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Sailor-Scholar: Remembering Rear Admiral Horace B. Robertson Jr., JAGC, U.S. Navy (Ret.)

*This volume is dedicated to the memory of
Rear Admiral Horace B. Robertson Jr.,
JAGC, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
November 13, 1923 – November 19, 2020*

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As a sailor and scholar, Rear Admiral Horace B. Robertson Jr. had an immeasurable impact on naval operations and policy, public international law, the law of the sea, the law of armed conflict and all those who knew him as a friend and colleague during his long association with the Naval War College. He served thirty-one years in the Navy as a warfighter and judge advocate, and another four decades as a professor, international law expert and author. Admiral Robertson dedicated his career and life to shaping, teaching and practicing public international law.

A North Carolina native, Admiral Robertson attended Davidson College for two years and then matriculated at the U.S. Naval Academy in 1942, graduating in 1945. Admiral Robertson first joined the fleet as a Surface Warfare Officer, serving on destroyers, amphibious ships and an anti-submarine warfare staff. In 1950, the Navy selected Admiral Robertson for post-graduate studies in law at Georgetown University Law Center, where he served as editor-in-chief of the *Georgetown Law Journal* and graduated first in his class in 1953. He then rejoined the fleet and served a final line tour as the commanding officer of an amphibious landing ship.

Admiral Robertson went on to serve as a judge advocate in the U.S. Navy's Judge Advocate General's Corps for twenty-one years. His assignments included service in the Office of the Judge Advocate General; on the staffs of the Fifth Naval District in Norfolk, Virginia, and Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet; as Assistant Chief of Staff for Legal Affairs to the Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Philippines; Special Counsel to the Secretary of the Navy; and Special Counsel to the Chief of Naval Operations. During this period, he also earned a Master's Degree in International Studies from The George

Washington University. In 1972, he was selected for promotion to Rear Admiral and appointed as Deputy Judge Advocate General of the Navy. Admiral Robertson went on to serve as the Judge Advocate General from 1975–76, retiring from active duty in 1976.

Admiral Robertson continued his service in the field of law when he joined the faculty of Duke University School of Law in 1976 as a Professor of Law and later served as Senior Associate Dean from 1986–89. He taught courses and seminars in torts, public international law, the law of the sea, the law of armed conflict and admiralty until 1990, at which time he assumed Emeritus status.

A renowned expert in the law of the sea, Admiral Robertson served as a member of the United States delegation at two sessions of the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea that produced the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. He was a lead author of the influential *San Remo Manual on International Law Applicable to Armed Conflicts at Sea*.

From his first publication in the area of international law, “Submarine Warfare” in 1956 as a Navy lieutenant in the *JAG Journal*, to numerous articles and comments published in such journals as *Law and Contemporary Problems*, *Duke Law Journal*, *Virginia Journal of International Law*, *Syracuse Journal of International Law and Commerce*, *Ocean Development and International Law*, *Duke Journal of Comparative and International Law*, *United States Air Force Academy Journal of Legal Studies* and *Israel Yearbook on Human Rights*, Admiral Robertson was a prolific scholar and esteemed expert in the law of armed conflict and law of the sea.

Admiral Robertson began his association with the Naval War College as a student in 1967 in the College of Naval Warfare, graduating in 1968 as the Stephen B. Luce distinguished honor graduate for excellence in academics, extracurricular activities and community service. He returned to the Naval War College as the Charles H. Stockton Professor of International Law for academic year 1991–1992. During that year, he taught courses in international law and served as the editor of *The Law of Naval Operations*, volume 64 of *International Law Studies*.

Admiral Robertson first wrote for *International Law Studies* in 1980 and continued to publish articles in the journal until 2008. Those articles, “A Legal Regime for the Resources of the Seabed and Subsoil of the Deep Sea: A Brewing Problem for International Lawmakers,” “U.S. Policy on Targeting Enemy Shipping: Bridging the Gap Between Conventional Law and State Practice,” “Modern Technology and the Law of Armed Conflict at Sea,” “The ‘New’ Law of the Sea and The Law of Armed Conflict at Sea,” “The

Obligation to Accept Surrender,” “Contemporary International Law: Relevant to Today’s World?,” “The Principle of the Military Objective in the Law of Armed Conflict,” “Self-Defense against Computer Network Attack under International Law” and “The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea: An Historical Perspective on Prospects for US Accession,” demonstrated his breadth of knowledge and critical thinking on key areas of international law.

As a judge advocate and international scholar, Admiral Robertson directly contributed to the advancement of public international law, the law of armed conflict and the law of the sea for sixty-five years. His work influenced policy and practice at home and abroad and helped educate a generation of legal minds. From Annapolis to Newport, Admiral Robertson’s legacy is truly one of honor, courage, and commitment. *International Law Studies* and the Naval War College mourn the loss of a great scholar, sailor, colleague and friend, and dedicate volume 97 to his memory.