

The Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
Change of Command – US Naval Academy
Annapolis, MD
23 July 2014

I am honored to be here to preside over this change of command, as Vice Admiral Mike Miller passes the crucial, the storied job of Superintendent of the United States Naval Academy to Vice Admiral Ted Carter.

We are also here to mark the last post in the active service of Mike and Barbara Miller. Mike is the longest serving officer in the United States Navy, the sole remaining member of the Academy Class of 1974 on active duty. How long, you might ask, has Mike served? Well, when he ends speeches to the Brigade, which he always does, with “Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead” he’s just quoting what he heard Admiral Farragut say at the Battle of Mobile Bay.

[Laughter]

I want to read a brief excerpt from Mike’s write up in the Lucky Bag. You just didn’t pay me enough Mike. [Laughter]

“Mike marched to the Naval Academy from the...hectic town of Minot, North Dakota. His major accomplishments included his ability to get term papers in late and not be penalized. ... Athletics were one of Mike's favorites, especially running his mile with the OOD close behind. Mike always made it a point of being punctual, setting a record for never missing an excused squad formation. Undoubtedly, Mike will go far, as far as the next bar.”

Mike Miller and I share a lot of things, we share a love of swords and bladed instruments, the somewhat attenuated ability to do pushups after a Navy touchdown, corny jokes and puns, but I think that the main thing that we share is the astonishment of his classmates and my shipmates from long ago, that they share at the offices we have attained. You obviously haven't seen my picture from when I was a jg. As one of my friends described it, it looked like I glued two squirrels to my face. I was there under Elmo Zumwalt.

Every change of command is a bittersweet event, mixing the achievement of what has been with the promise of what is to come. Our Navy and our nation face some significant challenges in the coming years and decades, and our ability as a Naval Service to meet these challenges in a very real and a very central sense begins here at the Academy in Annapolis. For 170 years The Yard has been the place where young men and women are trained and educated as naval leaders. It is a long unbroken line from William Sims, John Lejeune, Chester Nimitz, Elmo Zumwalt, Jimmy Carter, Mike Mullen, Jon Greenert and now Michelle Howard. Some of the Plebes that we saw outside going through summer training today will rise to the highest levels of responsibility in the Navy, the Marines, in our government and in society. And every single one of them will be better citizens and contribute more to our nation because of the time they spent here.

The Chinese character for challenge combines those of problem and opportunity. It is the task of this place, and preeminently that of the Superintendent, to give those who go here the skill and the confidence to turn the challenges they will face into opportunities. It is also the role of the Superintendent to instill the character and integrity that Midshipmen will need every much as the peerless education and training they receive. It is almost a truism that the Naval Academy is a

unique institution. Those who choose and who are chosen to come here are aiming to be a part of something larger than themselves. They have chosen the harder way. It is also true that a successful Superintendent has to have unique skills and deal with a staggering variety of issues with consequences that can reach far into the future.

Mike Miller has fulfilled the myriad, complex and daunting responsibilities with excellence, with grace, and with a high fun factor. Now, I am very much looking forward to the opportunity of working with Ted Carter to give the Midshipmen under his command and his care to ensure that we as a Navy and as a nation – as my fellow Mississippian William Faulkner said – do not just endure, but to prevail.

Mike Miller has had a career marked by sustained high achievement. From his time as an S-3 Viking pilot, through squadron command during Desert Storm, to command at sea of a carrier, to now as Superintendent he has set and he has met an exceptionally high standard.

It has been my pleasure to work with Mike my entire time as Secretary. When I became Secretary, I inherited him as the head of the Office of Legislative Affairs, and I was in almost constant contact with him during that time. Forgive me Congressman, but dealing with Congress full time requires the patience of Job, the diplomacy of an Ambassador, and the tact of a spouse spending a weekend with the in-laws. Mike had all the tools. He was an exceptional representative of the Department of the Navy and allowed us to get accomplished what needed to be done for our Sailors and Marines.

It's hard to express how much I, and we, are going to miss Mike Miller and his steady hand on the helm here at Annapolis. We will miss his loyalty to our Sailors and Marines, his loyalty to this institution and to the larger institution of the Navy. We will miss his knowledge and respect for tradition but also his willingness to change when that is required. And we'll miss the wonderful personality and great good humor with which he approached every single thing. What I treasure most, is the very real friendship that we have developed. And that's one thing that doesn't change today.

I've lost track of the number of times that, on a weekend, with family and friends, or either or both, in tow, I've called Mike and Barbara from the car while sitting outside Buchanan House, asking if they were home, and if we could come in. They were always incredibly gracious and always inviting and Mike, particularly in the summer, was always in uniform—shorts and t-shirt. I want to take a moment and thank Mike and Barbara especially for all the kindnesses they have shown my family. All three of my daughters have adopted Mike and Barbara, or as they better call them VADM and Mrs. Miller, and their affection has been returned many, many fold. Our daughter Annie is here today and came from New York to say goodbye. The other two would have been here as well except Elisabeth has a job in Colorado and Kate a camp in Mississippi. My wife Lynne is also in Mississippi but sends her love and happy wishes. Annie has made so many friends here, thanks in large part to the hospitality of the Millers as she has come to graduations, commissionings, and she was even invited to a dining out.

