

**Stand Up of the Southeast Regional Maintenance
Center Intermediate Maintenance Activity
Vice Admiral Kevin McCoy
June 28, 2011**

Thank you for that kind introduction, Admiral Gale.

Admiral Harvey, Vice Adm Hunt, Rear Adm Thomas, Ms Anderson, Captain Cochrane (NAVSTA CO), CAPT Cook, Commanding Officers of GETTYSBURG, FARRAGUT, and SIMPSON, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen – it is so good to be here with all of you today as we recognize the Stand Up ceremony of the Southeast Regional Maintenance Center Immediate Maintenance Activity. Today we recognize the vital role that Sailors and Government civilians play, in addition to our industry partners, in keeping the Navy's Surface Forces ready and ensuring that our ships achieve their full expected service lives. It is so fitting, and I am so grateful that Admirals

Harvey, Hunt, and Thomas are here today. First, they are our fleet leadership. We in NAVSEA are accountable to them for the life cycle engineering and material readiness of our Navy. But more importantly with respect to today's events, they have been leading the charge within the Navy to tell the story and make the case for the funding and manpower to re-grow our Intermediate Maintenance Capability and to ensure that Maintenance Budgets are sufficient to support the long term readiness of the fleet. Admirals, I am so grateful to work for you, and side by side with you as we strive to improve the material readiness of the fleet. Thank you sirs for your tremendous support.

It is so good to be back in Mayport. I want to recount two events, defining moments for me, that happened right here in Mayport that shaped my thinking and passion for

what we have been trying to do the past few years relative to surface engineering and maintenance. First, in early 2006, when I was the NAVSEA Chief Engineer, my structural engineers came to me and told me that we had to condemn the arresting gear and catapults on the USS John F Kennedy. The fundamental structure supporting the systems had maintenance constantly deferred and now these systems were on the verge of failure. They got my immediate attention. Being somewhat astute, I instantly recognized that this was a big deal with huge repercussions for the Navy. That same week, I traveled here to Mayport for a first hand look. What followed was several briefings to the CNO, SECNAV, and the Congress. An even closer subsequent inspection of the whole ship lead to the decommissioning of JFK over 10 years early. By our plan, we were supposed to have the ship in service

until 2017. The bottom line was that we had neglected to perform the required maintenance to ensure the ship made it to its full Expected Service Life to the point that in the remaining time the ship had left, there was not enough money available to recover. Equally as troubling was that we were surprised as a Navy. I was convinced that we could not let this happen again.

The second defining moment came a little over a year ago when I toured the Regional Maintenance Center here in Mayport. I walked through shop after shop where the equipment and major machines were placed in long term inactive lay-up – the machines were actually covered in thick Saran Wrap! We had sailors here and we had trained civilians here – but not enough to man the ships. The organization was reduced to processing work to the

private sector only. No longer did we have the organic capability to perform fundamental repairs. I am not knocking the private sector – we can not sail our Navy without a strong, facilitized private sector repair capability. However, we need a mix of government and private sector to maximize readiness – particularly for short fused work where the contracting process just takes too long. So, the situation was very wrong. We had a backlog of deferred maintenance on the ships in the port, we had sailors anxious to work in their rates, we had trained civilians ready to work on ships and train and mentor the sailors, we had an incredibly well facilitized government industrial capability, but we had insufficient manning to effectively accomplish I-level work. Equally as bad, we were missing tremendous opportunities to train sailors at the activity to be more self reliant with respect to repairing their ship

when they eventually return to sea, AND we were missing out on the ability for afloat sailors to come to the IMA shops and see their equipment torn down and gain invaluable training themselves.

Seeing this Intermediate Maintenance Activity effectively shutdown was a heart breaker for me who headed an afloat submarine SIMA in the 90's. Some of you will recall that before I left that day last year I conducted an All Hands Call and I made the statement that WE WILL rebuild this capability, that WE WILL grow both the sailor and civilian staff and we will cut the saran wrap off the machines. I received a rousing applause. What those of you who were there did not know was that I made the promise without having the funding approved yet! I was writing a check with no money in the bank,

however, I knew in my heart that it was the right thing to do for our Navy, I knew we had the solid support from Admiral Harvey the Fleet Commander, and I knew that if I promised all of you, then I was personally 100% committed and could not walk it back – we had to deliver.

In a very budget constrained environment, and in advance of Programmed Funding, the fleet has supported adding a total of 50 additional skilled personnel to this activity in the last year – and that is just the start. We are continuing to grow this year and for the next few years.

This morning, Bobby Butler the Executive Director told me today there are another 60 sailors under orders who have not yet arrived. A year ago, the only shops that were left opened here were the Dive Locker, Gas Turbine Repair Shop, and a Shop to repair some Combat Systems.

