**MILITARY SPEECH**

**FOR**

**BRIAN YAROLEM**

Thank you Sir!

I am humbled and honored to be with all of you tonight and to have the privilege to introduce our guest speaker, Colonel (Ret.) Eric Steidl. It is believed that Eleanor Roosevelt once said, “The Marines I have seen around the world have the cleanest bodies, the filthiest minds, the highest morale, and the lowest morals of any group of animals I have ever seen.... Thank God for the United States Marine Corps!!! (**Wait for the laugh**)

(**If that quote is a but much, here’s an alternative**) Ronald Reagan said, “Some people spend a lifetime wondering if they made a difference in the world.... but the Marines don’t have that problem.”

One person that has **CLEARLY** made a tremendous difference in this world is **Colonel** (Ret.) Eric **Steidl.** He was born in Colorado, graduated from the University of Washington, and joined the United States Marine Corps through the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps in 1986. He proudly served as a CH-46E aviator. Though our guest speaker, Colonel Steidl, recently retired after serving in the Marine Corps for 28 years, that career, spanning almost three decades, including various assignments in the operating forces continue to inspire and motivate everyone that has the privilege to meet and know him. His extensive experience includes Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 268 (1989-1994), Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 163 (1995-1999), Executive Officer Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 163 (2002-2004), Executive Officer and Commanding Officer Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 165 (2004-2006), Executive Officer Marine Aircraft Group 16 (FWD) (2006), AC/S G-3 3d Marine Aircraft Wing (FWD) (2006-2007), Commanding Officer 22 Marine Expeditionary Unit (2010-2012), and Officer in Charge II Marine Expeditionary Force Special Operations Training Group (2012-2014). He was designated a CH-46E Weapons and Tactics Instructor in 1992. Colonel Steidl deployed with 11th, 13th, 15th and 22 Marine Expeditionary Units over the course of seven WESTPAC/C5F/C6F deployments and participated in Alaska Special Marine Air Ground Task Force (Exxon Valdez Oil Spill); Operations DESERT SHIELD, SEA SOLDIER IV, DESERT STORM (SWA); Operation CONTINUE HOPE/UNISOM II (Somalia); Operations VIGILANT SENTINAL, SOUTHERN WATCH, AND DESERT STRIKE (SWA); Operations IRAQI FREEDOM/SWEENEY, OIF 04-06, OIF 05-07; Operation UNIFIED ASSISTANCE (Indonesian Tsunami Relief); Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR (Libya); and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.  (**I don’t know if you want or need to include all of this... I wasn’t sure which to edit out... with all, speech is still about 5 minutes**).

Throughout his career, he has accumulated over 4,390 flight hours.  His personal decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal with Gold Star, Air Medal with strike flight numeral 7, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with 2 Gold Stars, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, and Sea Service Deployment with 7 stars. Colonel Steidl and his beautiful wife, Treva have two great children, Heidi and Carl.  He and Treva raise Black Angus cattle and hay on two family farms located near Windsor, Colorado.

His accomplishments and commendations are lengthy and impressive, but most impressive is the man himself. I **know**... I had the pleasure of working alongside him and his staff when he was the Director of Expeditionary Force Special Operations Training Group.

With a passion for life and his heart in service, Eric Steidl has given his all to his country, and to my knowledge, he is as passionate about personal pursuits as he is about his military participation. He’s always been infatuated with technology and more specifically, his cell phone, Other things clearly fascinate him as well, and he would often speak about his love for one of life’s great pleasures...Was it travel? Shakespearean drama? Horticulture??? No... something far more rare... or medium well done...maybe double double... **In-n-Out Burger**.  (**Wait for the laugh**) To demonstrate that, yes, there is a Heaven and that it’s possible to combine two great and worldly passions, Colonel Eric Steidl just so happens to have the In-n-Out app on his beloved mobile phone...Anytime he traveled, he would check the app to see where the closest In-n-Out was located and always went straight there... which explains why he owns and operates Blue Sky Farm. He is a man and a Marine who believes in living life and serving others in true “Animal Style.” His enthusiasm for all he does... his dedication to those around him... the manner in which he engages in life, clearly demonstrate that this man, like his culinary beacon, possesses the “secret sauce” in all that he does.

In case his incredible list of awards and accomplishments need even more back up... which they don’t, Eric Steidl is just a fascinating person... Not only is Colonel Steidl a remarkable leader, but he’s also a great friend.  We’re all in for a treat tonight, so without further ado, please join me in welcoming Col (Ret.) Eric Steidl....