I also want to thank Mike and Barbara from me personally. From opening their home, to many, many invitations to come here, to eating at Cantlers with me, which isn't easy when you're in

whites as Mike often was, to allowing me to fulfill every kid's lifelong ambition by allowing me to stand on the sidelines at Navy Football games, and go in the locker room afterwards — thank you Mike.

Now, literally when this ceremony ends I leave to travel around the world to visit our Sailors and Marines and to work with our partners and allies and to see the graduates of this place and watch them lead the most formidable expeditionary fighting force the world has ever known. Many of those leaders are the result of your labors, Mike, and those that join them will be the result of the labors of Ted Carter, but also of Mike's legacy.

During his four years as Supe, Mike has put the Academy on a 21st century footing with a firm sense of what the future needs of the Naval Services will be. That future is going to prominently feature cyber as a necessary and increasingly important element of the military art.

Working with Congress – so that time at OLA had some residual benefits -- he has led the founding of the Cyber Center of Excellence here at the Academy. He has ensured the right leadership is in place, the appropriate experts recruited, and \$225 million secured to achieve this goal. One of his great contributions to this place and to our country is this Center which will be a model for the rest of the military and which will play a critical role in the defense of America.

But his vision here in Annapolis went far beyond bricks and mortar and academics. The moral, mental and ethical development of our future leaders is also central to his legacy. He has continued to raise the standards of admissions and performance here at the Academy. This

year's incoming class is the most academically qualified in the school's history. It was on his watch the Naval Academy was named the top liberal arts school in the country in 2012, and this year it was listed as the #1 Public School by U.S. News and World Report. One publication named the Academy as the #1 Liberal Arts School in the South, and when Mike told me I said "I'm really proud and not surprised, but...the South...really?"

One hundred years ago, President Woodrow Wilson gave the commissioning address here and said to the new Ensigns and Second Lieutenants "you are not serving a government ... you are serving a people." That is critical for a military defending a democracy. It has to reflect and be a part of the people it protects. Respect must run both from and to the people protected and those protecting. And for those at this Academy, that respect begins here. And that is what Mike has been instilling in our Mids.

And we can see tangible results. From the 2012 Thompson-Ravitz Award for the best community relations program to the 2014 recognition by the State of Maryland for the outstanding volunteerism of the Brigade, the Midshipmen have shown that they understand their role not just as officers, but as American citizens.

This engagement has helped Mike with the American people refocus the Academy's efforts on diversity. He has started a number of important on-campus programs and has emphasized outreach. The Class of 2013 as the most diverse in Academy history. And while he has been here as Superintendent the enrollment of women has gone from 21% to nearly 26% in the Class of 2018.

And finally, we cannot forget that seminal and shining achievement...undefeated against Army.
And I have to point out victories 9 to 12, in a row.

It isn't just Mike Miller that the Navy is saying farewell to today, but also his incredible wife Barbara. She has not only been there to support her husband, but also her fellow military spouses and families. Here at the Academy she established a system of workshops and programs to personally mentor new military spouses, and influenced hundreds of couples over her four years here in Annapolis.

She has helped establish a close bond between the community here and the Academy family, participating in things like Compass, and the Society of Sponsors, and Naval Academy Women's Club. And she has been a key part of helping to develop a positive gender climate at the Naval Academy by supporting the Joy Bright Hancock Society and helping to mentor four classes of graduating female Midshipmen. She, and her constant presence and purpose, will also be deeply missed here. It was my privilege to name her the sponsor of the USS THOMAS HUDNER and she will continue in that position for the life of that ship. And I do want to point out; she's the principal in this role and Mike the supporting spouse.

And I want to recognize Chip Miller as well. Thank you to you and your sister for sharing your father with us. I know you did not have any say in that, but without your love and willingness to endure the rigors of a military life; your parents would not have been able to make the contributions they have. So on behalf of so many that your parents have touched, thank you.

But as I said before, a Change of Command also allows us to look ahead. One of our international navy partner in Asia told me recently told me there's one big difference between soldiers and sailors. Soldiers of every country, he said, by necessity are always focused on the ground; they look at boundaries, both natural and man-made. They are constrained by things like borders and maps. But sailors, sailors look out over the ocean and see no boundaries. They don't see barriers. They look out and see nothing but the horizon and the potential of the future.

Admiral Carter comes with his own dramatic operational background, a lot like Mike Miller. He graduated from TOP GUN in 1985, I'll point out about a year before Maverick did. [Laughter] He commanded the storied "Top Hatters" of VF-14 and the Enterprise Strike Group during combat operations in Afghanistan. For over a year he has been the President of the Naval War College, another crown jewel in our military education system, where he has been working on and thinking about how we educate our officers. So he already has a sizeable head start looking over that horizon.

I think it is quite a thing for him, and quite appropriate, to have the chance to influence not only our current leaders as they took graduate courses at the War College, but now our future leaders here at the Academy. I have no doubt, knowing his career and his character that he will be splendid in this new role.

So here we are today at the United States Naval Academy, the alpha and the omega of a forty year career to say thank you and Bravo Zulu to Mike Miller, to Barbara, to their family and to commemorate the deep and continuing impact that you have had and that will endure. And we

are here to welcome Ted Carter and his family in the new role, and to promise him our support as he undertakes these tremendous new responsibilities.

To Mike and Barbara, fair winds and following seas. We're going to miss your daily presence, but you are forever a part of our Navy. On behalf of a very grateful nation, thank you for your many years of incomparable service. Godspeed.