

CNIC Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

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By Navy Installations Command Public Affairs

WASHINGTON D.C. – Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) celebrated Hispanic Heritage month with a lively ceremony Oct. 10 at CNIC headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Opening remarks were given by Cmdr. Darian Caldwell, CNIC's, N14 Program Manager. The national anthem was performed a capella by Naomi Howell, a civilian employee with CNIC's Shore Support Team. Capt. Johnny Poole, CNIC's command chaplain gave the invocation followed by the introduction of the guest speaker by Commander, Navy Installations Command, Vice Adm. William French.



Tony TorresRamos, director of the Office of Civilian Human Resources, Department of the Navy, was the guest speaker at a Hispanic Heritage event held at Commander, Navy Installations Command. Mr. TorresRamos reflected on his upbringing in Puerto Rico and spoke to the audience about the importance of commitment, passion and making a difference. (U.S. Navy Photo by Sandra Niedzwiecki)

“Before I introduce our guest speaker, I'd like to say what a great time it is to do this event as we celebrate our Navy's birthday this weekend,” said French. “Happy Birthday to everyone.”

Guest speaker for the event was Tony TorresRamos, director for the Office of Civilian Human Resources. With 36 years in the federal service and more than 23 years on active duty as a Marine, TorresRamos spoke about his upbringing in Puerto Rico and his desire to make a difference.

“I was restless and knew in my heart and my mind that I wanted to do more,” said TorresRamos. “So what did I do? I joined the Marine Corps.”

TorresRamos focused on the importance of commitment, passion and making a difference. And while incorporating anecdotes about his background and experiences as a Marine prior to his civilian career, TorresRamos emphasized being true to oneself and stepping outside the comfort zone.

“I encourage you to take the hard opportunities. To challenge yourself if we are going to meet the increasing demand of our commands and in our country for the future, we must go outside the comfort zone,” said TorresRamos.

More than 100 guests from the CNIC headquarters staff attended the event held in the command headquarters building atrium. Throughout the remarks, laughter resonated across the atrium as TorresRamos' injected humor into his remarks which kept the audience on their toes.

“He was a great speaker and very humorous,” said Logistics Specialist First Class (AW/SW) Davin Lowe. “I really enjoyed myself. I thought it was awesome. It was very engaging.”

This month's theme -- Hispanics: A legacy of history, a present of action, and a future of success -- reflects the unique

experiences and contributions Hispanics have made to our nation.

“Your contribution is something greater than all of us in the room,” said TorresRamos. “To stand up for what you believe in but willing to yield or bend when the time demands it, is so important.”

TorresRamos added that to keep learning is what helps us to become better at our jobs.

“I ask you to demonstrate moral courage, to be true and to serve with integrity of purpose and action.” He went on to say that learning new ways of doing things by including diversity within the workforce contributes greatly to the mission. “Don’t be afraid to explore, to take ownership and responsibility for our inclusion.”

President Lyndon Johnson started Hispanic Heritage Week in 1968 and in 1988 President Ronald Reagan expanded it to cover a 30-day period beginning Sept. 15 and ending Oct. 15. National Hispanic Heritage Month celebrates the anniversary of the independence of five Latin American countries on Sept. 15: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico celebrates their day of independence on Sept. 16 and Chile on Sept. 18.

A number of Hispanic Americans have played pivotal roles in naval history. Edward Hidalgo was the first Hispanic to serve as the Secretary of the Navy from 1979-81.

“Hispanic Heritage month is a time to educate others about the Hispanic culture,” said Wil Santiago, CNIC’s Equal Employment Specialist from Ponce, Puerto Rico. “I think that is really what it’s about, to get people to understand and appreciate different cultures, to bring inclusion to the workspace.”

After the ceremony, guests were invited to take part in a Hispanic Heritage food-tasting to include piononitos, carne fria and quesadillas.