

Rear Admiral Karl O. Thomas
Director 21st Century Sailor Office (N17)

Rear Adm. Karl O. Thomas is a native of Northern Virginia. He received his commission through Naval ROTC at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1986 after graduating with a degree in management systems. He earned a Master of Science in Information Technology from Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California.



Following initial training in the E-2C Hawkeye, Thomas served in Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 114 where he made two deployments on USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70), as well as two counter-narcotic detachments to Panama.

Thomas also served as navigator on USS New Orleans (LPH 11) and USS Essex (LHD 2). He served his aviation department head tour with VAW-117 and once again deployed on Carl Vinson in 1999 participating in Operation Desert Fox.

Thomas was executive officer and commanding officer for VAW-117 during Operation Iraqi Freedom where his squadron earned the Battle E in 2003 and 2005. After graduating from Nuclear Power School with honors, Thomas served as executive officer of both USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) and USS George Washington (CVN 73), delivering the first permanently forward deployed nuclear aircraft carrier to Japan. In 2009, he commanded the 6th Fleet Command Ship, USS Mount Whitney (LCC 17) and completed numerous joint exercises in the Mediterranean, North Atlantic and Baltic Sea. He assumed command of USS Abraham Lincoln from September 2012 to August 2014 for refueling complex overhaul. He reported to USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) as the commanding officer in September 2014 where he completed his fourth deployment on Vinson in support of Operation Inherent Resolve and his crew earned the 2015 Battle E. He most recently served as executive assistant to the director, Air Warfare (N98).

Shore duty assignments include VAW-110 as a fleet replacement instructor; flag aide for both commander, Fighter Airborne Early Warning Wing Pacific and the director of Naval Reactors. He served in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (OUSD AT&L) (Unmanned Warfare) and coordinated the OUSD AT&L Unmanned Air Systems Task Force.

Thomas assumed the duties of director, 21st Century Sailor Office March 31, 2017.

Thomas has earned various personal, campaign, unit and service awards

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