



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
Commander, Naval Surface Forces Pacific
Change of Command
San Diego, California
Admiral Cecil D. Haney
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As prepared for delivery**

Thank you Rick for the wonderful introduction.

Distinguished guests, fellow flags, our San Diego Sailors, men and women of the surface community, San Diego community members, family and friends, good morning and Aloha. I know I am not in Hawaii right now, but it is such a great way to start. It is wonderful to be back in San Diego and for such a special occasion as the change of command for the Commander, Naval Surface Forces, United States Pacific Fleet.

Admiral Rick Hunt, thank you for the honor. Today, we salute publicly your stellar performance in command of our surface forces and the teamwork that you and Josie have provided. Steve, Nikki, Aden, it is good to see you again. Thanks for coming.

We also welcome Tom and Judy Copeman to SURFPAC. I am glad to see your son Tom here also. My wife Bonny was not able to join us today and she wishes each of you the very best.

Rick, not very many flag officers get the benefit of doing back-to-back tours here in San Diego. I am somewhat envious, but then again I do live in Hawaii. Back to back tours usually mean stability. For example you get to stay in the same house for both tours. But I understand that was not how it worked for you. There were quite a few household moves during your stay in San Diego.

For those of you who do not know the story, when Rick became the Commander of Third Fleet the Third Fleet flag house was being renovated, so he and Josie moved into the SURFPAC house. When renovations were complete, they moved into the Third Fleet house. Once they got settled in there, they got the good news about his next assignment as the Commander of Surface Forces, Pacific. It took one more move to get settled in and now they are packing up to move to Washington, D.C.

It seems you do not get to stay in one place for very long Rick, but I know Chief of Naval Operations Greenert needs you in the Pentagon as Director of the Navy Staff. I know you will do great things for our Navy there and with your vast Pacific experience, you will remind the team to rebalance efforts toward this vibrant Asia-Pacific region.

This year our Navy is commemorating the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812; a war that many historians call our second War of Independence. I cannot imagine a more appropriate place to have this Change of Command than the flight deck of this great ship since USS *Boxer* was named after a British ship captured by our Navy during the War of 1812. Captain Kevin Flanagan, it is great to have USS *Boxer* as today's stage for this ceremony. She looks fantastic.

Our nation is a maritime nation and our security and prosperity are tied to the sea. Our ships, Sailors, and our leaders have played a pivotal role in the history of our nation and the world. The surface community can point to distinguished leaders throughout its history who have contributed to the success of our Navy. Leadership is at the heart of any successful organization and it certainly has been here at SURFPAC while Rick Hunt has been in command.

Today our nation is rebalancing to the Asia Pacific. As the Commander of the Pacific Fleet, I am focusing on four priorities: warfighting readiness, strengthening allies and partnerships, providing purposeful forward presence and supporting people and their families. While Rick has been here at SURFPAC he has been all over these priorities. We have all benefited from his engaged leadership-enabling change and producing sustained improvements in many areas.

During his tenure at SURFPAC he has aggressively worked to ensure the warfighting readiness of our Fleet, not just now, but well into the future. He is been instrumental in modernizing the Fleet. Just a few months ago when I was visiting San Diego, Rick took me on a tour of several of our newest warships right here on the waterfront.

I was able to see the future of the Navy as we toured LPD-20, *Green Bay*, and the new Littoral Combat Ship, *Freedom*. I saw firsthand the capabilities of these ships, as well as improvements in our AEGIS warfighting system. I look forward to *Freedom*'s upcoming deployment to Singapore on her maiden Western Pacific voyage.

Right now our Navy is participating with 21 other nations in the largest ever Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC) in the waters near Hawaii. Thanks to visionary leaders like Rick, our ships are sailing with a blend of bio fuels and are using other innovative energy saving measures as we strive to become less dependent on foreign oil.

I witnessed this first hand yesterday as I traveled on a helo powered by a bio fuel blend to visit the guided missile cruiser *Princeton* and the guided missile destroyer *Chafee*, also powered by a bio fuel blend. I even witnessed the oiler *Kaiser* refuel *Princeton* with bio fuel in the world's largest naval bio fuel demonstration. Additionally, a variety of warplanes from the aircraft carrier *Nimitz* flew from this carrier and conducted aerial refueling with bio fuel blends. I am here today, so obviously it works.

Rick's focus on warfighting enabled the surface force to improve our forward-deployed AEGIS and Ballistic Missile Defense operational availability, ensuring ships were on station, conducting missile defense of our homeland and regional allies. They were ready and postured during the last North Korea launch attempt.

I have recently had an opportunity to see this remarkable capability in action. I went to the island of Kauai, not on vacation, but to visit the Pacific Missile Range Facility. There I watched as the cruiser *Lake Erie* conduct a successful missile intercept during a very challenging scenario. The spectacular results of our Ballistic Missile Defense capabilities are truly impressive.

Rick has also ensured our ships sail to accomplish the most important missions. Yesterday I was able to hear from the Sailors on two separate ships about their recent operational experiences. At sea, onboard *Princeton*, I heard firsthand about their recovery of 16,000 lbs of drugs in June while at sea training with the carrier *Nimitz*.

While at sea on the destroyer *Chafee*, the Sailors described their latest Western Pacific deployment where they conducted operations in the South China Sea, worked to foster stronger relations with the Philippines and helped protect the natural resources of Pacific Island Nations.

