

## **Huan Nguyen First Vietnamese American Navy Rear Admiral**

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WASHINGTON (NNS) -- Huan Nguyen became the first Vietnamese American promoted to the rank of rear admiral during a ceremony at the Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C., Oct. 10.

Nguyen, 60, will serve as the Deputy Commander for Cyber Engineering at the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) on the Washington Navy Yard. NAVSEA Commander Vice Adm. Tom Moore served as the presiding officer.

"Today we will welcome the first Vietnamese-born U.S. Navy officer to achieve flag rank, and that is a significant event," Moore said.

Nguyen addressed the audience after being promoted. "It is a great honor to attain the rank of admiral," Nguyen said. "I am tremendously humbled to become the first Vietnamese American to wear the flag's rank in the U.S. Navy.

"The honor actually belongs to the Vietnamese American community, which instilled in us a sense of patriotism, duty, honor, courage and commitment to our adopted country, the United States of America," he added.

"This is our America. A country built on service, kindness and generosity, opportunity--the freedom to hope and dream. These values are what inspired me to serve. And what a great honor and privilege it is to serve our Navy, to serve our country, to support and defend our Constitution," Nguyen said.

Nguyen was born in Hue, Vietnam, the son of an armor officer in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. During the 1968 Tet Offensive, Nguyen's mother and father, along with his five brothers and sister, were killed by Viet Cong communist guerillas in their family home outside Saigon. Nine-year-old Nguyen was shot in the arm and thigh, with another bullet piercing his skull. He stayed with his mother for two hours, until she bled out and died. Amazingly, Nguyen survived and escaped after dark.

Nguyen was taken in by his uncle, a colonel in the Republic of Vietnam Air Force. In 1975, at age 16, they fled Vietnam, seeking refuge in the United States following the fall of Saigon.

Transported through Guam, U.S. Navy and Marine Corps personnel took care of Nguyen and his family. The U.S. 7th Fleet helped to evacuate thousands of Vietnamese refugees and transport them to safety in Guam. Seeing the U.S. Navy take care of his family would later inspire Nguyen to serve in the Navy.

“I was one of those refugees, apprehensive about an uncertain future, yet feeling extremely grateful that I was here at all,” he recalled. “The images that I remember vividly when I arrived at Camp Asan, Guam, now Asan Beach Park, were of American sailors and Marines toiling in the hot sun, setting up tents and chow hall, distributing water and hot food, helping and caring for the people with dignity and respect.

“I thought to myself how lucky I am to be in a place like America. Those sailors inspired me to later serve in the United States Navy,” Nguyen said.

Later that year, U.S. Air Force Colonel Ed Veiluva and his wife Dorothy sponsored his uncle’s family, allowing them to officially come to the United States as political refugees. Nguyen moved with his uncle’s family to Midwest City, Oklahoma, just outside of Tinker Air Force Base.

Nguyen graduated with a bachelor of science degree in Electrical Engineering from Oklahoma State University in 1981. He holds master’s degrees in Electrical Engineering from Southern Methodist University, in Engineering (Manufacturing Concentration) from Purdue University, and in Information Technology with Highest Distinction from Carnegie Mellon University. He received a Navy direct commission through the Reserve Engineering Duty Officer program in 1993.

“America is the beacon of hope for all of us. There is no other place in the world where a person can go for such opportunity,” Nguyen said.

Nguyen’s operational tours include a number of waterfront maintenance assignments: Ship Repair Facility Yokosuka as testing officer on USS Kitty Hawk availability; Officer in Charge, Ship Repair Facility, Detachment 113. Later, he served as Executive Officer/Chief Engineer at the Joint Counter Radio-Controlled Improvised Explosive Device (CREW) Field Office in Baghdad supporting Task Force Troy/18th Airborne Corps and V Corps, CREW Engineer at Task Force Paladin and Combined Explosive/Exploitation Cell (CEXC) in Afghanistan.

Staff assignments included duties as Deputy Chief Information Officer, Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) from 2017-2019, Director Military Programs, Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) and Executive Officer, NAVSEA Enlisted Personnel from 2013 - 2017. He also served as Community Manager, Engineering Duty Officer (Reserve Component). Reserve assignments include multiple command tours with various units at NAVSEA, Pacific Fleet (PACFLT), and Office of Naval Research.

Nguyen’s personal awards include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (two awards) and Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (two awards).

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191010-N-QE653-005 WASHINGTON (Oct. 10, 2019) Vice Adm. Thomas J. Moore, left, administers the oath of office to Rear Adm. Huan T. Nguyen during Nguyen's promotion ceremony at the U.S. Navy Memorial & Heritage Center, Oct. 10, 2019. Nguyen is the first Vietnamese-American promoted to the rank of rear admiral and will serve as the deputy commander for Cyber Engineering at Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) at the Washington Navy Yard. (U.S. Navy photo by Laura Lakeway/Released) {[https://www.navy.mil/list\\_all.asp?id=111160](https://www.navy.mil/list_all.asp?id=111160)}



191010-N-QE653-007 WASHINGTON (Oct. 10, 2019) Rear Adm. Huan T. Nguyen cuts a cake with his family during his promotion ceremony at the U.S. Navy Memorial & Heritage Center, Oct. 10, 2019. Nguyen is the first Vietnamese-American promoted to the rank of rear admiral and will serve as the deputy commander for Cyber Engineering at Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) at the Washington Navy Yard. (U.S. Navy photo by Laura Lakeway/Released) {[https://www.navy.mil/list\\_all.asp?id=111160](https://www.navy.mil/list_all.asp?id=111160)}





# United States Navy Biography

## REAR ADMIRAL HUAN T. NGUYEN Deputy Commander Cyber Engineering, Naval Sea Systems Command

Rear Adm. Huan Nguyen immigrated to the United States in 1975 after the fall of Saigon. He is the first Vietnamese-American to achieve flag rank. He is a 1981 graduate of Oklahoma State University with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering. He holds a master's degrees in electrical engineering from Southern Methodist University, engineering from Purdue University, and information technology (with highest distinction) from Carnegie Mellon University. He received a direct commission in the Reserve Engineering Duty Officer (EDO) program in 1993.

His operational tours include multiple waterfront maintenance assignments including test officer onboard USS Kitty Hawk (CV-63) during restricted availability at Ship Repair Facility Yokosuka, and officer-in-charge of Detachment 113, Ship Repair Facility Yokosuka, Japan. Later, he served as executive officer and chief engineer for Joint Counter Radio-Controlled Improvised Explosive Device Electronic Warfare (CREW) field office in Camp Victory supporting Multi-National Corps Iraq, and CREW engineer with Task Force Paladin and the Combined Explosive and Exploitation Cell supporting Combined Forces Command Afghanistan. He was instrumental in the stand-up of Joint CREW Composite Squadron One in Iraq.



Staff assignments included director, Military Programs at Naval Sea System Command (NAVSEA); executive officer for NAVSEA enlisted personnel; and Engineering Duty Officer community manager (Reserve Component). Most recently, he served as deputy chief Information Officer for NAVSEA. Selected Reserve assignments included command of five units within NAVSEA; U.S. Pacific Fleet; and the Office of Naval Research.

Nguyen's personal awards include the Legion of Merit (two awards), Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, and Navy Commendation Medal (two awards). He had the honor of serving with teams that have been awarded the Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Navy Unit Commendation, and Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation.

*Updated: 17 October 2019 {<https://www.navy.mil/navydata/bios/navybio.asp?bioID=1152>}*