Haney assumes command of U.S. Pacific Fleet

Adm. Cecil Haney delivers remarks during the U.S. Pacific Fleet change of command ceremony. Haney assumed command from Adm. Patrick Walsh during the ceremony Jan. 20. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 David Kolmel

By MC2 Class Amanda Dunford,
U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii - Adm. Cecil D. Haney, former deputy of the U.S. Strategic Command, relieved Adm. Patrick M. Walsh as commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet during a change of command ceremony onboard Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam today.

Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Jonathan Greenert presided over the ceremony and praised Walsh for his service in the Navy and the impact his leadership had on the command.

"He's had a marvelous career. He knows what it means to take care of a family, he knows what it means to take care of a command, and he's encouraged his staff to do the same," said Greenert to a crowd of almost 900 attendees. "He's (Walsh) all about being ready, he's harnessed that Pacific Fleet teamwork, the talent and resources."

Greenert also praised Walsh for his ability to foster strong international relationships. "Pat has been committed to the building and improving of our relationships in and around the Western Pacific."

Under Walsh's command, U.S. Pacific Fleet provided humanitarian relief for numerous countries struck by natural disasters including Operation Tomodachi, a humanitarian assistance and disaster relief effort conducted in response to the earthquake, tsunami and subsequent radiological crisis that impacted Japan in March 2011.

Commander, U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) Adm. Robert F. Willard praised Walsh for his work leading all US military support efforts during Operation Tomodachi.

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Sailors' mourn loss of aviation boatswain's mate pioneer

By MC2 (SW) Byron C. Linder,
***USS Carl Vinson* Public Affairs**

USS CARL VINSON, At Sea (NNS) -- Sailors assigned to Nimitz-class aircraft carrier *USS Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) and embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 17 held a memorial foreign object damage (FOD) walk-down Jan. 25, for a fellow shipmate who was killed two days prior.

Lt. Cmdr. Regina Mills, formerly Rogers, was assigned to *USS Nimitz* (CVN 68) in Bremerton, Wash., as the Navy's only female aircraft handling officer. She was struck and killed by a vehicle when she stopped to assist others involved in a traffic collision in Gig Harbor, Wash., Jan. 23.

(Left) ABCM Raul Castillo and Aircraft Handling Officer Lt. Cmdr. Tommy Edgeworth, wipe away tears as they lead a memorial foreign object damage (FOD) walk down dedicated to Lt. Cmdr. Regina Mills aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier *USS Carl Vinson* (CVN 70). U.S. Navy photo by MC2 James R. Evans

Though she was never stationed aboard *Vinson*, she made an impact as a member of the Aviation Boatswain's Mate (AB) community, explained Master ChiefAviation Boatswain's Mate (AW/SW) Raul Castillo, an El Paso, Texas, native and *Vinson's* senior enlisted aircraft handler. Castillo served with Mills for two tours of duty, one aboard *Nimitz* and one at Afloat Training Group San Diego. She was his division officer at both commands.

"Being part of such a small community, we all know each other," he said, explaining how the Navy's 21 total platforms for ABs to serve at sea, combined with high attrition and turnover rates, resulted in longtime ABs being a premium. "Everybody loved her and respected her passion for life. She shared a lot of moments with me that would have broken a person down, but her passion for life is what will always stick with me."

Castillo said FOD walk-downs were a favorite for Mills, and a memorial FOD walk-down was most appropriate.

"In the seven years I knew her, that was her thing," said Castillo. "She found it a way to relax. When she called it, she'd take off her gear and go out there. She really liked being out there with the young ABs. She was a big promoter of female ABs because there are not very many, and the places she went in her career should be very inspirational to young female ABs to pursue the same route."

Hundreds of Sailors from a wide range of departments and divisions gathered on the flight deck for the walk-down. At 4:26 p.m., the attendees observed a moment of silence. The walk-down commenced one minute later, and concluded at 4:35 p.m., the sun descending on *Vinson's* port side.

Chief Religious Programs Specialist (SW/AW/FMF) Monica Kuhl, a Cheyenne, Wyo., native and *USS Carl Vinson* Command Religious Ministries department leading chief petty officer, was one of the hundreds in attendance. She had served aboard *Nimitz* with Mills, and noted her influence spanned far beyond the flight deck.

"I just knew her from around the ship, but she was the highest-ranking female there," Kuhl. "A lot of the junior females looked up to her and respected her because she had done so much in the Navy. She set the example for everybody, and I would like to be that kind of leader."

Mills' leadership also affected and continues to impact Lt. Paul Dussault, a Barrington, R.I., native and *Vinson's* flight deck officer.

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Tip of the Week

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