



For Your Information

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Washington, DC 20301-7100

05-FYI-0069

22 November 2005

Rear Admiral Hicks Relieves Rear Admiral Paige as Commander and Program Director of Aegis BMD

Air Force Lieutenant General Henry "Trey" Obering, Missile Defense Agency Director, announced today that Rear Admiral Alan B. Hicks relieves Rear Admiral Kathleen K. Paige as the Commander and Program Director of Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD). The change of command took place at a November 22 ceremony at the Army Navy Country Club in Arlington, Virginia.

Hicks, a native of Henderson, Kentucky, graduated from the University of Louisville in 1976 with a degree in International Studies and Economics and earned his commission through the university's NROTC program. He completed Surface Warfare Officers' School in 1976 and was designated a Surface Warfare Officer in 1977. He was selected to flag rank by the Fiscal Year 2002 Flag Selection Board.

At sea, Hicks' tours include Commanding Officer of the Aegis cruiser USS CAPE ST. GEORGE (CG-71); Commanding Officer, USS HAYLER (DD-997); and Executive Officer, USS CARON (DD-970). His initial sea tour was as Navigator aboard USS SCHENECTADY (LST 1185). As a staff officer, his tours included Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations, Cruiser-Destroyer Group EIGHT.

Ashore, Hicks' assignments include Deputy Director for Combat Systems and Weapons in the Surface Warfare Directorate of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Deputy Commander, Naval Sea Systems Command's Warfare Systems Engineering (SEA-06); Head Surface Manpower/Training Requirements, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (N763B), and Joint Requirements, Joint Staff.

The ceremony also marked Paige's retirement after 34 years of service. Her tenure at the helm of Aegis BMD was filled with many "firsts." As the plank-owner Program Director, she was responsible for putting the initial increment of Aegis BMD to sea. She led the development and deployment of the world's first sea-based ballistic missile defense capability: a Long Range Surveillance and Tracking (LRS&T) system that reports flight information on intercontinental ballistic missiles to the Ballistic Missile Defense System's land-based ballistic missile engagement capability. Her disciplined systems engineering approach and leadership resulted in repeated firing mission successes while increasing the operational realism of each test to establish Aegis BMD's legacy to 'test how we fight'. Her program testing successes were key to meeting a challenging schedule to get the Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) Initial Deployment Rounds and the world's first sea-based engagement capability against short and medium range ballistic missiles to the fleet.

By the end of her tenure, she had firmly established Aegis BMD's 'We Deliver' reputation throughout the missile defense community with eleven ships fitted with the Long Range Surveillance and Track capability and two ships fitted with the ballistic missile engagement capability. Aegis BMD's accomplishments and the system's promise were validated by the decision of the Government of Japan to invest in the Aegis BMD capability for two of its Aegis destroyers.

In March 2005, concurrent with her Program Director, Aegis BMD assignment, Paige was selected by the Director, Missile Defense Agency to be the first Director of Mission Readiness. She assembled and led the Mission Readiness Task Force that reviewed, assessed and then implemented a rigorous systems engineering approach to the in-service Ground Based Missile Defense flight test program. Her performance as Director of Mission Readiness increased congressional and warfighter confidence in the weapon system's readiness and its ability to perform a mission whenever called upon.

At the ceremony, Paige was presented the Defense Superior Service Medal for her “outstanding leadership and ceaseless efforts resulting in major contributions to the national security of the United States.” The citation further stated “... she oversaw the development and deployment of the world’s first maritime-based ballistic missile defense system. Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense was the first operational element of the Ballistic Missile Defense System meeting presidential guidance to deploy ballistic missile defenses in 2004 and 2005...”

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