

Chief 49 visits Chief 35

By RADM Dan McKinnon, SC, USN (Ret.), Columnist



Left to right: RADM (ret) Bill Morris, RADM Pete Stamatopolous, RADM (ret) Dan McKinnon, RADM (ret) Ted Walker.

In June, I hosted a lunch at Vinson Hall in McLean, Virginia, where **Ted Walker** is a resident. It was an opportunity for **Pete Stamatopolous** to bring Ted up to date on what is happening in our Navy as well as exchange memories. With us was **Bill Morris**, who many will remember as the Navy flag officer known for helping walk the Navy through the 1991 publicly embarrassing contract cancellation minefield of the A-12 Avenger aircraft program, and subsequent procurement of the F/A-18E/F aircraft.

They should rename the Super Hornet stabilizer for him. It was fun to share history. Pete explained today's challenges and efforts to take his Corps and Command (he also goes by "Com") and extend its influence and professionalism down into all aspects of Navy material readiness, from shops and store-rooms at sea, to overhaul and repair at the four shipyards and six fleet readiness centers. The Navy Supply Corps created the military supply chain after WWII, long before the phrase "Supply Chain" became capitalized and took on commercial elegance. No reason why the Corps of today should not own it all. Pete's command leadership style revolves around a management system where each day of the week he meets with those responsible for a chunk of his empire, pulls it apart, and puts it back together again. His three elder luncheon companions are proud of the respect he holds in the E-Ring.

Ted recalled how so much of his career was in the nuclear submarine Navy where he held positions of responsibility from Lieutenant Commander, as a first squadron SUPO, through Flag rank. In the Pentagon, he helped program the Submarine Force. In the Fleet, he ensured its readiness. The post Navy legacy of this "Distinguished Graduate" can be found from a library in Vinson Hall, to the Ship's Store at the Navy Memorial. Both bear his name. Think books and gedunk.

Pete and Bill discovered a shared Greek affinity that was not mythology. Pete recounted the arrival almost 120 years ago of his ancestors through the port of New York. As a Line Lieutenant assigned as Planning Officer to the Naval Communications Station at Nea Makri, Greece, Bill talked about meeting a young girl who spoke fluent Greek and French. With the assistance of our embassy, he hired her to help deal with farmers who had problems with Navy antennas. She had problems with muddy shoes when sloshing through the fields. They were not ruby red shoes, but she was from Kansas. They married and it was away from Athens, Greece and on to Athens, Georgia. Problem solved.

With us at lunch were two young officers, Commander **Owen Morrissey** and Lieutenant **Rico Castaneda**. Brought to prop up a current Chief, and check sea story veracity of old Chiefs, they sat quietly, hopefully with iphone recorders turned off.

I could not help but think about generations of professionalism. Also coming to mind was a favorite line from Alfred Lord Tennyson's, "Morte d' Arthur". "The old order changeth, yielding place to new. And God fulfills Himself in many ways."