

NACO'S BANQUET REMARKS

Good evening and what a perfect evening it is! Every face I see is a memory, some more perfect than others but all so very good. Tonight is a celebration and recognition of the culmination of what **YOU, THE MEMBERSHIP** have accomplished over the past 2 years.

My personal congratulations to my friend, shipmate and partner over the past 2 years, COMO Steven Budar and the newly elect bridge, for I know they will do great things and further the Coast Guard Auxiliary over the next 2 years.

Yesterday, I gave my report at our National Board Meeting that outlined the accomplishments of our National Board and dedicated staff. We talked about where we started just 2 short years ago, how far we have come and what yet need to be done. We talked about the importance of "Staying the Course", that **"WE"** collectively have charted. I need not reiterate any of this tonight.

Instead, I want to take the opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of the many members of our team, whom without their contributions and dedication, we could not have been as successful.

Sir Isaac Newton credited his scientific break throughs to the work of those that had gone before him in the field of science by saying, "If I have seen further it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants."

So it is only fitting that we acknowledge the contributions of our past National Commodores and their colleagues. Each have made key contributions to the Auxiliary and set the stage for continued mission excellence. Each of them has shared insights on the Auxiliary and how we should plan for the future. Therefore, it can truly be said: **"if WE have seen further, it is only by standing upon the shoulders of these giants"**. So, Henry, Joe, Ev, Viggo and Bill, I extend to you my personal gratitude and thanks for all that you have done and continue to do.

Next I would like to acknowledge the contributions of our National Executive Committee and our Executive Staff. These members have helped to chart our course for the past two years and, I hope, well into the future. Their continuing good humor and willingness to roll up their sleeves has been remarkable. I sometimes wish that our membership could have listened in on our meetings and monthly conference calls—they truly would have been proud of our outstanding leadership team, as I have been.

The same can be said of our wider leadership team, the District Commodores, Vice Commodores and the Directors of Auxiliary. They have played a key role in helping to forge our strategic plans at the national level and to formulate sound plans at the District level. To each of them, thank you.

There is a Spanish proverb which states to the effect, “that success has a thousand fathers, while failure dies an orphan”. Well, I’m proud to acknowledge the many fathers and mothers of our success—our National Staff. I have always been and remain very impressed with the quality, energy, and commitment of this staff and hope that our new bridge will take advantage of these highly competent, professional individuals.

I want to thank Captain Smith and his staff for all of their continued support. With all of the changes over the past 2 years, within the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary, (AuxMan, OPS Policy, Congressionals, the day-to-day issues in general), they truly were and remained Semper Paratus.

To the Coast Guard Flag Corp, I thank you for your acceptance, your partnership, your council and most importantly, for your friendship.

And how can I not thank our membership, **for without them**, we would have accomplished little. For it is they at the deck plate, that implement and executed our missions in support of the Coast Guard and the Recreational Boaters. To use one of Admiral Allen’s key terms, they symbolize, Mission Excellence.

Lastly, **I want to thank my family, specifically my wife Maria for allowing me to fulfill a dream.** I thank you for the understanding and the sacrifices; the missed family events; not being able to spend as much time with our children and grandchildren as we would have liked to; the travel; missed dinners and late nights working on various projects. Most of all, thank you for your continued support for allowing me to do what I wanted, **to focus and to contributed to the best of my ability, to the greatest volunteer organization anywhere.** Dear, you are truly one of a kind and I love ya!

To take a quote from Admiral Collins, “Great organizations don’t just happen; they evolve from sound visionary leadership, willingness to change what needs to be changed and the commitment to safeguard those guiding principles most critical to organization success”. I firmly believe this is true of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and each of you here tonight should be proud of what you have accomplished.

In closing, I wish you could all have a life as lucky as mine; that you can wake up one morning and say, I do not want anything more. Furthermore, I want you to promise me something, that you will live each day to its fullest and have no regrets!

Again, I thank you, for allowing me the privilege and honor to serve **YOU**, the members of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.