During a trip to Japan I talked to the inspiring Sailors of USS *Shiloh* from their forward deployed base in Yokosuka, Japan, on operations they have recently conducted. It is impressive how our Sailors are performing and these examples illustrate how our Forward Deployed Sailors are getting it done using these multi-purpose cruiser/destroyer platforms.

To the needs of our global Navy, Rick was instrumental in improving the materiel readiness of our mine counter measure ships. As part of this effort, he also coordinated the heavy lift of four mine counter measure ships from San Diego to the Central Command Area of Responsibility. As you can see, Rick's leadership has been instrumental in improving the warfighting readiness of the surface fleet. Not mentioned here, but also included are numerous improvements in anti-submarine warfare and amphibious operations.

SURFPAC ships are training and ready to respond to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief needs. We have seen numerous examples of the need for our support in the last decades, as we respond to the destruction left by typhoons, volcanoes, earthquakes and associated tsunamis. Today, SURFPAC Sailors are working in Vietnam for Pacific Partnership 2012 from the hospital ship *Mercy*. They are working together with nine other partner nations, non-governmental organizations and other government agencies with the host nation to prepare in calm to respond in crises. Thanks Rick for your leadership in this area.

To show you the breadth of Rick Hunt's command tour here, he also hosted China's National Defense Minister General Liang Guanglie just a few months ago here in San Diego. This work was significant as we attempt to improve military-to-military relationships with China.

Rick has also applied his forward leaning leadership to focus on Sailors and their families. He worked diligently with the Bureau of Personnel in Millington to identify policy changes that would reduce the gaps in key leadership areas at sea and alleviate the Type Commander and fleet burden of 'just in time' manning. His vision of a holistic approach to Surface Force readiness has revolutionized surface ship training. For example, this March, he successfully instituted the Surface Force Readiness Manual. He re-instituted the Basic Division Officer Course to ensure improved officer training.

Rick, you have much to be proud of during this tour. You have made the Navy stronger, better and most importantly, you have set a clear course for the future. You have led the surface community well and I commend you for a job well done.

Okay, enough about Rick. In all of this, Josie Hunt has provided Rick tremendous support and has been just as committed to the Navy as Rick has been. Throughout her Navy experience, Josie has always been an advocate of Navy families. Because of her back-to-back tours here in San Diego, she has had an opportunity to settle in to the community where she is currently on the board of management for the Armed Services YMCA.

She was also supportive of the Officer and Enlisted Spouses Clubs, as well as many other organizations. I have even heard that you will continue your outstanding work in your next tour

as the chairperson of the Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society Ball in D.C. Congratulations and thank you, or as we say in Hawaii-Mahalo.

But for all that she does for our Sailors and their families, I think she is most proud of her own ever-growing family. Can you believe that Rick and Josie do all of this while they have three children and six grandchildren. Three of their grandchildren are triplets!

I recently had an opportunity to speak at the Submarine Birthday Ball at the Naval Post Graduate School. There I met Lieutenant Steven Hunt, the son of Rick and Josie, and a submariner. Although I have asked Steve how he broke the news to his dad that he was going into submarines, I still have not heard the whole story. Seriously, we are proud of this great Navy family and Bonny and I wish you all the very best.

Vice Admiral Tom Copeman and Judy, I am excited to have you stepping in to fill such an important role here. You have my confidence and trust. I know that SURFPAC will remain in great hands.

Tom, your superb reputation is known far and wide. After having completed your back-to-back tours at Gitmo in Cuba and then at Office of Legislative Affairs on Capitol Hill, it is obvious that you know how to handle diverse challenges. Diverse challenges both foreign and domestic. You have extensive experience here in the Pacific, having been the deputy chief of staff for operations and training on the Pacific Fleet staff. I also know that you are an old hat here at SURFPAC where you were once chief of staff.

What you may not know is the great naval heritage of Thomas Copeman that goes back to a grandfather who received both a silver star and two bronze stars in the Pacific Island campaigns in World War II. A father with 22 years as a Surface Warfare Officer, commanding the USS *Fidelity*, service in Vietnam and he also taught at the U.S. Naval Academy. What a rich legacy this continues.

Judy, I would also like to thank you for all of your support. Bonny and I are looking forward to getting to know you over the coming months. It is great to have you and Tom on the waterfront where I know you will do great things. Welcome aboard!

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for being here to honor these two families today, as well as the Sailors and civilians they have led, or will lead. I know that the tremendous turnout for this Change of Command is a true sign of respect for two great leaders. Admirals Hunt and Copeman . . . Thank you.

As I conclude my remarks, I am reminded of a quote I would like to share. In commemoration of the War of 1812, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus gave an address for the Declaration of War Anniversary.

There he said: "Two hundred years have not changed the fact that the vast majority of the world's populations live near the sea, that a vast majority of the world's commerce travels over the sea, and that we are counted on to keep the peace and our sea lanes open, to deter aggression and, when needed, to win the fight."

Today, just as every day for nearly 237 years, our Navy ships sail the seas to guarantee the security of our nation and in turn guarantee the security of others. As we continue to rebalance to the Asia-Pacific, the surface force will continue to play a critical role in the peace and security that enhances economic viability in the Asia-Pacific region.

Each of you play a critical role in the continuation and success of our mission. I could not be more proud of your efforts and your achievements.

God Bless our Nation, our Navy and all who sail the high seas.

Thank you.