

**Chief of Naval Operations  
Adm. Jonathan Greenert  
Delivers remarks at the U.S. Fleet Forces Command Change of Command  
14 September 2012**

**Admiral Greenert:** Okay, John. That was nice and light. I appreciate that. Thank you very much.

Before I get started, you're '73, I'm a '75er that was awful. Would you please stand and acknowledge your classmate? Will '73 stand up? Would you? [Applause]. Thank you.

Thank you, John. I appreciate the kind introduction. I have deep and honest respect and admiration for you as well.

This is a bittersweet event for me. I have a friend and confidante that I'll talk to in just a minute, but it's a celebration of what John Harvey has done, what we have done in the last three years, and it's a farewell, but it's a promotion as the Gortney's join us and a welcome to them. A new four star. That's always pretty cool, don't you think? Very cool.

It's great to return to the waterfront. My venue is the Abe Lincoln, the Bainbridge, the Helena and of course if you can see this you're too close at sea, but it is magnificent to be at the waterfront. Always special. I see Sailors, I see ships, I see submarines. I don't see slides and I don't see -- well, it doesn't matter. All that other stuff. And it's great to be back on the Harry S. Truman because, well, I am from the Class of '75 and the Truman, by cracky, that's been a second home here. We've been here for all kinds of things. Class stuff. As John mentioned, we changed command here. It's kind of becoming a Fleet Forces Command site.

I'll tell you, the coffee's good and the food is good. And if you won't perform like you did whenever John and I transitioned here and attacked the food like a flock of locusts, it will be an amazing thing to see. It was very wonderful. Very wonderful.

It's great to be back in Hampton Roads. Darleen and I cherish our regrettably only two years. We've been in the Navy so long and it took us so long to get to Norfolk, having spent most of our career in the Pacific, but this area defines fleet concentration area. The whole community is all in. Mayor Fraim, Mayor Sessoms, Mayor Wright and all of you civic leaders I thank you very much for what you do for our men and women who served on here. You take care of their families. I can't say enough about it. They love being down here and I thank you very much.

And it's particularly important what we've done this year, and George Zembellas, I'm sorry, it is the 200<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the War of 1812. I had to say it one more time, old buddy. It will get over eventually, but not for a while. You are a close ally, a trusted ally, the very closest ally, and I look forward to working with you for continued years ahead.

So many of the family, as we mentioned before, and with the significance of this position, this is the number one fleet position we have in the Navy. You can see symbolically right there the importance of family to these fine leaders that we address today. Family is everything to them.

The Harvey family representing across the line a cadre of service. You all cannot deny each other, by the way. It's amazing the striking resemblance you all have. Represented, of course, by Mary Ellen, the leader. The leader of the Harvey household in my view. Sarah, very nice to see you for the first time. Fortunately you have a lot of your mother's good lucks in you. And David, as I understand, lives in China. Is that right? And serves in a different capacity there.

Dr. John Harvey. I want to thank you on behalf of the Navy for loaning us your son. Now as I probably expect somewhere around 1969 you said John, cut your muttonchop sideburns, quite listening to that rubbish on the music -- Crosby, Stills & Nash, the Beatles, the Dave Clark 5, it goes on and on. And remember -- that was the summer of love. Yeah, I'm sure you remember that. You liar. [Laughter]. I'm just kidding. Anyway, Dr. Harvey, we are going to return your son to you here shortly. I would say he is used, but we don't say that. Let's just say he's previously owned. He's all yours in about an hour and a half. And Mary Ellen, I'm sure you're dying for that, thank you.

And the Gortney family led, in my view, by Sherry. A terrific family. Sir, it's wonderful for your service in Korea. William Gortney. Thank you very much. I can see where your son gets his spunk.

I'd like to take a minute to of course talk about somebody, recognize a little bit of leadership and service. Somebody who's had over three decades of support to our Navy and to public service in general. I'm talking about Mary Ellen Harvey. She has really been the wind under John's wings for this long time. John, who writes so many love sonnets, has described her as follows: She consists of courage, humor, patience, and an infinite capacity for unconditional love. I think that's wonderful. They're a marvelous couple and he is deeply in love.

Mary Ellen has touched us in so many ways. Of course she's the mother of two and has done a magnificent job. But she's also been a leader and a mentor throughout their career and of course here in the Hampton Roads area. In the Tidewater Officers Spouse Association, a continuum of resource education which is the support we give to our fleet family service centers. And of course the Surface Officer Spouse Association. In short, Mary Ellen represents Navy spouses supporting a military career.

