



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
Commander, Naval Air Forces
Change of Command
San Diego, California
Admiral Cecil D. Haney
04 October 2012
As Prepared For Delivery**

Thank you Shortney for that introduction and for being here today. I would like to thank everyone in the audience for making it here for such a remarkable ceremony.

Distinguished Guests, Fellow Flags, the leadership team here in San Diego, community leaders, supporters of United States Navy, family and friends, good morning and welcome. It is great to have so many here to witness this important change of command. I especially want to thank Congresswomen Susan Davis, Mayor Casey Tanaka, and of course, Mrs. Sybill Stockdale here today. I am impressed by the number of three and four star retired flag officers here, including Admiral Bud Edney and Admiral Black Nathman, it's great to see each of you.

It is great to be back here in San Diego and what a fitting place for the Commander Naval Air Forces change of command. A nuclear-powered aircraft carrier is an iconic symbol of our Navy's grand achievements in aviation and one of the most recognizable symbols of America's military might. It's not lost on me that this great ship, USS *Nimitz*, is named in honor of Chester Nimitz, the Pacific Fleet Commander who led our Navy to victory in the Pacific nearly seven decades ago. I might mention that he was also a submariner.

It seems like yesterday that I was on this ship for the Rim of the Pacific Exercise, RIMPAC. Captain 'Doc' Ruth, it's good to see you again, the ship and crew look great! Thank you for your hard work.

Al, it is an honor for me to be here today and it is my privilege to publically salute you and your wife Judy for your outstanding work. It is also an honor to also welcome Admiral Dave Buss and his wife Donna back to San Diego, and to Air Forces. It is great to have you both here.

For just over two years, Mad Al Myers has directed the course of Naval Aviation and led his team to success. His remarkable accomplishments have been felt throughout the Pacific and around the world. Where ever our aircraft carriers steam, they represent 4.5 acres of sovereign and mobile United States territory. As the centerpiece of a Carrier Strike Group, or a Carrier Strike Force, they operate forward to deter conflict. If that deterrence fails, their carrier based air wings and shore based aircraft are ready to respond with our joint team.

As I travel the Pacific I have had an opportunity to see many of Al's greatest accomplishments. In my efforts to become more brown-shoeish, if that is a word, I have taken a keen interest in naval aviation lately. I recently flew on both the P-3 and P-8 maritime patrol aircraft. I flew in an H-60 powered by bio fuel. I took a tour of both Prowler and Growler squadrons. I recently visited NSAWC, the Naval Strike and Warfare Command, and observed high end Air Wing training. Finally I flew on board three aircraft carriers while underway and have seen firsthand Al's achievements in manning, training and equipping these ships and their remarkable aviation capability. My submarine buddies are getting worried about the amount of time I am spending with the aviation community.

Most recently I visited *John C. Stennis* as she surged west on deployment, months earlier than planned, after returning from the last deployment in March of this year. I appreciated the tremendous effort it takes to get an aircraft carrier ready to deploy and to train the air wing, especially in the case of *John C. Stennis*. Al, you and your team have played a significant role here with making sure our Navy's aviation capability was ready to deploy forward, to meet our national defense needs and conducting challenging wartime operations. Thank you.

Right now our aviation community is in transition. Al has led the transition of six communities and 23 squadron's during his tenure. I can think of no greater legacy to leave behind than to guide and shape the future of naval aviation in a way that will protect our nation for decades to come.

While Al has a clear vision of the future of naval aviation, he also has a respect for the historic past of naval aviation. Al planned and executed the year long commemoration of '100 Years of Naval Aviation' last year. Continuing on the extraordinary legacy of Air Pacific Commanders from the past, many of who are in the audience today, Al wrote the final words that closed the chapter on the first century of naval aviation and penned the opening paragraphs of the next chapter.

Mad Al is not reluctant to blaze new trails. How about the 'Carrier Classic Basketball Game', played on the flight deck of the *Carl Vinson* on Veterans Day 2011? It had nearly 8000 fans, the President of the United States and the Secretary of the Navy in attendance.

Finally, at the core of all of his achievements, Al knows it is about the people, our Sailors and their families. By his example, 40 Commander Naval Air Forces' commands earned the Fiscal Year 2011 Retention Excellence Awards.

Al, you have touched the lives of our Sailors and made a lasting difference. You have ensured Naval Aviation will remain, as always, capable and ready. Your accomplishments will have

lasting and meaningful affects for years, even decades to come. You have much to be proud of. Well done!

Al, please join me at the podium for a well deserved award presentation.

[Award Presentation]

Congratulations, Al.

Al didn't do all of this alone. He had some help from some outstanding people and I would like to recognize some of the contributors. I want to thank his extended family represented here at this ceremony. It's great to see Al's dad, retired Colonel Allen Myers III, a test pilot for the Air Force, and Master Sergeant Dave Myers, also of the United States Air Force. Thank you all for coming.

Most of all I want to thank Al's wife, Judy, for all she has done. She has shown tremendous support for our Sailors and their families. Judy understands the challenges our Sailors face with long hours and long deployments. For those of you who don't know, she is a retired Navy Captain with a tremendous career in her own right.

For the last two years she has worked to improve the lives of the families here at Commander Naval Air Forces. During times of crisis, she has reached out to families affected by the earthquake and tsunami in Japan and political unrest in Bahrain. She has been engaged in our Sailor of the Year Program, spouses clubs and our Ombudsman Program. Her support has been invaluable and on behalf of all the Sailors in the Pacific Fleet, I thank you for all of your work. Judy, will you please join us at the podium?

[Award Presentation]

Al and Judy Myers, thank you for a job well done. Al and Judy are headed back to the Washington D.C. area, to the Pentagon, at a most uncertain period – something about Sequestration. Al, I'm glad to have your thousand pound brain there during this potentially turbulent period.

We also welcome Dave and Donna Buss to the San Diego waterfront. I have full confidence in this team's ability to continue on the momentum created by Al and Judy. You come here, classmate, with a rich background and a 'can-do' attitude. I look forward to working with you as the Air Boss into the future. It's great to see your family here to include your son Matt who is in flight school right now.

Again thanks all for coming and may God bless these two inspirational leaders, the Navy they lead and may God bless America.

Thank you.