

Rear Admiral Brendan C. McPherson, USCG

Director of Operations (J3)

U.S. Southern Command

Rear Admiral McPherson assumed the duties of Director of Operations (J3) at United States Southern Command in 2024. He previously served as Deputy Commander, Coast Guard Pacific Area, in Alameda, California, beginning in June 2023, where he helped lead Coast Guard forces responsible for operations from the Rocky Mountains across the Indo-Pacific, Arctic, and Antarctic regions to the coast of eastern Africa. He concurrently served as Deputy Commander, Defense Force West and provides Coast Guard operational support to the Department of Defense (DOD) and Combatant Commanders within the region.

Rear Admiral McPherson previously served as Commander of the Coast Guard Seventh District in Miami, Florida from July 2021 until June 2023. His prior Flag Officer assignment included Military Advisor to the Secretary of Homeland Security in Washington, D.C.



Rear Admiral McPherson was promoted to Flag rank in 2019. He is a career cutterman with more than 34 years of military service including nearly 12 years cumulative sea time aboard six cutters. He also served as the Commanding Officer of the following cutters: MIDGETT, VIGOROUS and BARANOF. His staff assignments included Chief of Staff of the Coast Guard Thirteenth District in Seattle; Chief of the Response Division and Enforcement Branch of the Coast Guard Seventh District in Miami; Press Assistant to the Commandant of the Coast Guard in Washington, D.C; Chief of Strategic Communications in the Headquarters Office of Governmental and Public Affairs; Public Affairs Officer for the Atlantic Area/Fifth District in Portsmouth, Virginia; and an assignment to the Seventh District Tactical Law Enforcement Team in Miami. Rear Admiral McPherson started his career as an Ensign aboard cutter DAUNTLESS in Miami Beach in 1989.

In addition to his regular duties, Rear Admiral McPherson was assigned to several joint and interagency unified commands in response to national contingency operations. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, he was responsible for leading public affairs efforts for all Coast Guard forces within the Atlantic Area and U.S. Maritime Defense Zone Atlantic. In 2002, Rear Admiral McPherson deployed to Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (JTF GTMO) Joint Information Center in support of Global War on Terror (GWOT) detention operations there. Rear Admiral McPherson prior roles include working as a Press Secretary to the Principal Federal Official for disaster response and recovery operations in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita along the Gulf Coast in 2005.

A native of Bradley Beach, New Jersey, Rear Admiral McPherson graduated with Honors from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in 1989 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Management. He also earned a Master of Arts degree in Public Relations from the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication and holds a Master of Arts degree in National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island.

His personal awards include two Coast Guard Distinguished Service Medals, one Legion of Merit, six Coast Guard Meritorious Service Medals, two Coast Guard Commendation Medals, one Navy Commendation Medal, two Coast Guard Achievement Medals, and various service and unit awards.