

Remarks by the Honorable Ray Mabus  
Secretary of the Navy  
CNO Retirement and Change of Command Ceremony  
United States Naval Academy  
Friday, 23 September 2011

Admiral Roughead, Admiral Greenert, Deputy Secretary of Defense, Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Chiefs of Staff of the Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Commandant Commanders, naval leadership, military leadership, distinguished foreign visitors, ladies and gentlemen, thank you so much for being here today. It is an exceptional privilege for me, and I think for all of us, to be here today as Admiral Gary Roughead passes on the responsibilities of one of the most revered and fabled titles in the American military, Chief of Naval Operations, to Admiral Jon Greenert.

Every change of command is a bittersweet event, mixing the achievement of what has been with the promise of what is to come. This is doubly true for me and for all of us here today. Our Navy and our nation face some significant challenges in the coming years and decades, but just as the Chinese character for challenge combines those of problem and opportunity, Admiral Roughead has had the genius and the skill to turn so many of the challenges he has faced into opportunities. I am very much looking forward to the opportunity of working with Jon Greenert to meet our future issues, to ensure that we as a Navy and as a nation – as Faulkner said – do not just endure, but prevail.

I don't think anyone can ever fully express how much we are going to miss Gary Roughead's expert counsel and absolutely unwavering commitment to the Navy and to the United States, his loyalty to friends and to ideals, his loyalty to the institution, his unsurpassed leadership and his unassailable character. Personally, I am going to miss the strong partnership that Gary Roughead and I built over the last 28 months. I have valued and enjoyed that

partnership and my respect and admiration for him has absolutely no limit. But what I treasure the most is the friendship we have developed, and I know that that's not changing today. One small, personal thing will change. Because of the respect I have felt for this office and for the individual who holds it, I have never been able to bring myself to call him "Gary." At the end of the ceremony, I will be glad to be on a first name basis with my friend.

I'm very happy to be here because I just returned yesterday from a five-day, five country trip that included stops in Afghanistan and two other Central Asian countries. The trip was bookended by two events which were signal in their importance: the award of the Medal of Honor to Sgt. Dakota Meyer last week and today's recognition of the incredible contributions of Gary Roughead throughout his more than 40 years of naval service. So if my words today fail to adequately express what I and all of us truly feel about you, CNO, I hope you will blame it on a lack of sleep and not the depth of my appreciation or my feeling.

While traveling can absolutely wear you out, one of innumerable things on which CNO and I are absolutely in agreement is that there is nothing better than being with our Sailors and our Marines, deployed around the world, doing the work of America. It is work that I know this nation appreciates, but certainly doesn't fully understand, particularly the sacrifices required not just of those who serve, but also of their families.

The CNO never speaks to Sailors without asking them to thank their families, on his behalf, for all they do and all that is asked of them. So CNO, I want to do now what you have asked so many Sailors to do. I want to publicly thank your family, Ellen, and your daughter, Elizabeth, for all they have done and for all that has been asked of them during your decades of service to America.

Thank you, Ellen, for your support and advocacy, the responsibility you have always taken on behalf of all our Navy families. No one who meets Ellen Roughead can doubt her commitment to her personal family or to her larger naval family or her passion for both. After today, you will never again have to have a painting of a dead admiral or a sinking ship hung on your walls. Elizabeth, thank you for sharing your father with us. I know you did not have any say in that, but you have shared him with good grace and understanding. You have, just in the time I have known you, gone from being a student to a very confident, competent and caring young woman. Given your character and knowing your parents, I would have expected nothing less. Ellen and Liz, your understanding, your support, and your ability to keep the CNO grounded were essential in allowing him to do what he has done for the Navy, to achieve all that he has achieved. Strong leaders need strong families and Gary Roughead is a strong leader who has a strong family. And I can't fail to mention the contributions of Clancy, the smiling Labrador, and Arleigh, the latest addition, although I do have to say that the vaunted discipline of Gary Roughead does not seem to have rubbed off on the dogs at all. The entire Roughead family epitomizes the virtues and the strengths we want every Navy family to have.

Standing here today, I vividly remember the first conversation I ever had with CNO. It was the spring of 2009, it had just been publicly announced that President Obama had honored me with nominating me as Secretary of the Navy. I remember exactly where I was; I was on Capitol Street in downtown Jackson, Mississippi, standing across the street from my old home, the Governor's Mansion, when I received a phone call on my cell phone from the CNO. He started the conversation: "Mr. Secretary, your Navy is standing by and ready to answer all bells."

As a ROTC-trained officer, whose naval career ended at Lieutenant (jg) that was maybe the coolest phone call I have ever gotten. It also reminded me a little bit of what John Kennedy said, that he went from being a Lieutenant (jg) to commander in chief without any increase in technical skill whatsoever. Thank you for that phone call. And thank you for making me such a complete part of the Navy, and for your patience and your understanding of me in this role, and for making my job such a complete joy.

But I have to tell you, that call is typical of the graciousness and the leadership that have been the hallmark of Gary Roughead's career. No detail is too small, no undertaking too great for our CNO.

