command ceremony, Captain Hartwell “Rip” Coke, USN, assumed his duties as the 58th Superintendent, United States Naval Observatory (USNO) on December 17, 2021, relieving Captain David Kuehn, USN, who will assume new duties at United States Naval Information Forces.

In his keynote speech, Rear Admiral Ron Piret, USN (Commander, Navy Meteorology and Oceanography Command; Oceanographer and Navigator of the Navy) reflected on the long history of the Observatory, its evolution into the world’s authority on celestial and temporal reference frames, and Captain Kuehn’s leadership under the stress of the COVID pandemic. Rear Admiral Piret then presented Captain Kuehn with the Legion of Merit medal in recognition of his exceptional service as Superintendent. Following remarks by Captain Kuehn, the two officers then read their orders, and Captain Coke officially relieved Captain Kuehn at 11:25 a.m. EST.

Captain Coke is a native of Virginia, and a 1995 graduate of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VA Tech) with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Sciences with a focus in Aquatic Resources. He holds master’s degrees in meteorology and physical oceanography from the Naval Post Graduate School in Monterey, California, and in national security studies from the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island.

Upon commissioning, he initially served as a Surface Warfare Officer and transferred to naval oceanography in 2003. He now serves as a member of the Navy’s Information Warfare Community.

At sea, Coke served aboard USS IWO JIMA (LHD-7) as the Assault Division Officer and Electrical Officer, aboard USS VANDEGRIFT (FFG-48) as the Gunnery Division Officer, and aboard Carrier Strike Group EIGHT embarked on USS EISENHOWER (CVN-69) as the Staff Oceanographer and the strike group scheduling officer.

Ashore, he served as the Expeditionary Warfare Division Officer at Fleet Numerical Meteorology and Oceanography Center, staff Oceanographer for COMCMDIV THREE ONE located in Bahrain, as the junior oceanography assignment and placement officer at Naval Personnel Command, and as the deputy assistant chief of staff for Fleet Modernization and Facilities Management at Naval Information Forces, the Information Warfare TYCOM.

Coke commanded the Naval Oceanography Special Warfare Center in Coronado, California, and most recently, served as the US Fleet Forces Command Fleet Oceanographer.

Originally established as the U.S. Navy Depot of Charts & Instruments in 1830, the U.S. Naval Observatory continues to perform an essential operational role for the United States, the Navy, and the Department of Defense. Its mission includes determining the positions and motions of the Earth, Sun, Moon, planets, stars and other celestial objects, providing astronomical data; determining precise time; measuring the Earth's rotation; and maintaining the Master Clock for the United States.



Captain Hartwell F. "Rip" Coke
58th Superintendent, United States Naval Observatory