**Chief of Naval Operations
Adm. Jonathan Greenert**

**Vice Admiral Anne E. Rondeau Retirement Remarks**

**11 April 2012**

**Admiral Greenert:** I’m proud to say I don’t need these, Anne. It’s all about surgery. Trust me.

Do you see how quickly Winnifeld ran out here? He said are you going to say anything about Rondeau? I said well, we served in the Western Pacific. He said, I’m out of here. So the other side of the International Date Line, that’s supposed to be embargoed.

Actually, I’m caught a little bit by surprise so I’m going to have to take this off the top of my head. What do I know about Anne?

Well, we’ve known each other for actually quite some time, and Anne has taught me so much through the years. I’ll mention a few things that really, really strike me. And I think what have I ever done for her? I think other than that time when we were in Hong Kong and I talked you out of getting that tattoo that says “In a binding commitment --“. She was so mad at me the next day. She said I’m going to put this in all my emails for the rest of my life. There wasn’t even email then, but she committed already. Other than that --

But my recollection of Anne was, she asked me the two hardest questions that I can ever remember, and at the time the question -- I was a captain working in the Pentagon in the Navy Department, and I was the programmer, and the code is 801, and that means nothing to many of you and that’s okay, but you’re just this person that gets all these factoids in your head and you go in and you try to figure out how to put a budget together. Basically you’ve got ten pounds’ worth of stuff and you stuff it in an eight pound bag or something like that.

So she came in with the Strategic Studies Group, a bunch of overrated captains. I was one once. They come in and they’ve got all this knowledge and she came in with her running mate Jody Jacob, who is a wonderful person, and they sat down and said why don’t you do your briefing? So I did. I was going this is the shipbuilding plan, aircraft, and so on. Anne said, one question here. Can you tell me how the Navy Working Capital Fund works? Now do any of you out there do a working capital fund? There are volumes -- Duncan, you don’t know how it works, and you did it for all your life. He was always in a Mercedes. That’s how the working capital fund --

But anyhow, I digress. I said who is this person? This Anne Rondeau. I said well, I’ll never work with or for her again, that’s for sure. So I report to my first flag job in Guam and they said who did you anger, your first job Guam? We’re in there, and it was tough. This was in the late ‘90s. I was kind of a regional commander. Now in Navy parlance that’s a very difficult job. In fact there’s one of our heroes, Archie Clemons, who was the CINCPAC Fleet at the times said you know, the regional commanders, you know what you have to look forward to next year? A lesser budget. And it just goes on. And on every Friday he said there’s only two more working days until Monday. So we were getting by.

Well, in Guam, we weren’t sure if we wanted to keep Guam. What was the Navy presence going to be on Guam? And Anne was in charge of the entire Pacific, all the bases, really all the facilities. So she did my budget for me.

So the question she asked me was, Greenert, how come you can’t balance your budget? I said well, I don’t know, ma’am. And by the way, they sent me, my Chief of Staff was Captain Jody Jacob. I’m not making this up. This is true. So Jody was there helping me out. She said look, Rondeau, she can be bought. Here’s the deal. I said I’m in.

We tried orchids, we tried leis, we tried macadamia nuts, pineapple, aloha shirts -- have you ever seen her aloha shirts? I bought them. That’s how old they are. This is mid ‘90s, late ‘90s actually.

I said Anne, I’m desperate out here. We can’t get the grass cut, the exchange is out of milk, we don’t have enough meat in the exchange. She says all right, I’m going to send you goat. It will take care of the lawn, milk it, -- We got by.

Truth be told, actually I called Anne and I said I’ve got some budgetary problems out here. It’s pretty serious. She got on a plane. No one before her would do this. My relief, same thing. She got on a plane, came out and spent a week on the island, went around and looked at everything. And truth be told she went to the boss, money was tight. She got us some money, the right things were done, and that’s Anne Rondeau. That’s really the Anne Rondeau that you all know, that I know, and that’s really the leader that we know and love.

I want to talk a little bit about the War of 1812 and what it means to your Navy. Today, this year and for about 18 months, we’re commemorating the 200th Anniversary, if you will, of the war. Actually it’s supposed to kick off next week at New Orleans, and I walked around, and there’s more 1812 stuff here than we’re probably going to have in New Orleans, so I guess we’re starting today. What the heck.