There's no command and control for these spouses, this cadre of wonderful people. We have no charter for them. They have no ego. I think it is captured very nicely at the Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C. underneath a bronze that says, "Those who wait also serve, the Navy spouse." And Mary Ellen, I want to thank you very much for all you've done for John, for all you've done for your Navy, for all you've done for your nation for so long.

Could you please stand and allow us to give you a round of applause? [Applause].

Mary Ellen has a spouse. I basically grew up as a flag officer with John Harvey. I really didn't know him much at all before we met when we reported as part of the transition team for Admiral Vern Clark somewhere around the year 2000.

Immediately I admired the guts, the candor, and the professionalism of John. He was different from the rest of us who were sort of a little more hesitant than I think John was. John brought us all even in that team and through his entire flag career, he brought us back to understanding what ethos is and its significance. The values that we serve. The concept of ultimate trust that we put in our people. And really the essence of being a commissioned officer in the United States Navy.

I consider John a partner, a shipmate, and I've consulted with him often in my entire time as a flag officer.

John mentioned my Sailing Directions. We talked about it. I tell you ladies and gentlemen, after a year in office I am absolutely convinced we are on the right track. The Sailing Directions are sound. They will be our foundation for sure for year two and for the rest of my time in office.

We've got budget issues to deal with, for sure. World events are pretty squirrely right now and they're changing all the time, but I will tell you the six words that he mentioned and I will repeat them, will lead us through this. I'm talking to the wardroom to the ready room and to our board room. We have to think of warfighting first. That is what we owe the American people. That is how they will judge us. We are all about warfighting first.

We have to operate forward. That is where our Navy has been most effective through its entire career. That's how we're going to get the most out of our Navy, to operate forward.

We have to be ready. We have to have confident and we have to have proficient Sailors who understand their business and are good at what they do. We will organize them, we'll train them, and we'll equip them properly. That I guarantee you above anything else that we adjust in, that we invest in.

Our Sailors will adapt. They've always adapted. John Harvey adapted, I adapted, Bill Gortney adapted, all of you did, and we'll adapt again. Guided by those three tenets that I just mentioned. Adaptability is absolute in our service and it's the essence of being a Sailor. It's our ships and aircraft that also have to be adaptable. We have to do that to stay relevant and they have to be that way in order to take advantage of the technology that is out there today, so fast, moving so quickly and so readily available to us.

Take the nuclear carrier where we are today. You look around here, you go up on the flight deck and you get ready go to, you look across the way to the Abe Lincoln. In many ways it is definitely our most adaptable platform. You buy it, a little pricey. You buy, you pay once, you get half a decade of a platform to deliver capability. The Enterprise -- 50 years old, 50 years old. Built for the Soviet threat, early in that timeframe, and she employed the A-4, the A-6, the A-7, the F-4, the F-14, the S-3, you get the picture. She started out on paper charts and a bunch of

analog dials and vacuum tubes and things of that nature. Hell, Harvey even served on it. That's how long that thing's been around.

Today she serves in the Gulf of Oman. She's supporting Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. She is on the very front. She has it all. She flies 30 missions a day, has been all week. She employs the F/A-18 the Super Hornet, which is the best strike fighter in the world today. There's an example of it right over here. Look at it. She has digital charts and computers, she has the most advanced TacAir. That's pretty enduring and that's pretty darn adaptable.

The Harry Truman, this very ship and others, soon will host and will deploy unmanned strike aircraft. In a year we're going to demonstrate it on one of the carriers here out of Norfolk. Unmanned strike aircraft from an aircraft carrier. They said it couldn't be done. That's our future. That's the evolving air wing, the centerpiece of the strike arm of the United States Navy.

Today this adaptation that I mentioned to you requires a shorter period of time to get moving in the world we live in. We don't have time like we had to before, to bring technology to get it in. We're talking months, not years, and we have proven that this can be done.

Payloads. The things that we insert that bring this capability can be a real game-changer and a heck of a lot shorter time than building a new platform. We're proving it today over at Little Creek where we are taking patrol craft that have about 12 years left and there's a metamorphosis going on. They will be much more lethal and they will deploy to the Arabian Gulf right after that.

We have torpedoes which we found due to new changes in some threat weren't working right. They said we've got to buy new torpedoes. No. We just needed to upgrade the technology on the ones we have, and we did that.

We have unmanned drones flying from 25 year old frigates today, cutting edge in the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, the Arabian Sea, and the Indian Ocean. Getting the job done. And we have unmanned underwater vehicles operating off 25 year old minesweepers, getting the job done in about a third of the time that it would take when we had the minesweepers operating. You get the point.