Today, in addition to those, this activity has now reopened Shops for corrosion control, Paint and Sandblast; RHIB Boat repair, Flex Hose Repair, Outside Electric Repair, Inside Machine Shop, Valve Shop, Key and Lock Shop, Engraving Shop and Planning and Job Control. By end of the year, we expect to open facilities that will handle Water Tight Doors and Closures, Welder Brazer Qualification and Tool Issue. Yes, there's more. By 2012 we will add another 85 military and civilians, and the plan is to re-open Weld, Pipe, Shipfitter, Weight Test, Rigging, Diesel Engine, Heat Exchanger and Cooler, Outside Machine, Motor Repair, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, and Pump. We definitely are expanding and bringing back the needed facilities to properly support the needs of the fleet.

So, this is not about just a ceremony, but rather we are embarking on an important mission that recognizes the SIGNIFICANT revolution that has happened in how the Navy views the importance of Surface Ship Maintenance. We fully recognize that we can not build our way to a 313 ship Navy. In fact, over 70% of the 313 ship Navy we need in 2020 we already own. The Navy's best investment is to properly care for these ships to ensure they achieve their full service lives. No longer will we pay "lip service" to the surface Ship Class maintenance plan, rather, we are committed to performing Surface Maintenance with technical rigor and discipline and budgeting the required resources to ensure readiness today and for the long term. Just like we have historically done for submarines and Nuclear Aircraft Carriers.

Let me take a moment and address the fine sailors here. In addition to the invaluable hands-on training provided to you, you will also have the opportunity to participate in the Navy Afloat Maintenance Training Strategy (NAMTS) program, which provides the means for Sailors in specific ratings to achieve journeyman level certification in these skills during their assignment to IMAs. The NAMTS program includes training for Enginemen (EN), Machinist's Mates (MM), Electrician's Mates (EM), Gas Turbine System Technicians (GSM), and Hull Maintenance Technicians (HT). This training will be invaluable to you during your Navy career and in your later post-Navy career. Learn as much as you can everyday here!

Or the past three years, we at NAVSEA have been laser focused on working with the Fleet to get Surface Maintenance budgets, staffing, engineering, and execution pointed fair and true. The debate on the way forward is over and we are moving out on a multi-faceted plan and we are accountable to the Fleet Commanders and the CNO to show solid results – discipline, rigor, first time quality, and a steady improvement in the material readiness of our Surface Fleet. RADM Dave Gale as Commander of the Navy RMC's and Mr Bobby Butler his Executive Director, and Ms Bilyana Anderson representing RADM Jim McManamon of NAVSEA's SEA 21 organization are here today. They have been the spark plugs that have gotten us here and who everyday are leading the National execution of our plan– I want to publicly state how lucky we are to have them in their jobs

at this important time in the Navy's history. I also want to say how gratifying it was to tour work aboard USS FARAGUT this morning with the CO, CDR Daley. As we walked through the ship he was talking about many of the new initiatives that we have put in place like the TSRA process – Total Ship Readiness Assessment and the CCAT team – Corrosion Control Assist Team and showing me the great work his sailors have been doing with CCAT assistance and training. I'm a skeptic by nature. If I can't see it I don't believe it's real. Walking FARRAGUT really drove home that our efforts are real and making a difference.

To CAPT Cook, Dave Philips and the leadership here at the IMA in Mayport and to all the fine sailors and civilians who serve here I first want to say how proud I am

to have you on the NAVSEA team doing what you do for our Navy every day. I also want to stress the awesome responsibility we have been given. WE have asked for a significant amount of the Nations treasure to fund our Maintenance Initiatives. The Navy has delivered and is providing what WE asked for in a very tough budget environment. We have the responsibility to use this increased funding and staffing to make a real difference and improvement in the material condition of our ships. Whether it's work done organically by the IMA or work we contract to the private sector and we oversee, we must have the discipline and rigor to get it right. In short, the Navy expects us to show we are making a difference – we are accountable. This is our time to perform.

I have strong faith in each and every one of you.
Active Duty, Reservists, Civilians, and Contractors.

Together, we must hold ourselves to the highest standards of quality, safety and reliability. We owe it to our war fighters to ensure our ships are the world's greatest; able to win any fight – and as our CNO says, he never wants it to be a fair fight! Ladies and gentlemen of this fine activity, let me make this perfectly clear -- sustained combat readiness **REQUIRES** sustained material readiness – we are counting on you!

Thank you for joining me here this morning. I stand with you in the way ahead and look forward to your hard work in ensuring that America's Navy remains #1 in the world. Good luck and God Bless America. Thank you.