

Admiral Robert F. Willard



Admiral (Ret.) Robert F. Willard is a Los Angeles native and a 1973 graduate of the United States Naval Academy. He has a Master's degree in Engineering Management from Old Dominion University and is an MIT Seminar XXI alumnus.

An F-14 Tomcat aviator, Willard served in a variety of west coast Fighter Squadrons; VF-24 "Red Checkertails," VF-124 "Gunfighters," VF-2 "Bounty Hunters," and VF-51 "Screaming Eagles" aboard the aircraft carriers USS [*Constellation*](#) (CV 64), USS [*Ranger*](#) (CV 61), USS [*Kitty Hawk*](#) (CV 63) and USS [*Carl Vinson*](#) (CVN 70). He was operations officer and executive officer of Navy Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN) and aerial coordinator for the movie. He later commanded VF-51.

Following nuclear-power training, Willard served as executive officer of *Carl Vinson*, commanded the amphibious flagship USS [*Tripoli*](#) (LPH 10) in the Persian Gulf during Operation *Vigilant Warrior* for which *Tripoli* received a Navy Unit Commendation and commanded the aircraft carrier USS [*Abraham Lincoln*](#) (CVN 72).

As a flag officer, Willard twice served on the Joint Staff, was deputy and chief of staff for U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, commanded Carrier Group Five aboard *Kitty Hawk* and commanded the U.S. 7th Fleet in Yokosuka, Japan. In March 2005, Willard became the 34th vice chief of naval operations; in May 2007, he assumed command of the U.S. Pacific Fleet; and on October 19, 2009, he began his final assignment as the commander, U.S. Pacific Command, Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii.

Willard's decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit and various other awards.

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