



## Chief of Naval Operations Keynotes Monterey's Annual Submarine Ball

Title	Chief of Naval Operations Keynotes Monterey's Annual Submarine Ball
Item Type	Article
Authors	Public Affairs Office, Naval Postgraduate School
URI	<a href="https://hdl.handle.net/10945/53315">https://hdl.handle.net/10945/53315</a>
Publisher	Naval Postgraduate School
Date Issued	2017-04-25
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Download date	2026-04-14 10:58:00
Link to Item	<a href="https://hdl.handle.net/10945/53315">https://hdl.handle.net/10945/53315</a>

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*U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Lewis Hunsaker*

### **Chief of Naval Operations Keynotes Monterey's Annual Submarine Ball**

*By MC1 Lewis Hunsaker*

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John M. Richardson addresses attendees of the 117th Submarine Birthday Ball in the Naval Postgraduate School's Barbara McNitt Ballroom, April 22.

"It's a pleasure to be here. It's really a pleasure to be out of Washington, D.C.," Richardson opened with a smile.

"Of all the places to be, this is a wonderful spot to share a very special night with all of you," he continued. "It's like being in a family. Everyone comes back and you get that terrific feeling, rekindling old memories over a nice meal."

Richardson thanked various distinguished guests in attendance, and offered a special thanks to NPS faculty for the global impact they impart on the force. He then continued with the focus of his presentation for the ball, discussing how the force has changed from generation to generation over the years.

"If you go back 117 years, this was our first generation. This is a generation of pioneers with the purpose of doing very fundamental things. We needed to figure out how to get a ship made of metal, full of people, to submerge, and then surface again on command while keeping everyone alive in the process," said Richardson.

It took about 40 years, but all these requirements came together in the late 1930s to early 1940s with the Gato-class submarine, he continued.

"Many of these pioneers gave their lives for this endeavor," said Richardson. "The Gato-class submarine came together just in time. On December 7, 1941 everything changed ... On that day, the order came down to execute

unrestricted submarine warfare. Throughout the submarine force, commanding officers looked at the message and said, 'What do I do with this?'"

The submarine force was unprepared for this order, Richardson continued.

"We had been too narrow in our thinking. We didn't think about nighttime service attacks. We didn't think about going into harbors and attacking there. We didn't even think to test the weapons. So, we started World War II well behind in our thinking and in our systems," he said.

This, he noted, paved the way for the second generation, the warfighters.

"[The warfighter generation] made up for it," Richardson said. This group got their act together quickly, in about three years, troubleshooting multiple problems, and at the same time, forming a "new generation of commanding officers with new weapons, new tactics, and they were amazingly effective."

"At the end of WWII, the submarine force comprised about six percent of the U.S. Navy, and had sunk about 55 percent of the enemy's tonnage," Richardson said proudly.

The warfighters generation built on what the pioneer generation had accomplished, and then they turned their knowledge over to the third generation, the 'cold warriors.'

"With this generation, we had a revolution in technology with the advent of nuclear propulsion ... This changed everything about submarines. We could literally stay underwater essentially forever. We lived in the oceans for long periods of time," said Richardson. "Nuclear propulsion gave rise to a whole new generation of sciences that we still study here at the [Naval] Postgraduate School."

During this time even more tactics emerged, Richardson said, along with the quietest and newest classes of submarines.

"As before, nothing came off the plate. We took the work of the pioneers, we took the work of the warfighters, the cold warriors and added on to that ... It's getting more and more complex," said Richardson. "Which brings us to the fourth generation, and I'm not sure what to call them."

The Navy's senior officer then noted that it was up to the current generation of submariners to define their own generation. But, he added, there are some characteristics that cross all generations of the Navy's silent service.

"We demand you to learn the lessons of the past and be better than we were. So, when the fight comes we will not be unprepared. You will be trained and equipped and ready in every respect to fight and win," Richardson concluded.

4/25/17