

Instructor of the Year Awards Ceremony

6 May 2010

Thank you, Joe, for that kind introduction. Good evening. It is truly an honor to be here tonight to address this distinguished group of United States Navy Instructors of the Year.

You have certainly had a busy week here in Washington D.C. and I hope that you have enjoyed yourselves so far. Your visit this week is but a small token of our respect and admiration for your achievements serving in one of the most challenging, and most important, jobs in the Navy and Marine Corps. Your true legacy lies within those individuals you've instructed whom are the future leading petty officers, master chiefs, and officers of our Navy.

Through the hard work and dedication that you demonstrate each day, you have consistently met every challenge in securing our future and safeguarding our most important asset – our people.

I would like to thank my fellow flag officers, senior executives, and other distinguished guests who join me tonight in honoring you. But, before I go any further, I would like to recognize the real award winners – the spouses and family members whose support makes all that you do possible. This is truly a team effort. If I may, I would like to ask all of you to stand so we can thank you for what you have done for our Navy and our nation. [Initiate applause].

As a Navy, we have set an organizational goal of being recognized as a “Top 50” employer, one of the great places to work in our nation. What

does being a “Top 50” employer mean? We believe a “Top 50” organization focuses on both performance and taking care of their people. An important part of this is developing a results-oriented work environment that supports life-work integration while maintaining a strong focus on performance.

“Top 50” organizations recognize the value of diversity – diversity of ideas, perspectives, and experiences that can only come from tapping into the diversity of our nation, a nation that is changing.

Of the recruitable population in the United States, only 28% are eligible to enter the military. But, as a result of economic conditions and the comprehensive benefits that we provide, we are meeting our recruiting goals with high quality individuals.

However, we know that the economy will eventually improve. With this will come an increase in the competition for talent. We must effectively position ourselves now to be successful in this environment in the future. And one of the key reasons I believe we are a Top 50 employer is the training and education we provide our Sailors throughout their career.

You provide the tools and opportunities that ensure our fleet’s readiness, while providing for the personal growth and development of all our Sailors and Marines and instilling the desire for life long learning. NETC is the largest shore command in the Navy with a staff of over 19,000 at more than 170 locations. In any given day, approximately 30,000 students are in training. Each year, more than 12,000 international students from 150 nations attend NETC courses.

You are the world leaders in training. Other navies come to our training commands to see what to teach and how to train. And as our mission sets evolve, we're placing new demands on our Sailors and Marines every day – increased expeditionary capabilities, anti-piracy, language and cultural expertise, cyber security. Training and education is our asymmetric advantage in the world to meet these emerging demands. No other organization in the world does this as well as our training and education command.

We are asking more of our Sailors and Marines than ever before. Where else in the world do they bring in forty-thousand young men and women a year and in the span of just a few months, train them to be divers, mechanics, pilots, engineers, nuclear operators, and explosive ordnance disposal technicians, just to name a few?

But just as we ask more of our Sailors and Marines we're also taking care of them and their families better than ever ...exceptional health care and compensation for service members and their families, opportunities for education (for them and their dependents), training, and advancement, retirement benefits. But, more than the tangible benefits are the intangible life skills we give.

We give them the gifts of discipline, the fellowship of those who have served at sea, confidence, self-reliance, and the opportunity to lead others in service to the nation guided by the values of honor, courage, and commitment. Though imparting those life skills, I'm sure, were not part of your lesson's enabling objectives you're here tonight because you went beyond the lesson plan in reaching out to your students.

As John F. Kennedy said, “Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.” This is what we honor tonight.

Our Total Force of active and reserve Sailors and Navy civilians, many of whom you’ve trained, represents the finest I have seen in my career--this is the result of your efforts and for that, we are truly grateful. We wish you every success as you continue to build our Navy of the future. Thank you and enjoy the rest of the stay in D.C.