

U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Superintendent Receives Third Star



Capt. Charles McDermott, center, gives a tour of the Naval Coordination and Guidance for Shipping (NCAGS) facilities in Bahrain to then -Rear Adm. Jack Buono, Superintendent of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, in this 2013 photo. Buono has now been promoted to vice admiral. U.S. Navy / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Dawson Roth

WASHINGTON – Now-former Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao promoted U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) Superintendent Rear Adm. Jack Buono to vice admiral in the U.S. Maritime Service (USMS) at a small ceremony Jan. 11 in the Department of Transportation headquarters, Washington, D.C., the Maritime Administration said in a release.

“Vice Admiral Buono deserves this third star – he’s been a great leader, especially during COVID-19, and has put USMMA at

Kings Point on a solid foundation to develop our country's future maritime leaders," Chao said on the same day she resigned from her post.

Buono will continue to lead at USMMA, where he has been stationed since joining the academy in November 2018. The promotion makes Buono the first USMMA graduate to serve in this position at this rank.

Prior to his appointment as superintendent, Buono had nearly 40 years of maritime experience in the private sector. He retired from his last private sector employer in 2016.

"This well-deserved promotion is an indication of the trust and confidence we have in Vice Adm. Buono's leadership in the critical role of preparing our Nation's next generation of leaders – afloat and ashore," said former Maritime Administrator Mark H. Buzby, who has also just resigned. "His steady hand on the wheel continues to steer Kings Point fair."

Buono is a Master Mariner and a 1978 graduate of the academy. During his tenure as superintendent, he has been responsible for implementing the academy's strategic plan, which includes updating institutional culture, governance, communications, infrastructure, academics and athletics. More recently, Buono has guided the Regiment of Midshipmen and the academy community through the global health crisis while maintaining a strong focus on accomplishing the mission of the academy. His inspirational leadership has rallied the entire academy family – students, faculty, staff, parents, and alumni.

"I am truly humbled and honored by this promotion, and I look forward to continuing to develop the future of this national treasure we call USMMA," Buono said. "We will continue to press forward with our mission, developing leaders of exemplary character committed to serving the national security, marine transportation and economic needs of this

great nation.”

Other recent and significant accomplishments at USMMA under the guidance of Buono include the first semi-virtual graduation ceremony for the Class of 2020, the pivot to distance learning during the COVID-19 public health emergency, maintaining at-sea training experience for midshipmen aboard U.S. Flag merchant ships and two state maritime academy training vessels, and the milestone achievement of sending the Regiment of Midshipmen home for the recent holiday break COVID-free.