

# **Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Gary Roughead Secretary of the Navy Donald Winter Farewell Ceremony January 23, 2009**

We are to honor today Secretary Winter. Farewells as you know are never easy and even though we serve in a profession where farewells are part of our life, they seem to get harder and harder as the years go on and the responsibilities increase. I think it's because as that time progresses we realize the privilege that we've had, the experiences that we've had and the great journey that we are a part of. So it is bittersweet that we say farewell to the Winters but in a way it's not that bittersweet because they're really not leaving by the way, and this is a good thing.

It has also been a true privilege over the last couple of years to have been able to serve under your leadership. We began, our first meeting in the Pacific in Hawaii at Pearl Harbor, and I owe my position today to the Secretary and as I said I have great respect for him. But we were living this blissful existence in Hawaii and the Secretary had rewarded me with a position in Washington DC that I love and relish.

It really has been a fast couple of years and it has accelerated since Ellen and I arrived in Washington and most importantly it has been a truly privilege and honor for me to serve as the Chief of Naval Operations under a great Secretary of the Navy. A man who I've come to know as a gentleman of the greatest intellect, the highest sense of honor and an absolute, total commitment to the men and women who wear not only this uniform but the uniform of every service in our Armed Forces. His compassion for our Sailors is evident in everything that he does. The shortest meeting, the smallest issue, always distills down to 'what does it mean for the men and women who serve in our great Navy?'

He has brought in my opinion the same passion and zeal and enthusiasm to the position of Secretary of the Navy as one of the greatest – Teddy Roosevelt, who made his mark and put the Navy of the United States on the world stage with the sailing of the Great White Fleet. And Secretary Winter realized the importance of that event and saw that as a re-statement of our global interests and our global responsibilities. He has been the one who has led us in this milestone year of the sailing of the Great White Fleet.

He has also led the Navy at a time when we have used the Navy, when the Nation has used the Navy, in a way that it has never done before. As we sit here today, there are 14,000 Sailors, men and women who serve in our Navy, who are in the mountains of Afghanistan, the deserts of Iraq and the Horn of Africa, serving alongside the Army and the Air Force, the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard, but serving ashore -- and that's in addition to our normal global responsibilities. He has spearheaded the programs, the

processes that have allowed us to transform ourselves to support that Navy in this new way of operating.

He has also been spearheading significant and needed changes in how we do and buy things in the Navy. We and the world's navies buy expensive things. That's just the way it is. He also has been the leader in addressing that which we can do to bring those costs down, but again I come back to the fact that he is always about delivering the capability to the Sailor on the deckplate or in the squadron that is deployed somewhere in the world. He is exacting in his standards. The term I have used in my staff, Mr. Secretary, is if they go on to brief you, you better be ready to do a lot of push ups because that's exactly what you're going to be doing. You're going to be put through your paces, you're going to be pressed on the details, you're going to be asked what the value is of what we are about. That is what a Secretary of the Navy must do and because of his background, he has been a mentor, he has been a teacher and he has been an inspiration to those of us who have been involved in that very, very important business.

And for that Mr. Secretary, on a professional and personal level, I thank you for everything that you have done and what you have allowed me to do, what you have shown me to do, so that I can serve the Navy better.

Now the real power behind the office of the Secretary of the Navy is not on the stage today. It is Linda Winter: a woman of, I'm going to really step out on this one, of greater intellect than the Secretary of the Navy. A woman of intense interest in what our young men and women do, how they live, what's important to them, and what they need for themselves and their families. She has taken the time to dig in and explore the issues. She has also benefitted the uniformed spouses by being there at our conferences, by being the key participant in discussions, in the same way that Secretary Winter does, asking the questions that often times don't come to harbor but that are so very important. And because of that, because of her involvement, we have become a better Navy and our families and our servicemen and women are much better today than they would have been a couple of years ago. I thank you for that. And on Ellen's behalf I would also like to thank you for your friendship to her. She often comes back and tells me great stories to include lying on your stomachs and petting dolphins, and again in Hawaii I might add. But those are the types of times and the types of things that you did to find out more about who we are, what we do and what is important to us.

So it really has been a true pleasure and an honor to serve with you, to serve for you, as a partner in leading this great Navy. And on behalf of all who wear this uniform, we wish you both fair winds and following seas in all that is ahead. But we also recognize that you will always be part of us and we will always benefit from your leadership and your integrity and your total commitment to the men and women who serve. Thank you very much.