

Fleet Admiral Chester William Nimitz

(1885–1966)

Chief of Naval Operations

VITA

Born in Fredericksburg, Texas; graduated from Naval Academy (1905); on China station (1907); commanded Atlantic submarine flotilla (1912); studied diesels in Germany and Belgium (1913); oversaw construction of first Navy diesel engine; chief of staff to commander of Atlantic Fleet submarine division (1917–19); Naval War College (1922–23); on staff of commander in chief, Battle Fleet (1923–25), and of commander in chief, U.S. Fleet (1925–26); organized Naval Reserve officers training at University of California (1926–29); commanded submarine division 20 and *USS Augusta* (1929–35); assistant chief of Bureau of Navigation (1935–38); led cruiser and battleship divisions (1938–39); chief of Bureau of Navigation (1939); commander in chief, Pacific Fleet (1941); organized defenses of Hawaiian Islands and commanded naval, sea, and air forces in Pacific Ocean Area; defeated Japanese in battles of Coral Sea and Midway (1942); helped

plan strategy for Pacific theater and provided direction for major offensives in Central Pacific; directed campaigns in the Gilberts (1943) and in the Marshalls, Marianas, and Palaus (1944); invaded the Philippines (1944); promoted to fleet admiral (1944); directed capture of Iwo Jima and Okinawa and operations against Japan; present at surrender in Tokyo Bay on board flagship, *USS Missouri* (1945); Chief of Naval Operations (1945–47); special assistant to Secretary of Navy (1948–49); U.S. commissioner for Kashmir (1949–51); died near San Francisco.

Our people must be shown that a single department will improve upon the record of the past year's operations in the Pacific. For my part, I am convinced that a single department will not work as efficiently as two separate departments have proved they can work in producing the kinds of forces required for modern war. I am also convinced that the merging of the War and Navy Departments into a single department cannot help, and may hinder, the adequate provision and efficient use of our seapower.

—Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN
Testimony before the Senate
Military Affairs Committee
(November 17, 1945)

Source: Trevor N. Dupuy, Curt Johnson, and David L. Bongard, *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military Biography* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1992), pp. 546–47.



Portrait of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz by Adrian Lamb.

Naval Historical Center