



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

**SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER
TRANSFORMATION**

SACT REMARKS to

ALL HANDS

V.ADM GROOMS' retirement

NORFOLK, 15 June 2015

Général d'armée aérienne Paloméros



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[Admirals, Generals, Ladies and Gentlemen]

As many of you, too many of you will leave soon, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you and wish you the best for your future.

Together, we have achieved a lot on our demanding transformation endeavour and you must be proud of what you have accomplished for our Alliance.

You have delivered qualitative works to improve NATO's military credibility, readiness and interoperability; you have paved the way for the future while insuring the indispensable support to current operations.

Thanks to your efforts, I'm sure that our men and women will be better trained, better equipped and better prepared to work and fight together, to face the challenging demand for peace and security in a disturbed 21st century.

Today, I would like to recognize one of ACT's great leader, a man who have brought so much to this command, to NATO, to his country, DCOS Capability Development Vice Admiral Grooms, who is both leaving ACT and retiring at the end of the week.

Admiral Grooms has greatly honoured his country, the United States, during his 35 years of service, and especially during the last two years while instilling momentum and dynamism in the Transformation of the Alliance.



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Bruce, Saint-Exupery wrote that *"it is not because things are difficult that we don't dare, it's because we don't dare that they are difficult"*.

As a natural-borne leader, you have constantly been demonstrating this rare quality of a commander, who dares, who is not afraid of the unknown, working hard to reduce uncertainty, in order to ensure full and shared success with your subordinates.

Bruce, you were born in Cleveland, Ohio. This is a land of great pioneers and adventurers, in the air with the Wright Brothers, or in space with Neil Armstrong, this is as well a land of great military leaders.

You responded to the call of the US Navy, stating that *serving was not just a job, but an adventure* and you attended the US Naval Academy in 1976. After your graduation in 1980, you completed with outstanding marks the nuclear power training in order to serve aboard a variety of submarines.

In very demanding positions, you contributed to the security of your country, but also to that of every Ally providing deterrence and protection of the maritime lines of communications.

You expressed very early in your career what was written in your DNA, these exceptional leader skills which earned you the confidence and trust of all your sailors. You always found ways to understand, and develop the motivation of each individual in your successive commands, so that each member felt empowered to contribute to the best of their ability, and to the success of the entire team.



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This was demonstrated in the many successes of your units. You achieved significant results while commanding the USS Asheville, where the ship earned the Battle Efficiency “E” award, the Golden Anchor, and the Silver Anchor for the highest retention of personal in the Submarine Force.

Your outstanding leadership was rapidly identified by your superiors. You then received in 1999 the V.ADM James Stockdale Inspirational Leadership Award, acknowledgment of your exceptional character in getting through with your men and women the transient issues on your way.

Bruce, I would say that in the aftermath of the Cold War, in a time focused on the Revolution in Military Affairs, you were ahead of your time, perceiving our most precious capability as our people.

You took over the head of the Capability Development Directorate in May 2013, equipped with this outstanding background.

Your superb qualities of persuasion, communication, and innovation have been instrumental in a very sensitive period for the Alliance. We have been facing new emerging threats and have been looking for a new posture after two decades of crisis management.

Your directorate was the flagship to enable a constant adaptation of the Alliance while maintaining a full coherency with our long-term transformational efforts.



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It has required a great captain at the helm to find the fair wind; which you were, because as stated by Historian Edmund Gibbon, “*the wind and the waves are always on the side of the ablest navigator*”.

Your reputation precedes you in the Alliance. You earned over these two years, the deep respect and recognition of all the contributors to our Transformation whether within the International Staff, the International Military Staff, or the Nations’ highest military authorities.

You have had a significant and highly positive impact on our Transformation.

You made it possible to find consensus between Nations in order to provide our forces with the appropriate equipment (1), the ability to innovate faster than our adversaries (2) while maintaining an integrative, transatlantic dialogue with all stakeholders, especially Industry (3).

[1. develop the appropriate capabilities]

You have led the enhancement of the NATO Defense Planning Process. Your tact and determination have been crucial to achieving agreement on the minimum capabilities requirements process, so that the Alliance can meet its level of ambition.

Through your efforts, Nations found consensus in identifying the 16 major capability shortfalls, which have been endorsed by the Heads of State and government in Wales, and are now being devised into roadmaps to help and push nations to fill the corresponding gaps.



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Your efforts have also been fundamental to the implementation of the Smart Defence Initiative, supporting Nations today in developing 153 projects, many of them mitigating our main capability shortfalls.

[2. Innovate faster than our adversaries]

In the face of dynamic threats, with adversaries innovating at a high pace, making use of available new technologies, you have crafted many initiatives to foster innovation, experimentation and creativity into the Alliance.

This is particularly true in the cyber domain on which our forces increasingly relies, yet a domain in which we must constantly improve our defence.

For command and control, your active role in pushing forward the NATO Federated Mission Networking Implementation Plan will soon enable Allied and Partner Forces to quickly setup mission networks connecting nations when deployed in operations.

In the maritime domain, you have been pivotal in the successful but complex transition of the Centre for Maritime Research and Experimentation (CMRE) from ACT to the Science and Technology Organization.



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[3. Enhancement of Dialogue – RCC, Industry]

These are only few of your successes but they all emphasize your ability, your willingness to foster a fruitful cooperation. You have significantly extended ACT's visibility and networking.

Your personal involvement in the organization of the NATO/US Regional Commander Conference has enabled the gathering of all top military leaders in the United States to exchange their perspectives on how our Nations, and our Alliance can win in our very complex world.

With high diplomacy and conviction, you have promoted a deeper Dialogue with the Industry, a key enabler of Innovation in the Alliance at a time when our Nations must define the requirements to replace their current capabilities.

You have also had the intuition that in order to innovate, the Alliance needed to provide industry with the opportunity to better understand the operational requirements and to interact in the early phases of project development.

So, I have fully appreciated your proactivity in gaining Allies approval to the Involvement of Industry In exercises (I3X). The first round will occur during our high visibility Trident Juncture 2015 in October, in Italy, Spain and Portugal with industrials from more than 50 firms and companies.



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Bruce, it is with great sadness that we will see you going out from the building on Friday. When you will be walking along the 28 flag poles, you may then recall President John F. Kennedy saying: *"I can imagine no more rewarding a career. And any man who may be asked in this century what he did to make his life worthwhile, I think can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction: "I served in the United States Navy"*. You could add today, I served in NATO, I served in ACT.

Bruce, any commander would have been honoured to have you at his side. I thank the United States and US Navy for having offered me this privilege.

I personally fully and sincerely appreciated your loyalty, your steadfast commitment, your ever-informed advice to manage this extremely dense and crucial period for the Transformation of the Alliance. You were definitely a standing pillar in the command on which I could always rely on.

I would also like to wholehearted thank your wife Emily who accompanied you during this rich and rewarding career, with what we should not forget, no less than 17 moves and long periods alone with you abroad. We owe her your exceptional availability.

In closing, Bruce, please accept our deep gratitude for your highly appreciated services. Best wishes for you and your family for the future...and remember that you will always be part of our ACT's community.