



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
CWO4 William Roberts's Retirement
SEAL Heritage Center
Virginia Beach, Virginia
Admiral Cecil D. Haney
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As Prepared For Delivery**

Thank you Lieutenant John Orivitz for that intro, I appreciate it. The other day I was speaking at a luncheon and was introduced by a young officer, much like you. Instead of reading my biography he simply told the audience the date I was commissioned and then told everyone how many years ago that was. Next he turned to me and said "You know Admiral, you've been in the Navy longer than most of us have been alive." Not exactly the accolades this young Admiral was looking for. So thanks for just highlighting the bio.

Bill, I hope you didn't think that was funny, that's you too shipmate! More than 30 years now-- That's a life time for many here.

Just to give everyone a feel for how long Bill has been in the Navy, when his father decided it was time for him to get a job after high school, he took him to the Navy recruiter in Independence, Kansas, his home town. There he had an interview with the recruiter who had a parrot perched on his shoulder. That's actually a true story. You don't see many parrots in the Navy these days; that's old school. A good thing, given what I was told the parrot had deposited on the recruiter's shoulder.

Distinguished visitors, ladies and gentlemen, friends, former shipmates and especially the Roberts family, thank you for being here to honor the culmination of a spectacular career that has spanned more than 30 years of service to our Navy and our Nation.

As I look at the audience today, it is good to see so many familiar faces from the past. I've had a chance to visit with Larry and Karen Roberts before the ceremony. Larry, thank you for your service. I know as a retired Chief Petty Officer and Vietnam veteran, you knew what you were doing when you took your son to the Navy recruiter that day. I know both of you are proud of his career.

It is also good to see Bill's wife, Terri and their girls, Lauren and Courtney, here today. I cannot really call them girls anymore -- they are all grown up. Bonny and I are so impressed with the lovely young ladies they have become.

Lauren, I know you are proud of your family. With your husband Donny leading Marines as a 2nd Lieutenant and such a strong Naval heritage in your family, I look forward to seeing how your children might grow up to serve our Nation.

Courtney, congrats on choosing such a challenging field of study. Tackling an electrical engineering degree from Old Dominion University is not for the faint of heart. Having taken a few engineering courses myself, I can truly appreciate your field of study. Bonny and I are as proud as your mom and dad are of your achievements.

As you may have guessed, I have known the Roberts family for quite some time. Until today, the only member of the family I had not met was Bill's brother Steve. Thank you Steve for being here. I'm glad we were finally able to meet.

I first met Bill and his family when he reported aboard the USS *Honolulu* in 1996. That was 17 years ago. I didn't know it then, but Bill had a choice between two submarines that he could transfer to. He chose Honolulu because we had just won the Ney award, meaning that we had the best food in the fleet.

His arrival was a lucky break for me. We needed a relief in the auxiliary division in the worst way. I shook his hand and asked the most important question on my mind. When can you relieve?!?! I was glad to see him onboard the next morning.

The auxiliary division on any submarine is one of the largest divisions and the young Sailors reporting to the 'A' gang often arrive with little training. It is a division that needs true deckplate leadership and Bill had a great reputation before he had arrived. We knew he had just been selected as the 1995 Senior Sailor of the Year and had been advanced to Chief Petty Officer. I couldn't get him onboard fast enough. As the Leading Chief Petty Officer for the 'A'-Gang, he excelled, and so did the division.

Bill, I received an email from an old shipmate of ours who had something to say about you. It was from Captain Scott Minium -- I know you remember him.

Scott was my 'ENG' on Honolulu and was ultimately Bill's boss. In an email he sent to me, he wrote, and I will quote this, "Bill's Division responded at once to his influence. He set the standard for taking care of his personnel, painstakingly organizing their work so successfully, that not only did they have the best material condition on the ship, but also the best working hours and the best morale." That is exactly the way I remember the turnaround in 'A'Gang, except for maybe the working hours, given the extensive portion of the submarine 'A' Gang maintainers.

Bill knew his Sailors and had a feel for the heartbeat of the boat. I grew to trust his instincts and his recommendations. In no time, he became my unofficial assistant Chief of the Boat. He would even stop by my stateroom and check on me, to make sure I was doing okay. No one had ever done that before. You didn't know it at the time Bill, but that meant a lot to me. Of course, he used that opportunity to school me on a few things too. All of which I remain deeply appreciative of. Thank you.