If you’re in the South Atrium, look at the displays. This is a microcosm of Anne. This is a history buff, an educator. Page three in your program, page three on, you’ll see that. And you know what? It is literally part of her DNA because she is the fifth generation niece of First Lieutenant O’Banning, United States Marine Corps who was the first Barbary War hero back in the early 1800s. He was awarded the first Mamluke Sword in 1825. That is the sword that United States Marine Corps officers wear today. The fifth generation niece. It is in her DNA.

1812 is when I believe our Navy was reborn. We were born in 1775, but we sort of gave everything away and said we didn’t really need this Navy, we’re just going to -- We’ve got good economic times, things will be fine.

But in 1812 this small coastal fleet was sort of put together. We were really overmatched by the Royal Navy. How overmatched were we? There were about 600-700 ships they could put to sea. They were distracted by the French, sure, but they sent a lot of ships over here. We had 20 ships, and 7 of them under repair at the time. But we were better than they expected. Why were we better than they expected?

First of all, we had commanders that were bold and they were innovative and they adapted in the face of adversity.

Second, we had crews that were confident, they were proficient, and they were especially proficient in gunnery, in seamanship, and they practiced, practiced, practiced. They trained.

Third, the ships were well built. The technological advantage back to then. They were resilient. That’s where the term Old Ironsides came from, some of you remember, the Constitution.

Lastly I would mention in the parlance we use today, if you look at the situation of the Royal Navy in those days, they were big, they were hollow. The problems they had, we would call a hollow Navy, a hollow force.

So we learned a lot of lessons from the War of 1812. We, the Navy.

Number one, we’ve got to maintain warfighting first. Those frigates were good, our frigates were good. They delivered firepower, they had capability to get out there, and they were resilient. When you can deliver the fire power first, it’s like you’re going to win.

Today we’ve got to deliver durable ships today and capability out around the world. That’s our job. We’ve got to address the tensions in the Arabian Gulf and we’ve got to focus on the Pacific and bring along our allies.

The second lesson, the Navy’s got to operate forward. That’s where it’s got to be to be effective. And we couldn’t in the War of 1812. We were unable to do that. We were a coastal navy. We could not bring the nation an off-shore option. We paid for it.

Today we will continue to protect the freedom of navigation. We’ll be in the maritime crossroads. That’s where we need to be. We need to be able to get to Malacca, to Gibraltar, and to Hormuz as the case may be, and ensure that they maintain them open and ready to go.

Third, we have to be ready to fight. As John Paul Jones said, men mean more than guns in the way you run a ship. It’s true today. It’s people, it’s all about our people, and they have to be ready today. Readiness over fleet capacity no matter what.

So going forward, today we need trailblazers, you can fill in whatever you want, leaders. People who are not afraid to act. People who are willing to be bold, confident and accountable. That’s what I ask from our people, and that’s what we need today.

We need people like Captain David Fordham who was 32 years old, the first individual to capture a British warship in the War of 1812.

Captain Thomas McDunn, 29 years old, the hero of Lake Champlain.

And many of you have heard of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry. Twenty-seven years old fought in the Battle of Lake Erie.

We need trailblazers. We need trailblazers like Anne Rondeau. People who are willing to stand up when the have the opportunity and say I’ll do that. People willing to say it’s not about me, it’s about the unit, it’s about the people that work for me.

Because of Anne we have folks out there today, we have Norah Tyson, the first female Strike Group Commander. We have Michelle Howard who commanded an Expeditionary Strike Group, and Anne Phillips is doing that today, commanding an Expeditionary Strike Group. There are people like Carol Pottinger who serves as a three star admiral down at NATO in Norfolk.

Anne always wanted to be a professional. She wanted to be a leader. A Shipmate. You have been that for all these years.

You’ve taught me a lot. I’m so honored to serve with you.

I have one thing -- Anne, I kind of like this quote and I’d like to present it to you. A little off script here, but that’s all right. It’s John F. Kennedy’s statement. He said, “Any person who may be asked in this century what they did to make their life worthwhile can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction -- I served in the United States Navy.”

Shipmate, I’d like to present this to you.

Thank you for your service and if you’re ready, we’ll go ashore.

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