The finest examples of naval service have been built by legendary individuals about whom Midshipmen study here in Annapolis: Naval officers like Jones, Lawrence, Farragut, Porter, the Perrys, Spruance and Nimitz and your career is already moving into legend here. Gary Roughead's leadership skills follow those great officers in a willingness to innovate while respecting the deep traditions of the sea service. His skills were recognized pretty early on here at the Academy, where he commanded the Brigade of Midshipmen and then returned years later as Commandant. Annapolis has been one of the touchstones of his career and his life. In the Navy, he has been an operator's operator, commanding numerous times at sea, as well as being one of only two admirals in the history of the United States Navy to have commanded both the Atlantic and the Pacific fleets. I know he is happy about how little time he has spent in the Pentagon, but he has made those tours count as, among other things, Chief of Navy Legislative Affairs and now as Chief of Naval Operations.

As the Chief of Naval Operations, his leadership has helped to reshape the Navy to meet the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, operationally and strategically. Shortly after taking this office, Admiral

Roughead, along with the leaders of the other sea services, introduced the Global Maritime Strategy, a blueprint for the future of our nation's maritime forces and our relationships with our many global partners.

His innovations have helped restructure Navy fleets as well, re-establishing Fourth Fleet and appointing for the first time a Navy SEAL as commander of a numbered fleet. Both the fleet and the commander proved to be inspired choices. He also stood up Fleet Cyber Command as the 10<sup>th</sup> Fleet, while consolidating the Navy's information related communities together in the Information Dominance Corps, positioning the Navy as the leader in the information domain at the leading edge of the information age. The 10<sup>th</sup> Fleet had existed during World War II as the code and communications nexus of the Navy. In reestablishing it to meet the cyber needs of today, once again he showed that innovation with a respect for tradition.

Rebuilding our fleet has been a priority for both the CNO and for me. His leadership was critical in bringing about things like the dual block buy of the Littoral Combat Ship. He knew that by committing to buying 10 ships of each variant it would more quickly expand our fleet and provide our future Navy with the speed, the agility and the flexibility necessary to meet those global maritime commitments which he had laid forth in his strategy. But he also knew it would be more than a win for the Navy, it would be a win for our nation because it would save our taxpayers over \$2 billion, while strengthening our industrial base and securing American jobs.

He has also demonstrated leadership, as you must, in his willingness to make some hard decisions, recommending the truncation of the DDG1000 line and restarting the DDG51 Arleigh Burke class destroyer. It was also shown in his steadfastness in holding naval leaders to exceptionally high standards of conduct. His decisions may not have always been universally

applauded or popular, but CNO and any objective observer knew they were right ones for our Navy.

His vision went beyond shipbuilding and will ensure continued naval preeminence above and below as well as on the seas. His commitment is unsurpassed in keeping our edge in technology expressed in things like unmanned vehicles, providing unmatched capabilities, at a lesser cost, while saving operators' lives. This is the future, and CNO was one of the first to recognize it, see its potential, and most importantly, begin to bring it to fruition. There seem to be a good many people who can recognize where we need to go, but far fewer who can turn those insights into reality. The Pentagon, and this will come as no surprise to any of you, as well as many other institutions, has no shortage of folks who will explain to you in some great detail why something cannot be done or why it will take a long time and why it is important for you to be patient. CNO, thankfully, was not, in the words of Theodore Roosevelt, one of those "cold and timid souls who know neither victory or defeat" and he understands and he acts with the great clarity and urgency that comes with knowing that time is simply a luxury our Navy does not have.

With all of those accomplishments, all the things he has done in his career— from rewriting our basic strategy to rebuilding our fleet – it was what CNO has done for our most important asset – our people – that will be his most enduring achievement. He has never lost sight of the primary responsibility of leadership: taking care of the people entrusted to you and to the office you hold.

Both in war and in peace, being a Sailor can be a dangerous job. CNO has been tireless in his efforts to provide Sailors with every possible tool to keep them and their families safe and secure, both afloat and ashore, forward deployed or here at home. One of his greatest legacies

will be his commitment to diversity; his efforts not only to assure that our Navy looks like the nation it helps to guard, but that our country's great commitment to the fundamental principle of equal opportunity is no less true for anyone who wears the cloth of this country.

So here we are today at the Naval Academy, the Alpha and the Omega of Gary Roughead's naval career, to say thank you. Thank you to Gary Roughead and to his family and to commemorate the deep and lasting impact that they have had. We are also here to welcome Jon Greenert and his family to his new role and his tough, new responsibilities.

I have no doubt, knowing Jon Greenert and knowing of his career, most recently as our Vice Chief of Naval Operations, and by the way he was Gary Roughead's only vice, that Admiral Jon Greenert is ready for whatever awaits. Admiral Roughead's contributions may be hard, if not impossible, to surpass, but I am confident that if anyone can match them, it is Jon Greenert

To Admiral Gary Roughead, because of what you have done and the example that you have set, our Navy is truly "ready to answer all bells." To Gary, Ellen and Elizabeth Roughead, fair winds and following seas. We will miss your daily presence, but you are forever part of the Navy. On behalf of a grateful nation, thank you for your lifetime of incomparable service. Godspeed.