



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet  
Sailor of the Year Luncheon  
Hale Koa Hotel  
Honolulu, Hawaii  
Admiral Cecil Haney  
12 April 2013  
As prepared for delivery**

Good Afternoon and Aloha! It is great to be here at the Pacific Fleet Sailor of the Year Luncheon!

Thank you Fleet Master Chief Minyard for that introduction and for your hard work and dedication to our Sailors. It is great to see Mechele, your wife, here today. Mechele, thank you for your commitment and all that you do – not just for Fleet Minyard, but also for our Navy Families.

It is also great to see so much of the Pacific Fleet leadership team, including Flag Officers and Master Chiefs. I would especially like to recognize the Master Chiefs here today for your tremendous leadership. Can I have all of our Force and Command Master Chiefs please stand and be recognized? (Applause) How about all Master Chiefs, please stand and be recognized? (Applause) As you can see, there are many stars here today! Thank you for all that you do.

I would also like to welcome and congratulate the true stars of today's luncheon, our 10 Commander of the Pacific Fleet Sailor of the Year finalists. Can I get each of you to stand? (Applause) I know that for some of you this is your first visit to Hawaii. Although many of you have deployed around the world, not everyone gets to visit paradise. These 10 Sailors here exemplify the best we have among our Nation's elite. It is an honor to be here to publically recognize them today.

I must also thank the spouses and family members for your tremendous support, your inspiration and your service. Please stand and be recognized. (Applause) For many of our Sailors, they could not do the outstanding work that they do every day without you.

I know there is tremendous support for these Sailors from their leadership teams, fellow shipmates and friends who are attending today. Thank you for coming to encourage them.

I also want to thank everyone who has helped sponsor this event. I would like to offer a special Mahalo to the Navy League Honolulu Council. Dave Livingston, Navy League president, and co-chairs Tim Guard and Rick Blangiardi; your tremendous efforts have made this event possible.

Today we are here to recognize 10 outstanding Sailors who have proven themselves to be among the very best in my Pacific Fleet. Each of them has excelled at every command

they have been part of and every assignment given them, with both technical expertise and inspirational leadership! I cannot thank them enough!

As the Commander of the Pacific Fleet, I have four priorities that I consider essential for our Navy's success. I gauge performance on how effectively we complete these priorities. First, as Sailors, we must be focused on Warfighting Readiness. That is, after all, why we have a Navy. Next, we must ensure that our Navy is purposefully deployed forward to areas of consequence. We must work to strengthen our relations with our allies and partners. Finally, we must always value our Sailors, civilians and their families. As I read through the selection packages for our finalists, I could see that they are highly effective at performing these four priorities. That is part of what makes them so special.

Today I have had an opportunity to meet many of them. They are as impressive in person as they are on paper. They embody every aspect of our United States Navy Ethos. These Sailors are tremendously empowering leaders and superb team members. They have a sense of ownership and demonstrate unwavering integrity. They inspire trust and are fantastic communicators. This is why, even in this sequestration environment, we must pause to recognize these stellar performers.

They symbolize the greatness of our Nation as they reflect the diversity of our all-volunteer force. As your Pacific Fleet Commander, I am always in awe of where we get our incredible volunteers from. Consider that three of them were born outside the United States. They came from far away Trinidad, the Philippines and Saipan. They come from the East and the West Coast: two were from Brooklyn, New York, two from Los Angeles, California. We have one from a true Navy town, Groton, Connecticut, and one from the Mid-West, St. Louis, Missouri. Even one from Tampa, Florida; home of the Central Command and Special Operations Command, sometimes known as 'Tampistan'.

These Sailors come from diverse backgrounds from within the Navy as well; they represent 10 different rates and represent commands stretched half way around the world, from Washington, California and Hawaii, all the way over to Japan.

These Sailors have deployed in support of operations around the world, including combat operations in foreign lands. Three of them have received Navy Combat Action Ribbons, one of them has received an Army Combat Action badge, and one of them has received a Purple Heart. They are indicative of a resilient generation serving to answer the call of our grateful Nation.

They value personal growth, as several have earned Bachelor's Degrees. They volunteer off duty hours by coaching children's sports activities, helping 'at-risk' youth, working food drives for the needy and Habitat for Humanity for the homeless. They take care of the environment by cleaning up the beaches, rivers and maintaining the hiking trails in our parks. They volunteer in their churches, throughout the community, and inside the lifelines of the Navy. They exemplify teamwork in every way. They are passionate leaders among their peers.

Out of more than 100,000 Sailors in the Pacific Fleet, you have proven yourself among the best. This is especially noteworthy given that today only 25 percent of our Nation's 17-24 year olds are even eligible to enter the service. Only 1 percent of our Nation volunteers to serve in our Armed Forces. Out of 315 million Americans, you are among the very best we have and you have so much to be proud of.

But with success, there comes a cost; there is even more expected of you. The junior enlisted look up to you as their teachers, role models and leaders, just as you looked up to those who helped shape you into the leaders you are today. I look to you to train the next generation of Sailors to be your replacements in the future. I know I can count on you to make them outstanding! As you climb through the ranks, I know you will continue to influence your juniors and even your seniors. Your excellence of service is a shining example to us all.

As I conclude, I would like to say that I'm glad that you had the opportunity to visit not just paradise, but also the historic sites here in Hawaii; to include the Arizona Memorial. Whenever I see the Arizona Memorial, I am reminded that we live in an uncertain world and that we must always be ready for surprise. You only have to watch the news today to see how uncertain our world remains. Just look at what is going on in North Korea today.

That is what makes Sailors like each of you so important. While we have the most technologically advanced Navy in the history of the world, with state of the art ships, submarines, aircraft, weapons systems and equipment, it means little without the Sailors who bring these platforms to life. Because of the dedicated and professional Sailors who make up the Pacific Fleet team, I know we are ready to face any challenge in our future.

Again, congratulations to each of our 10 finalists on a job well done! Mahalo for your remarkable service to date and I look forward to continuing to serve with you. In a moment, we will announce the Commander of the Pacific Fleet Sea and Shore Sailor of the Year. Although we only get to pick two of you, please know that each of you are winners and I know you will each play an important role in the future of our Navy. Be proud of your efforts; it is a truly remarkable achievement just to make it here today. I for one am very proud of each of you. You are exceptional Sailors, keep charging!

May God bless our Nation, our Navy and each of you who serve. Mahalo, thank you.