



United States Navy Biography

Rear Admiral Victorino G. "Vic" Mercado Vice Director, Strategy, Plans, and Policy (J5) U.S. Central Command

Rear Adm. Mercado graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in May 1983 with a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics/Computer Science.

His career as a surface warfare officer includes assignments aboard USS *Leftwich* (DD 984), USS *Valley Forge* (CG 50), USS *Antietam* (CG 54), USS *Curtis Wilbur* (DDG 54), culminating with command of USS *Decatur* (DDG 73) during an accelerated deployment with the *John C. Stennis* Battle Group in support of Operation *Enduring Freedom* – Afghanistan and United Nations sanctions on Iraq. He subsequently commanded Destroyer Squadron 21 with additional duties as sea combat commander for the *John C. Stennis* Carrier Strike Group.



Ashore, he completed a tour with the Navy's engineering and acquisition community as the command, control, communications and intelligence warfare systems engineering manager for the AEGIS Program Manager (PMS 400), served as an action officer and vice director, Navy Staff for Staff Operations and Special Events (OPNAV N09BX), as the national defense legislative fellow for Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, and later led the Commander's Action Group for the Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet. On the Joint Staff, he served as the joint staff lead in the JCS Strategy Group, as assistant deputy director, Global Strategic Partnerships (J-5), as executive assistant to the Director, Strategic Plans and Policy (J-5), and as executive assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. After the Joint Staff, he served as the military assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Defense.

His first flag officer assignment before reporting to Central Command was as the deputy director, Surface Warfare Division (N96B) on the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations.

Mercado holds a master's degree in Systems Technology in Joint Command, Control, and Communications from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, completed Air Command and Staff College, and is a graduate and a Commandant's Writing Award winner from the Joint/Combined Warfighting Senior School at Joint Forces Staff College. He is also a former Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Shiphandler of the Year award winner.

His decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal (2), the Legion of Merit Medal (2), and various individual and unit campaign awards.