

Rear Adm. Ken Fisher retires;

Succeeded as Deputy CINCPACFLT by Rear Adm. Willard



PH2 (AW/NAC) Keith DeVinney modified photo

Navy flag officers and Senior Executive Service (SES) civilians gathered to honor Rear Adm. Ken Fisher at his retirement ceremony Oct. 5. Front row (left to right): Rear Adm. (sel.) Jim Beebe, Rear Adm. James Allan, Rear Adm. Kirkland Donald, Rear Adm. Robert Willard, Rear Adm. D. H. Stone, Adm. Thomas Fargo, Rear Adm. Ken Fisher, Rear Adm. Jihn Costas, Rear Adm. Ann Rondeau, Rear Adm. R. T. Conway, Jr., Rear Adm. (sel.) Robert Moeller. Back row (left to right): Mr. Bill Ryzewic, Ms. Maureen Kleintop, Ms. Linda Newton and Mr. Mike Akin.

Story by Navy Region Public Affairs Photos by PH2 (AW/NAC) Keith DeVinney

Last Friday afternoon Sailors and civilians gathered in HSL-37's hangar at Marine Corps Base Hawaii to honor Rear Admiral Kenneth L. Fisher, USNR.

The ceremony formally marked his completion of more than 37-years of dedicated service to the United States Navy. Guests at the ceremony included members of Admiral Fisher's family (all of whom traveled from the mainland to attend), more than 20 active duty and retired flag and general officers, and several members of the local consular corps.

The outgoing Pacific Fleet Deputy and Chief of Staff explained his selection of the Kaneohe hangar for the ceremony by saying that most of the momentous events in his career had taken place in hangars on shore and in hangar bays of aircraft carriers at sea.

"I'm comfortable here, I'm at home with the airplanes around us," said Fisher. Furthermore, he told the audience that he wanted a simple ceremony, in a simple setting – a ceremony that would highlight people, show a little Navy tradition, and honor the American flag.

Fisher, a Minnesota native, had never even been in an airplane when a Navy recruiter contacted him during college. But after completing his degree at St. Cloud State University, he reported to Aviation Officers Candidate School and earned his coveted "Wings of Gold" in 1966.

A distinguished fighter pilot, Rear Adm. Fisher flew more than 250 combat missions during Vietnam, flying F-4 Phantoms off the decks of USS Enterprise (CVN 65) and USS America (CV 66). He remained on active duty until October 1973, when he affiliated with the Naval Reserve at NAS Dallas. Throughout his active duty and reserve flying career, Fisher flew a wide variety of naval aircraft, including: T-28s, T-34s, A-4s, F-4s, F-8s, F-9s, and F-11s.

When Admiral Fisher joined the Naval Reserve, he began flying as a commercial airline pilot in his "spare time." He initially flew Boeing 727s and 747s for Braniff International, but spent the majority of his civilian flying career with Southwest Airlines. He logged thousands of hours during his 17-year Southwest career, flying four different series models of the Boeing 737.

After an introduction by his Deputy, guest speaker Admiral Thomas B. Fargo, welcomed the guests to the "Fourth Annual Ken Fisher Retirement

Ceremony."

He explained that time and time again the Navy, and most recently the Pacific Fleet, had bid Rear Adm. Fisher farewell only to quickly recall him to fill critical billets at critical times.

Fargo paused, and said, "This is really it." Then almost as quickly as he made that definitive statement, he retracted those remarks – choosing instead more vague, almost legal jargon by saying, "the preponderance of evidence to date leads us to believe that this is it."

Adm. Fargo called Rear Adm. Fisher

Rear Adm. Fisher's flag assignments have included: Deputy, Maritime Defense Zone Atlantic; Deputy Commander, Naval Air Forces Atlantic; Deputy, Joint Task Force Southwest Asia (Operation Southern Watch); Reserve Deputy of Operations (J3), U.S. European Command; Deputy Director of Operations (J3) U.S. Space Command, and Commander, Readiness Command Region Ten.

Concluding his remarks, Adm. Fargo referred to his Deputy as "a consummate patriot, a war fighter, a diplomat, a skilled

miere of the motion picture "Pearl Harbor."

