



Commander U.S. Pacific Fleet
Navy League IA Appreciation Luncheon
Admiral Patrick M. Walsh
3/17/2010

Good afternoon and Aloha, I would like to thank the Navy League and especially [Don Morrison](#) for coordinating and hosting this outstanding event; and I would like to thank the sponsors who made today possible...

It is an honor and a pleasure to be here today...in the presence of such dedicated Sailors, families, and a very supportive community. I am grateful for the chance to express my personal appreciation, gratitude, and thanks...and consider this venue and this opportunity...important for many reasons.

Traditionally, our service culture deploys as part of a unit, such as a ship, a squadron, a Carrier Strike Group, Expeditionary Unit, or a SEAL team. Those whom we recognize today, Individual Augmentee Sailors (or IAs) instead, train, deploy, serve, and transfer from the combat zone without the benefit of what we consider as 'traditional' support, camaraderie, and the unit cohesion that comes from fellow shipmates. Oftentimes IAs stand up and come forward as individuals, because of their unique skills, talents, and willingness to serve the needs of the nation, in any capacity, in time of war.

The challenges that they face are equally unique because the focus of their background, training, and professional careers is at sea. Therefore, they must adapt and apply what they have learned to a foreign, hostile environment...as a result they are not inside our traditional support network – and many of us left behind are not aware of their service or sacrifice...that is why your presence and personal involvement today is so important.



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VADM John Bulkely a WWII Medal of Honor recipient summarized the challenge to service in the Navy when he said, “a Sailor is truly unique because he must have the capacity to simultaneously love his country...his service...his family...his shipmates...and the sea. He needs each of them unquestionably as each of them needs him...and the demands placed on him never diminish, they only grow.” Admiral Bulkely would be very proud of those we recognize today because they have returned from duty in faraway lands to continue their service back at sea.

All of us should make time to express both pride and gratitude to those who have honored us by the hard jobs they have taken and the remarkable distinction that they have earned for the United States Navy.

For many these assignments on the ground and oftentimes in combat zones have been defining moments in their lives that have brought a tremendous sense of personal satisfaction, contribution to a national mission, professional success, and intrinsic reward...it is a point in their lives that reveals the essential nature of their character...and a moment never forgotten.

As the Pacific Fleet commander, the Individual Augmentee assignment is one that I value because you have experience, insight and perspective to share with the fleet community – when we sit down with you, we should be prepared to take notes. We can learn from how you responded to challenge, responsibility and leadership roles, in unfamiliar terrain with an unpredictable mission set, and yet represented our core values of honor, courage, and commitment under fire with valor and without compromise. Your performance is the reason why our Sailors, and the culture that they represent, are in high demand.



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I have had the opportunity to sit down with individual augmentees as the FIFTH Fleet Commander (the Naval Component Commander to U.S. Central Command), as the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, and now in my current assignment. Yesterday I spoke with some who are now in the audience, a corpsman, an engineer, and an aviator and their stories as the commander in charge of detainees, as the officer in charge of the naval training team, and as a hospital corpsmen...reminded me of how consequential their work is...how Sailors simply land on their feet. In short order, they can do extraordinary work and make extraordinary contributions to this mission and to their fellow man. Each time I hear these stories I am reminded just how important it is for us to support them and their families. Here is just a small sample of the hundreds of direct action awards that we have reviewed for Individual Augmentees:

[QUOTES FROM CITATIONS] THIS SAILOR served as a Security Detachment commander for the Coalition Military Assistance Team. He completed over 200 missions stretching from Iraq the Turkey/Syria border to Kuwait. He was involved in four separate firefights with enemy forces. In one incident, although injured by an IED, he refused to leave the area until the mission was complete. What community did he represent as an IA? Communications Specialist, submariner. Award: Bronze Star with Combat "V."

THIS SAILOR served on the Navy Embedded Training Team. His convoy came under a mounted ambush attack in the Taliban-infested Helmand Province. He displayed exceptional leadership and uncommon valor, deploying his HUMVEE team along the enemy flank, where he directed his gunner to engage with a MK-19 grenade launcher to suppress the enemy attack. Additionally, during an attack on his firebase by over 200 heavily armed anti-coalition forces, he demonstrated clear bravery against a numerically superior force, helping to repel one of the



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largest coordinated Taliban/Al-Qaeda attacks in years. What community did he represent as an IA? Supply Corps. Award: Bronze Star with Combat "V."

