

# Office of Naval Intelligence Welcomes IC Pride

FROM THE OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

COMONI RADM Robert Sharp said he was honored and pleased to host the Intelligence Community's LGBT celebration at the National Maritime Intelligence Center.

"What a great Navy day," he said welcoming more than 250 people who arrived at the NMIC on 21 June and to those watching the events via video teleconference at three different locations.

IC Pride organizers were deliberate in choosing the words "Welcome Aboard" and "shipmate," both important words in the Navy, Sharp said. "We are not just accepting you, we are welcoming you aboard as shipmates," he said.

"Acceptance has been an important step but we'd like to move beyond acceptance to true welcoming," he said. "Acceptance allows you to exist, to participate. When you're truly welcomed, you become part of the crew. That's why we want to welcome you aboard as shipmates."

Sharp said he is passionate about diversity and inclusion which was why he was excited to speak at last year's IC Pride Summit, held at FBI headquarters, and why he wanted to host it this year. When he joined the Navy in 1988 being gay or lesbian was not discussed, he said. "Members of the community, if discovered, were prosecuted and thrown out of service," Sharp said. While the Navy is considered a family, he said gays and lesbians who were in relationships were not able to talk about their families.

During his career he has seen incredible growth in the role and understanding of the LGBT community and said he hopes to see even more.

Todd Weiler, former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, began his remarks by mentioning former Kentucky football player Landon Foster, who wrote an article published 20 June revealing that he is gay.

"I am sure I will receive some backlash for writing this, but if there is one person it helps, then it will be worth it," Foster wrote.

Weiler said accepting people who are LGBT is not about tolerance. "I tolerate rush hour traffic," he said. "People don't need to tolerate us. They need to accept us as human beings."

Weiler said he recently attended the wedding of his niece and her bride in Cancun and that they weren't making a statement, but rather celebrating with family and friends.

"All the family was there," Weiler said, "including conservatives, members of the National Rifle Association and a smattering of Democrats."

"It's not a choice or a lifestyle to be debated," he said.



Todd Weiler holds up a certification of appreciation given to him by Rita Sampson, the Chief of the Intelligence Community EEO and Diversity mission at the ODNI. RADM Robert Sharp received the award last year.



# Office of Naval Intelligence Welcomes IC Pride

---

FROM THE OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Weiler recalled being asked whether he was gay during his military career, to which he instinctively and quickly responded “No.”

Now he believes the military should be reflective of the civilian community and has become known for fighting to ensure that transgender service members be allowed to serve openly. While working at the Pentagon, he ordered the implementation of transgender protections for family members who were being discriminated against in DoD school systems.

Since leaving the Pentagon, Weiler continues to be recognized as a leader promoting a military that is reflective of the society it serves.

“I think we are so close to that moment where no one needs to hide,” he said.

[WWW.ONI.NAVY.MIL](http://WWW.ONI.NAVY.MIL)