While he was working hard with the 'A'Gang, his wife Terri selflessly volunteered to be the Ombudsman for the boat, where she worked hard taking care of the families, whether we were at sea or ashore. She even ensured that the single Sailors were met at the airport when the sub was underway. Terri, Bonny and I are forever grateful for your effort, support and caring as the Ombudsman for *Honolulu*. I am also thankful for the support you have given the Navy throughout Bill's career. I know that today is a big day for you too. Thank you and congratulations!

I know many here at Naval Special Warfare Group THREE, Det Little Creek, can appreciate the efforts and achievements that Bill has accomplished over 30 years and thanks for hosting this event -- knowing just how busy this team is around the globe. You can read the full story of

Bill's spectacular career in the program. I am thankful to have been included in some of his important career milestones. It was my honor to pin stars on his lapel as a Senior Chief and to commission him as a Warrant Officer. It is also such an honor for me to be here speaking today at his retirement ceremony.

I would like to bring your attention to one thing from his bio that I believe is truly telling. In his career, Bill has earned eleven Battle 'E' awards. Eleven! The Battle 'E' is awarded to those ships or units that win their battle effectiveness competition between other competing units. There is clearly a correlation between Bill's presence in each of these commands and their impressive recognized performance. I know firsthand the impact he made onboard *Honolulu* where we earned one of his eleven Battle 'E' awards during our time together.

Clearly he has contributed to the warfighting readiness of each assignment he has had. That is not lost on me. Today as the commander of the Pacific Fleet, I have four priorities. My number one priority is warfighting readiness and Bill gets it. He also understands my other priorities.

My second is to posture our forces forward with purposeful presence in areas of consequence. This allows us to be in position to react if and when needed. My third priority is to strengthen our relations with our allies and partners so that we can work together as a team in times of peace and times of crisis. Bill has helped advance both of these priorities for example, while homeported in Guam and serving on Frank Cable as she deployed throughout the Asia-Pacific.

Finally, my fourth priority is focused on valuing our Sailors, civilians and their families. Bill has been the embodiment of this priority. As a leader, a mentor, and a role model to his Sailors, he has made a lasting impact on each of them while strengthening the entire Navy team.

Chief Warrant Officer Bill Roberts understands what it takes to make a Navy team successful and he always has. While I speak of my four priorities, Bill has always understood them intuitively and has lived them throughout his career. His work at each of his assignments has energized the Sailors toward achieving these priorities and in due course, it has consistently paid off.

As those he has touched throughout his career continue to pass on his knowledge to their juniors, Bill's legacy will continue to live on for decades. This is a remarkable achievement and something to be proud of!

Bill, when you started this journey in 1982, we lived in uncertain times. In 1983 for instance, we committed to Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada and suffered loss at the Beirut barracks bombing. Today, we still live in uncertain times. As we look at the uncertainty of the future in my area of operations, we now consider North Korea and their nuclear ambitions, the Chinese with their cyber activity, competing claims that cause friction throughout the East and South China Sea, and of course sequestration. I, for one, am forever grateful for the teams that you have trained and left behind. As we prepare for what may come, I know they will continue to stand the watch and keep our Nation safe.

As I conclude my remarks, let me briefly talk about new beginnings. This transition brings new opportunities for both Bill and Terri. They will be free to pursue their dreams, many of them new, some of them old. As they start the next chapter in your lives together, I know that they will fulfill a dream that they have shared for many years. When Bill and Terri were married in

June 1987, he promised her that he would someday buy her a new home. He is a man of his word. Today they have a new home waiting for them in Quarryville, Pennsylvania, their first.

Finally, I would like to thank the entire Roberts family for your support during Bill's more than 30 years of service. Thank you for lending him to us during that time. I know that in retirement both Bill and Terri are looking forward to the opportunity to spend more time with each of you.

Bill, you have done just an extraordinary job and service to our Nation. I know we are a stronger Navy because of you. You represent the caliber of Sailor we continue to rely on in this all volunteer force. I am thankful for you and for all those who have volunteered to don the cloth of our Nation and serve with honor in our United States Armed Forces. May God bless each of you, our Navy and our Nation.

Bill, I wish you fair winds and following seas my friend.

Thank you.