During Rear Adm. Fisher's remarks he took a short stroll through his career, but spent the majority of time talking about Sailors. He made it clear that in his book – "Sailors" is an all inclusive term, referring to officers and enlisted alike. Fisher said his goals as a senior reservist had been simple. He wanted to do what was right – what was right for our people and what was right for our Navy. He thanked the Navy civilians, and reminded everybody just how important they are to our mission. The admiral also took time to thank the local civilians for their support to him, and their support for all those who wear the uniform.

He concluded his remarks by saying: "It's all about the people. Look around you; we are a team of Sailors, Marines, and civilians. We are active duty and reservists. We are a team that won't be beaten. We stand for Honor, Courage, and Commitment."

And with that, the guests rose from their seats to give him a standing ovation.

After Rear Adm. Fisher reluctantly read his retirement orders, members of the CPF staff came forward to conduct the "Passing of the National Ensign" ceremony. The members of the staff represented the enlisted ranks and officer ranks from Ensign to Rear Admiral (lower half). While the CPF band played "My Country 'tis of Thee," the narrator read "Old Glory" – the words of an unknown author, and crisp salutes were rendered as the flag was carefully handed from Sailor to Sailor. The ceremony concluded with Rear Adm. Ann Rondeau passing the folded flag to the awaiting hands of Rear Adm. Fisher.

As the ceremony drew to a close, Rear Adm. Kirkland Donald read the time-honored narrative "Relieving the Watch." He reminded all those gathered that for 37 years our Shipmate stood the watch. He concluded by telling Rear Admiral Fisher "Shipmate, we have the watch."

Beyond a shadow of a doubt, the musical highlight of the ceremony was YN2 Jeffrey Crawford's singing of "God Bless the USA." Crawford's version of Lee Greenwood's patriotic ballad was nothing short of spectacular.

At the conclusion of the song and the well-deserved applause, six bells were sounded, "Rear Admiral, United States Naval Reserve – Retired, departing" was announced, the boatswain mate piped, and Rear Admiral Ken Fisher proudly saluted as he walked through the formation of honorary sideboys.



Adm. Thomas Fargo, Commander-in-Chief Pacific Fleet, presents a Presidential Citation to Rear Adm. Ken Fisher during Fisher's retirement ceremony at Marine Corps Base Hawaii Oct. 5.

the perfect example of the Navy's total force integration – highlighting the pivotal role reservists play in our Navy. He referred to him as the Pacific Fleet's own "Quick Reaction Force," able to deploy at a moment's notice for six hours or six months.

Rear Adm. Fisher began his association with CINCPACFLT in December 1996, when he reported as the command's Reserve Deputy and Chief of Staff. He subsequently returned to Hawaii for three additional tours – serving as the Deputy and Chief of Staff. His most recent tour began last August, with a "guaranty" that the assignment would not last longer than 6 months.

In addition to serving the Pacific Fleet,

manager, and above all a Leader." He said that Rear Admiral Fisher brought to the table what he valued most, "the ability to develop a plan and the fortitude to produce a high quality product."

Adm. Fargo presented Rear Admiral Fisher with the Distinguished Service Medal. The citation chronicled his pivotal role in one of the most demanding operational schedules imaginable for the world's largest naval command. In addition to the normal complexities with guiding the fleet staff, Fisher was praised for leading the team through a number of the most globally visible events on record: the Court of Inquiry following the Ehime Maru accident, the repatriation of the EP-3 crew from China, and the world pre-

Right: Rear Adm. Ken Fisher accepts a folded flag from Rear Adm. Ann Rondeau upon the conclusion of the "Passing of the National Ensign" ceremony.



Above: A shadow box encompasses Rear Adm. Ken Fisher's 37 year naval career.

Left: Rear Adm. Ken Fisher salutes as he passes through the honorary sideboys. Rear Admirals Conway, Costas, Donald, Rondeau, Stone, Willard, Winns and Capt. Bumgardner served as the sideboys at the Oct. 5 retirement ceremony.