That Hornet over there, the cutting technology of strike fighter, was a concept. Looked just like that, pretty much the same, in the '70s. So we had the A that came out in 1983. The C about 1987. And that, the E, just about ten years ago. That aircraft will be good with the right payload until 2027, about 50 years. We can do this.

The Helena, which is right over there, is a 25 year old submarine. '70s design. But we figured out the right payload, we figured out the right sonar, the right fire control system, the right weapons. I assure you, and we have empirical data, that submarine and its sister ships own the undersea domain. I have empirical data.

I think you get the point. Payload is the focus, not the platform. The platform is very expensive.

So I call on many of you industry leaders out there today to think about this. Help us out. I ask the fleet. We need your ideas. You were the ones that gave us the ideas on the patrol craft. You were the ones that gave us the ideas to improve mine countermeasure in a matter of months.

And we look to the fleet. Understand what is possible. Platforms that will accommodate future payloads. Look at payloads first that will bring us cutting edge technology. We need open minded innovative leaders to embrace that concept and get ready for that change.

Like John Harvey did when he was here. He recognized when change was needed and he made that change possible. You all took it from there.

I ask my flag wardroom to be bold in thought, to be confident in your approach and to be willing to be accountable for your actions. Those are the attributes that John Harvey exudes in everything he's done as I've watched him. He saw opportunity, he took action, we got results. He made the Fleet Forces Command, he made the fleet tangibly better during his tenure. He's turned around, with the help of many people, but he spearheaded the way, a long, nagging problem of surface fleet material condition. He's got us on the right course and speed. We have more work to do, but he's got us on the right course and speed. He has raised what I would call our professional psyche and he's kept us standards focused during his time.

So we're going to remember the old salt. Some of you look at this statue and say what a fine-looking young man. That's the old salt. I know what that's all about. If you ever looked like -- when did you ever look -- Never mind. It's a very nice statue, John.

This guy's full of energy, always industrious, steady hand on the tiller for almost four decades. Facts-based man who thinks what's the bottom line.

I think is there a vignette, is there anything recently that would just sort of grab the essence of what might remind you of John Harvey? I had two options. One is sure, the movie Battleship. That was him. I thought no, so let me give you a vignette because I just thought of this and that's always risky.

Back in the '80s you may recall we decided as we strove for a 600 ship Navy, we were going to recommission the battleships. So we had Missouri, we had Iowa, we had New Jersey, and we had Missouri. The New Jersey is steaming north -- let me rephrase that. We formed battleship strike groups. Battle ship battle groups I think at the time. They were led by a one or two star admiral.

So the New Jersey is steaming north off of the coast of New Jersey. And she's foggy. It's in the morning. About civil twilight. And Admiral Bluster comes up to the bridge, got a cup of coffee out of the galley. Sitting down -- by the way, there are two people in this. You figure out which one reminds you of Harvey. Admiral Bluster goes to the bridge, he's got a cup of coffee, sits down. And he's watching. The officer of the deck is looking off of the bow here -- the front of the ship for some of you -- off the bow and to the left and there's a light out there. The officer of the deck is staring at it. There's a conversation going on there. He's listening. What have we

got here? He said I've had this contact at here at bearing -- they're going north so this will be easy -- 340. So it's to the left of the bow, the port side. Okay, what's the story? Well, it hasn't changed bearing. It's the proverbial constant bearing, decreasing range.

So Admiral Bluster hears this kind of give and take on the radio. He said contact at my bearing 340, this is the Battleship New Jersey. I have you at 340. I am the privileged vessel. Request you give way.

Now in the rules of the road, whoever's on the right in this what would be a meeting situation has the right of way. Not unlike a stop sign. So the New Jersey has the right of way. They proceed.

They're proceeding along and nothing much is happening. The reply comes back, Battleship New Jersey, recommend you change course.

The Admiral hears that and says that's not right. So the officer of the deck does the same kind of exchange. Says we're the privileged vessel, recommend you change course.

The reply comes back from this contact. Recommend you change course.

That does it, Admiral Bluster can't take this. Grabs the phone and says, contact at 340, we are the privileged vessel. This is Admiral Bluster and I am directing you to change course.

There was some hesitation and a very quiet but somewhat confident voice came back and said well this is Petty Officer Littlejoy from the Cape May Lighthouse. I recommend you change course, New Jersey.

So there was a right rudder put on and things changed differently.

Facts based.

John, I wish you the best of luck in your new line of work. I hope you relax. Based on trends I see, I don't see that will be any time soon. Thank you very much.

Would you please join me here on the podium. We'd like to give you a token of our appreciation for your service.

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