

**Remarks as delivered by Adm Mike Mullen  
Chief of Naval Information Change of Office  
14 July 2006**

[Amenities]

T has served for 28 years and I'm not going to go over all 28 years this afternoon, but the service he's given is truly important and I'd like to characterize that.

The service – he would say this differently, but the service in the best years of his life from when he was young to this particular point in time. What he chose to do with his adult life, which is to wear the uniform and serve us, he's served us exceptionally well in many, many jobs. If you just look back to the last ten years or so, and you got see who he's worked for, where he's been, it has always been where the action is, and there's been a lot of action throughout his career.

I'll focus a little bit on the last ten years. Denny Blair, who's a good friend, is here today and he worked for him out of PACOM. Before that he was involved working in the Chief of Naval Personnel's Office, and before that he was in 5<sup>th</sup> Fleet with Scott Redd and the whole time with Tom Fargo at a time when things were significantly hard.

Then after he was enjoying Hawaii and getting it sorted out in the Pacific. He was called to go serve with Hugh Shelton, as the Chairman, and then after that with Dick Myers for two years, and then served two service chiefs.

That's a pretty long list of individuals and I'll say it this way, none of whom are the same, all of whom need good public affairs assistance and advice. It takes the real skill to serve like that with individuals who are pretty high octane, have their own opinions, and yet he's been able to steer so many of us in the right direction and done so with a flare and a skill and a subtlety and an assertiveness that is premier.

His service is characterized by many things in what I consider to be as important facet of who we are and what we do these days. So I'm incredibly grateful for that service at this time, both in its time and in its quality too. We will truly miss that. We will truly miss it.

In addition, he doesn't just serve alone as I indicated. His family has been there with him, has moved and been through those challenges as well. So the support, his service extends far beyond just those of us who wear the uniform, but those in our families, in our extended families who support us.

In addition to that when the parents are around, I'm always reminded that these are two very capable men. They're not as young as they use to be, but they were raised in families by parents who brought up individuals that chose to serve and serve nobly.

I am grateful for parents and the fact that they raise young men and women to a point and a position in their lives where they choose to serve, and there are a couple of moms in the audience here as well. So to both mothers and these two individuals I'm very, very grateful for all that you have done, I know T, your mother who is not here today but I know she's here in spirit, just physically couldn't come. So service extends not just for the individual or to the individual, but to the family.

Secondly, he has served in an extraordinary time of change we have in the Navy right now. In fact, we were talking just before the ceremony when I was just sort of pinning down the exact dates that he served in the Chairman's office and I said before and after 9-11, and he was quick to say and during 9-11, and we've talked specifically about the events that day that we all believed change the world.

He has served in an extraordinary time of change, and the most difficult challenges any leader has is to lead change, whether you're leading it or it's coming at you, and nobody's done it better. With our people in our community, he's lead enormous change. Clearly, that is and wasn't required to match the change that's going on in the world right now, and we are in a time in our Navy and in our nation

and in our military where the pace of change is just picking up and it's going to continue to pick up.

Being educated, being publicized, being focused on what that change is and what it means externally and internally in handling the tough issues as T always does and his counsel to those of us he's advised is to deal with it upfront – bad news doesn't get any better with time. We need to get it out and it's very wise counsel that has certainly served me well for which I am grateful that I would say it has served all our leaders well.

We're at a time where we've got 4,000 Sailors on the ground in Iraq, that's going to go up. We've got almost 11,000 Sailors on the ground in CENTCOM, and we think that number is going to go up. We'll continue to support the ongoing efforts there at a time where we continue to be globally deployed, over a third of the Navy is, and just the events of the last 24 hours would certainly give us all cause to the need for every service to be ready at all times, and we are. T has generated the stories and generated the support in this time of change which has really made a difference, and I really appreciate that.

One individual – I was at the ceremony yesterday when Greg got promoted, and one individual in the press core turned to me and said, and you're off the front pages and I can understand that from one perspective. In the other perspective we've also been out there a great deal, over 400,000 Sailors, men and women who served and have served exceptionally well. T has led in this time of change again, and I am very grateful for that T, and in particular the structure of the public affairs community. The focus of the public affairs community may have served all of us incredibly well.

Then lastly he's been an enormously capable leader. He has led those who are junior to him and brought them along. He cares about our people enormously, about their lives, about their careers, about their concerns. He gets an awful lot of feedback from them that is helpful from the deck plates, which is a true characteristic of a great leader, because he really does know what's going on there.

He's also led his peers, his other flag officers, and he's clearly led me, and that's a real challenge when you talk about the leadership about those who are seniors to whom you are really or on whom you need to be focused everyday.

As I said, pretty strong personalities and a really incredible time. He's led in the areas that I care about a lot that make a difference in terms of our future, in terms of what we do day-to-day, but most importantly what we do for our people. So being an extraordinary leader with somebody we needed and T has been that for the last 28 years, but certainly for the last three as Chief of Information.

We've been blessed at a time where we needed to be blessed and our future is better because of what T McCreary has done as our Chief, and T, I will be forever grateful for that time we spent together.

We welcome the new CHINFO today, Greg Smith, another individual with a superb reputation in the business. I'm very proud about our public affairs community and it continues to generate individuals of great integrity and great skill, and has the reputation as an exceptional public affairs individual and somebody highly regarded in the business.

I couldn't be happier with both his promote selection, promotion and assignment to this job. I look forward to continuing the challenge. There are great challenges out there and I think you will find that leading in this Navy, is as invigorating and inspiring and as rewarding a job, an opportunity as we have.

So welcome to you, to Shirley, to the entire Smith family or clan I guess is probably more appropriate. That actually may stick now. I'm grateful for all you've done and it's great to have you here. So again thanks for everybody that's coming. It's great that it's here and it's a great celebration and a great reminder about how fortunate we are to have two individuals of this caliber along with their families to serve our nation. God bless you and God bless our country.