

Naval Academy Event Highlights Historic Ties Between U.S., Spanish Navies

BY PETER ATKINSON, DEPUTY EDITOR

The U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., hosted a formal ceremony Sept. 25 commemorating the strong bond of camaraderie and friendship between the Spanish Navy (Armada Española) and the U.S. Navy. The event was presided over by Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. John M. Richardson and Vice Adm. Walter E. “Ted” Carter Jr., superintendent of the Naval Academy, together with the Spanish Minister of Defense Maria Dolores de Cospedal and Chief of Staff of the Spanish Navy Adm. Teodoro E. Lopez Calderón.

The delegation’s visit commemorated the 150-year anniversary of Adm. David G. Farragut’s diplomatic mission to Spain and the 200th anniversary of the death of his father, George Farragut, a Spanish citizen from the island of Menorca who arrived in the United States in 1776 to support the Revolutionary War.

David Farragut was the first person to attain the rank of rear admiral, vice admiral and admiral in the U.S. Navy. During his mission to Spain, Farragut was received by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in Madrid, and finished his trip in Menorca, the birthplace of his father, where he remained with his wife until January 1868. He remained on active duty until his death in 1870, having served nearly 60 years in the Navy.

Following the welcoming remarks, Lopez Calderón presented a plaque to Richardson, after which de Cospedal presented him a copy of the book “Farragut and Menorca, The Spanish Legacy in the US Navy” that reviews the role of George and David Farragut, and details the close relationship reached between the countries.

During his remarks, the CNO noted, “We’ve had a nice review of just how close our two nations are and our two

navies are, going all the way back to our foundation — our founding years — 242 years ago. There’s no doubt that throughout our history, one of our most reliable and capable allies has been Spain. Based on our long history of maritime cooperation, I have absolutely no doubt that the United States and Spain, the U.S. Navy and the Armada, will face the challenges ahead together and I look forward very much to our continued partnership and friendship.”

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the authorities and distinguished visitors gathered at the Memorial Hall entrance to observe the noon meal formation of the Brigade of Midshipmen, with the flags of Spain and the United States leading the outdoor event at the sound of their respective national anthems.

The event concluded with a visit to Preble Hall to see the permanent location of the plaque followed by a lunch at the Superintendent’s Residence, Buchanan House. The plaque and book project have been an initiative of The Legacy Association, led by president Eva García, a Navy League national director and the National President’s Personal Representative. García attended the event, as did Navy League National President Alan Kaplan and members of the Navy League headquarters staff.



Chief of the Spanish Navy Adm. Gen. Teodoro E. Lopez Calderón delivers remarks during a ceremony in Memorial Hall at the U.S. Naval Academy Sept. 25. A Spanish delegation visited the academy to commemorate the history of camaraderie and friendship between the Spanish and U.S. navies.



U.S. NAVY

Spanish Minister of Defense Maria Dolores de Cospedal presents a copy of "Farragut and Menorca, The Spanish Legacy in the US Navy" to Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John M. Richardson.

The Legacy Association is dedicated to bringing attention to the significance of Spain's historical and cultural contributions to the United States, in order to encourage and promote ties between the two countries based in the relationship that existed even before the United States became an independent country.

The idea for the plaque emerged from previous visit that García paid to the academy.

"It very much stood out to me that the only mention of Spain was in a section related to the Cuban War and I thought it was imperative to do everything possible to convey, in a more positive and fair manner, the history of comradeship and cooperation between the Spanish and the U.S. Navies," she said.

The book arose several months later, when she decided that the 200-year anniversary of George Farragut's death deserved presenting documentation that would tell the history of the Spanish legacy in the U.S. Navy.

With that in mind, in October 2016 she created an ambitious index and requested the cooperation of several expert historians in the field who selflessly collaborated in the production of the book about the relationship between the U.S. Navy and the island of Menorca, which was a base for the Mediterranean Squadron, today the Sixth Fleet, from 1815 until 1848.

Upon the completion of the manuscript, The Legacy Association presented the project to the Spanish Ministry of Defense, which took an interest in its publication. In April, Garcia received the official confirmation: Spain was to have a designated place for the plaque in the Naval Academy's Naval Museum, on its main floor in Preble Hall.

The documents exhibited in the book and the unprecedented efforts in such a short period of time were undoubtedly worth the successful conclusion, García said, a commemorative plaque on the wall of the U.S. Naval Museum.

The day after the Naval Academy event, on the occasion of the official visit of Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy to the White House, the book "Farragut and Menorca, The Spanish Legacy in the US Navy" was presented as an institutional gift to President Donald J. Trump.

Fittingly, Rajoy stayed in The Blair House where, at a conference in 1861, it was decided that David

Farragut would command the Civil War assault on New Orleans. Farragut was promoted to rear admiral after the battle. ■



Eva García, president of The Legacy Association, as well as a Navy League national director and the National President's Personal Representative, greets Richardson in front of the plaque commemorating the Spanish legacy of the U.S. Navy at its permanent location in Preble Hall.