THIS SAILOR served as the Lead Navigator for a Joint Task Force in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. When enemy forces savagely and suddenly ambushed his convoy, this Sailor immediately acted to engage the enemy on the ridgeline above him despite receiving a gunshot wound to the leg. Although in immense pain from his wounds, he rapidly identified the enemy positions and maneuvered remaining forces into a fighting position. After directing his casualties to a secure area, he supervised medical evacuation but personally refused to leave his team despite his own severe wound. His brave actions saved the lives of his teammates. What community did he represent as an IA? Aviation Ordnanceman. Award: Silver Star.

Charlie Company was on patrol when attacked by anti-coalition forces using IED and small arms fire. A Marine was shot in the back and critically injured. A helicopter of opportunity received the request for support and flew directly to a hastily prepared landing zone. When the helicopter landed, THIS SAILOR, without hesitation and under continued threat of enemy attack, rushed out of the aircraft along with a Marine Sargeant to carry a litter towards the location of the wounded Marine. THIS SAILOR dashed with the wounded Marine into the aircraft and placed him on stanchions. THIS SAILOR'S loyal dedication in the face of enemy fire made it possible for the wounded Marine to receive medical care at the trauma center in six minutes...and live. Without regard for his own life and safety, THIS SAILOR demonstrated extraordinary heroism in a combat situation by his selfless actions to provide emergency medical evacuation support for Marine forces on the ground. Who was he? THIS SAILOR was a passenger on the helicopter. What community did he represent as an IA? Storekeeper. Award: Bronze Star with Combat "V."



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THIS SAILOR served as a Marine Platoon Corpsmen supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. During his company's assault and seizure of a bridge, an amphibious assault vehicle received enemy fire from RPGs, which inflicted five casualties. Without concern for his own safety, THIS SAILOR braved small-arms, machine gun, and RPG fire to evacuate the wounded Marines and tend to their wounds. He continued to treat the wounded until his vehicle was immobilized by enemy fire. Under a wall of enemy machine gun fire, he directed the movement of the four casualties to another vehicle, personally carrying one critically wounded Marine. Following a deadly artillery barrage, he again exposed himself to treat Marines along the perimeter. What community did he represent as an IA? Hospital corpsman, HM-2 (apprentice). Award: Navy Cross

Today, we recognize the importance of your deployment and acknowledge the personal sacrifice of you and your families, with a heart-felt welcome back to the Navy. During these times of personal and family sacrifice, you have taught us about things that matter. Sometimes, it is good to remind ourselves about what matters from the point of view of a child.

“It matters that the world knows that we must celebrate the gift of life every day in some way, and we must always remember to play after every storm.

It matters that the world knows that all children are truly blessed with the gifts of gentleness, trust, and compassion, which should guide the wisdom of grown-ups.



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It matters that the world knows we each have a song in our heart that can inspire us in good times and hard times if we take the time to listen. It matters that the world knows the strength and value of all things created...must be measured by character and commitment rather than by might and wealth.

It matters that the world knows a person by my name...by sharing the things that really matter.”
(Paraphrased from Mattie Stepanek, 9 years old, June 2001)

If we follow the words and deeds suggested by the author, young Mattie Stepanek, who was 9 years old when he wrote those words, three years before he died, then this great organization, your work, your contribution, and our combined service will, in the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, “leave the world a bit better (because) one life has breathed easier...because you have lived.”

Today, we remind each other...to be the advocate for those who are on...or one day will soon assume the watch in these critically important roles. If ever there was a time and place to apply the lessons that we know about principled, accountable, and responsible leadership, then now is the time and this is the wartime mission. Shipmates take care of shipmates... it is the model of leadership that has proven itself consistently across the expanse of our successful, storied history; we owe shipmates serving on the ground nothing less than our best effort.

Today, we recognize those who stood for our nation, our community, and all that we represent...even when they were alone. In my years of service, I have not come across a more compelling word than the word ‘stand’ used to describe an inward form of conviction and an



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outward sign of action. You will find over 60 meanings, explanations, and ways to use this word.

We use it to describe or explain:

To rise

To remain firm, steadfast

To take up a position

To perform a duty

To describe a determined effort

To uphold

To support

To represent

To symbolize

To advocate

To remain strong

To confront fearlessly

It is one of the most powerful words in our language because of what it means and what it implies...in personal inner strength, in personal conviction, and as the highest form of public recognition...because in our culture, those who stand for you...are those who matter to you.

Today, we stand...we stand proudly for you...and all that you represent. Ladies and gentlemen, ...our Individual Augmentees