

CNIC Holds Change of Command

10/24/14

By Sandra Niedzwiecki, Navy Installations Command Public Affairs

WASHINGTON,— More than 500 military and civilian personnel attended the change of command ceremony for Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) on Friday, Oct. 24 at Admiral Leutze Park on the Washington Navy Yard. Vice Adm. Dixon R. Smith relieved Vice Adm. William D. French as the fifth commander since the command's inception in 2003.



The ceremony included full gun salutes, musical performances by the Navy's Ceremonial Band, march on of the troops and parading of the colors by the Navy's Ceremonial Guard, and an a cappella rendition of the national anthem sung by Naomi Howell, one of CNIC's civilian employees. A special contribution to the ceremony was the participation of side boys by former submarine Sailors with whom French served during his first command, USS Spadefish.

"From these men," said French, "I've learned the trade of going to sea in submarines. Gentlemen thank you for finding your full dress blues, putting them all together and being here today."

Guest speaker for the ceremony was Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Jonathan Greenert.

"I'm honored to be here to take some time to speak about a person who has had a long and distinguished career, who has dedicated the last two and half years to CNIC, and who is an extraordinary leader," said Greenert. "Bill French has sustained the fleet, enabled the fighter and supported the family. He has revolutionized the Navy shore enterprise."

Responsible for 52,000 military and civilian personnel, 11 Regions and 69 installations worldwide, French received the Defense Distinguished Service Medal for his accomplishments including the attainment of the Homeport Ashore initiative, the development of governance and oversight for the Overseas Drinking Water program, and efforts to align CNIC to support fleet requirements.

The ceremony also recognized French's retirement after more than three-decades of exemplary service to the Navy.

"Today I want to thank many people," said French. "One of the many thankful parts of this job is you get the opportunity to work with so many different people both inside the Navy, fellow services and support organizations that take care of our sailor and families outside the Navy."

French thanked his family, fellow shipmates and mentors throughout his career, and welcomed Smith to CNIC recognizing the talent and commitment of Smith's new staff.

Prior to the ceremony, Smith was promoted to Vice Admiral to serve as Commander, Navy Installations Command. He is the first former installation commanding officer to lead CNIC.

Smith shared his enthusiasm about taking on greater responsibility to lead the Navy's shore enterprise.

"CNO, thank you for your kind words," he said. "I'm honored and deeply humbled by your faith and confidence for this opportunity for continued service to our Navy and our nation."

A native of Connecticut, Smith was commissioned through the Naval Academy in 1983. He was designated as a surface warfare officer in 1985 and then went on to serve aboard five surface combatants and held five shore assignments. Later in Smith's career he went on to lead shore installations as the commander for three Regions including Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific, Navy Region Hawaii, Navy Region Southwest, and most recently, Region Mid Atlantic prior to arriving in Washington, D.C.

Smith thanked French for a smooth transition and emphasized his commitment to service through action.

"I'm happy to report that as I assume this watch, that thanks to Vice Admiral Bill French, CNIC is on course, focused on fully supporting CNOs tenets of warfighting first, operating forward, and being ready," said Smith. "CNIC will maintain that course."

Smith offered that he is excited to join the CNIC family.

"I consider it a privilege to lead and serve you," he said. "To those who serve, the only reason we at CNIC exist is to support you. You have my promise and commitment to do just that."

Leading a world-class enterprise, CNIC is responsible for managing shore installation support for the Navy's fleet, fighter and family under the Chief of Naval Operations.

For more news and information about CNIC, visit <http://www.cnic.navy.mil/> or <http://www.facebook.com/NavyInstallations/>.