



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
Individual Augmentation (IA) Luncheon
Honolulu, Hawaii
Admiral Cecil Haney
28 February 2013
As Prepared for Delivery**

Good afternoon and Aloha! It's great to be at this fifth annual IA Luncheon. Thank you, Mike Buck, for that introduction and your support of our military. It's great to have you emceeding this event for the fourth time.

I would like to thank our Navy leadership here today, both past and present. It is great to see so many friends from the Navy League, including Don Morrison, the event coordinator, Dave Livingston, the president, and Bob McDermott, the executive director.

I also want to acknowledge additional Navy League members Jerry Coffee and Jim Hickerson, both prisoners of war in Vietnam, as well as Carol Hickerson who has done so much to support our prisoners of war and those still missing in action.

We appreciate the tremendous support and close relationship we have with the Navy League. Thank you for hosting this important event and keeping the tradition going. Mahalo.

I would also like to thank all of the sponsors who have contributed to this event. Because you were kind enough to volunteer your support, we are able to honor some true heroes; those who have volunteered to serve on an Individual Augmentation.

Most of all I want to thank those of you who have served on an IA and your families who supported you throughout the effort. It's an honor to be here with you.

When our Nation was attacked on September 11th and we engaged in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, our traditional way of deploying evolved. 'IA' became a buzzword and the new reality. For Navy and Marines alike, we were being called upon to deploy to some unusual places, often far from any ocean.

Since 2001, more than 110,000 Sailors and Marines have answered the call and performed their duty as an Individual Augmentee. Since then, one of our Sailors on IA received a Silver Star, our military's 4th highest award. Some 1,416 Sailors on IA have been awarded the Bronze Star, and 10 received the Bronze Star with Combat V. Also, 48 of our Sailors were awarded the Purple Heart. For more than a decade, those on IA have sacrificed for our Nation doing some very important work.

As our activities in these wars are planned to decrease, IA numbers are quickly declining, and fewer will have this remarkable opportunity in the future. Each of you are part of a special class of Sailors and Marines who can say that you have served our Nation on IA. You have volunteered to do this job and you have done it well.

Throughout my tours I have sought out those who were leaving or returning from an IA assignment. I remain keenly interested in understanding the process, the utilization and your views with respect to where you were assigned. I have seen augmentees in action when I have visited places like Qatar, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bahrain and Djibouti. I've learned valuable insights from you that I carry with me today and I know others have too. I've heard other leaders, especially Army general officers, laud your performance.

From talking with Sailors and Marines like you, I know it was tough duty. You deployed, often alone, without the full support of your parent command. Many of you deployed for more than a year, not including the training you underwent before and after. You reported for assignment with an unfamiliar team who was often wearing a different uniform. The days were long and the work was hard. Many of you were doing dangerous missions that were sometimes outside your area of expertise or training. When you returned from your IA, there was probably very little fanfare or celebration.

Now, as you settle back into your life, post IA, you may be surprised to find that the experience was a defining moment in your career; one that you will remember with pride for the rest of your life. That's because it was meaningful, important work, and you did it well. Your efforts made a difference for your team, for your service and for your Nation. Each of you are heroes. I am proud of your efforts and your achievements while on IA. You have my thanks and the thanks of a grateful Nation.

I don't have to tell you we live in an uncertain world; you know that. Here in Hawaii we can see a reminder of that uncertainty every day when you look toward Ford Island and see the Arizona Memorial. Each of you can recall the bombing of the USS Cole and the 9/11 attacks. I know that many of you volunteered to serve when you answered our Nation's call in response to those attacks. Now we continue to fight around the world against terrorism. Our missions take us to some unlikely places in pursuit of the enemy, wherever they may be found.

Some in this room have likely returned from Afghanistan. Can I get you to stand please? (Applause) I've heard stories from our Sailors who deployed in support of the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) there. As analysts working with our Special Forces, they provided intelligence to the trigger pullers and were able to see instant results of their efforts. There are a lot of amazing stories that we could share, but we can't talk about much of them due to their classification. For each of you involved in this important work, Mahalo.

Some of you have served in Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and even in Iraq. Can I get you to stand please? (Applause)

I recently heard from one Sailor who went to work for the Army in Iraq as they implemented a new defense system called the Land Based Phalanx System. His experience on Navy ships with the Close in Weapons System, CIWS, was just what the Army needed. His most memorable experience of his IA was one dark night when his base was attacked by mortar fire. The sky was alight with red tracer rounds as the gun system he worked with shot down six out of the seven mortar rounds fired into the compound.

Working with Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa (CJTF HOA) in Djibouti, those on IA have been busy supporting the fight against terrorist cells in Africa and the pirates in Somalia. Can I get you to stand please? (Applause)

Djibouti isn't known as a top vacation spot. One Sailor said that "most of the time it was just hot and miserable and you would pray for rain, until you got it and everything turned to mud." Another said that he found out that "living in a shipping crate wasn't as bad as he thought it would be." He must have been a submariner, given their love for small places.

While the living conditions were difficult, the jobs were rewarding. I heard the story of one Sailor who helped gather intelligence for the operation to rescue Jessica Buchanan, an American held hostage by captors in Somalia. That event made national news and our augmentees had a hand in its success.

I heard the story of a Navy officer assigned to JTF HOA as the aviation safety officer in Djibouti. There he made a real impact on aircraft safety where the increasing tempo of flight operations also included the flight of unmanned aircraft. By working with the Djiboutian government to improve the safety of the Air Traffic Control (ATC) system in the area, he advanced our relationships with their government.

IA's are serving in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Can I get you to stand please? (Applause) One of the Sailors here today found himself assigned to Task Force Platinum at Gitmo. As the Sergeant of the Guards, he was in charge of moving high value detainees to their medical appointments and court appearances. These detainees included the master mind of the USS *Cole* bombing and the '9/11 Five'; those who plotted the 9/11 attacks.

Ultimately it comes full circle. Those of you on IA have helped take the fight to the enemy, capture them and are guarding them as they await justice. This is very impressive work and not the traditional naval roles we are used to, but it is indicative of the adaptive and flexible, resiliency of today's Sailors and Marines.

As the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq draw to a close, our nation begins a rebalance to the Asia Pacific. As we focus on the rebalance, it is important to note that we have already had IA's volunteering their efforts in this dynamic part of the world for years.

I have also heard stories from those assigned to Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines, JSOTF-P. Can I get you to stand please? (Applause) Besides working with the Special Forces conducting operations, one Navy officer found himself busy working with our allies in the Armed Forces of the Philippines in relief efforts after Typhoon Bopha, a Category V Super Typhoon that killed more than a thousand people.

I know some here today were deployed to areas I have not mentioned. Can I also get each of you to stand please? (Applause)
I want all of you to know that no matter where you were stationed or what you were doing, your efforts were important to our Nation and I am thankful you were there.

While you were away on IA, those who stayed behind were protecting the home front; I mean the spouses and families. I appreciate the support of the families here in the audience. Can I please get you to stand and be recognized? (Applause)

IA's are difficult, communications is not guaranteed and time away is often longer than a traditional deployment. You were left to protect the home front, taking care of children, pets and your homes. Inevitably you had to deal with things like vehicle and appliance repair. It's funny how everything seems to break the day after they leave on deployment.

Each of you bravely moved forward with life while your spouse was deployed. I believe that family readiness and warfighting readiness go hand-in-hand. I thank you for your home front support. By maintaining the home front, you enabled your Sailor or Marine to focus on their job. Mahalo.

As I come to a close, I want to leave you with a quote by a famous aviator from World War II. This guy understood what it was like to volunteer for duty in some nontraditional places. Lieutenant Colonel Jimmy Doolittle was an Army Air Force pilot who volunteered to lead a top-secret attack on Japan with B-25 bombers. The unusual thing was that he volunteered to fly his land-based bombers from the deck of a Navy aircraft carrier, the USS *Hornet*. This was a highly unusual place for an Army Air Force pilot to fly from.

His raid was successful. It was the first time we were able to surprise the enemy in World War II. Jimmy Doolittle won the Congressional Medal of Honor for his efforts. His quote is simply this: "Nothing is as strong as the heart of a volunteer!" He's absolutely right. Today our military is made up of an unbeatable, all volunteer force. From within that organization, many of you further volunteered for an IA. You are truly courageous with unquestionable courage, honor and commitment. America is strong because of people like you and we are grateful for your service. I am proud of the great work that each of you have done and am looking forward to meeting each of you.

God bless each of you, our Navy, our United States Marine Corps and our grateful Nation.
Thank you.
Mahalo.