

**Leading to SPAWAR's Transition and Reorganization:** In its 1993

recommendation, the BRAC Commission recommended that the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command relocate locally from leased space to government-owned space within the national capital region. The commission revised its recommendation in 1995, which would impact SPAWAR headquarters, two local communities, employees, customers and industry partners alike; it recommended that SPAWAR relocate...from leased space to Government-owned space in San Diego. The commission voted 8 to 0 to move SPAWAR headquarters from its home in Crystal City, Va., to San Diego. This move, it said, would enable the Navy to eliminate management layers and to enhance productivity by collocating headquarters with the majority of its subordinate staff. By law, the BRAC Commission's 1995 recommendations went into effect Sept. 28, 1995, with neither presidential nor legislative intervention.



Rear Admiral George F. A. Wagner (Ret.)  
March 30, 1995 to March 20, 1998

With the release of the report on July 1, 1995, wheels were set in motion that would have a significant and positive economic impact on the city of San Diego. In 1997 SPAWAR headquarters had a budget of \$1.7 billion and its subordinate commands another \$3.1 billion. The estimate was that 700 to 750 people, civilian and military, would be employed by SPAWAR, bringing an estimated \$42 to 45 million annually to the San Diego economy from salaries alone. Add to that another estimated \$80 million a year on headquarters support contracts and the impact was deemed impressive. Another plus: SPAWAR's relocation to San Diego gave local small business a substantial opportunity to represent themselves directly to a major Defense acquisition command at the cost of a couple gallons of gas rather than a plane ticket to the East Coast.

By mid-October 1996 SPAWAR's Commander, Rear Adm. George F.A. Wagner, already had plans to restructure the organization well before moving it to San Diego. The downsizing begun in 1992 was to continue through 1999 and,

following that mandate, he would have 535 civilian positions to move to San Diego. Although he had up to six years to accomplish the migration, he wanted to close operations in Crystal Park 5 by October 1997. The majority of employees would be moved between June and October 1997, with some employees moving as early as summer 1996. He moved quickly. A \$17 million contract for renovation of Old Town Buildings 1 and 4 was awarded to Soltek of San Diego in November 1996. By mid-October the following year, Wagner reported that 103 employees were already on site in San Diego, with about 10 new families arriving each week.

Early 1997 came with talk of “IT-21,” or Information Technology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Adm Archie Clemins, Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet envisioned all information and all communication within the Navy taking place on personal computers, a fresh concept already being addressed by SPAWAR. It was business as usual, despite the upheaval of a cross-country move.

By mid-summer 1997, the teeter-totter of personnel had shifted, with more employees on site in San Diego than in Crystal City, Va., and Admiral Wagner announced that a “Stand-up” Ceremony would be held at the Old Town Campus Oct. 1. The ceremony would signify that “the Navy had a hardware Systems Command in the right place, where the fleet is so we can see first-hand the fruits of our labor,” he said, “as well as get direct feedback from the real users of our gear, the deckplate sailors. Beyond that, the collocation with one of our principal activities makes it much easier to capture and exploit new technologies in our systems.” While the ceremony was symbolic, it represented the start of a new partnership with America’s Finest City.

**October 1, 1997** was proclaimed “SPAWAR Day” by San Diego Mayor Susan Golding. It was a day when SPAWAR, a second echelon headquarters command reporting to the Chief of Naval Operations, stood tall and trim with only three geographically defined SPAWAR Systems Centers in Charleston, South Carolina, Norfolk, Va., and San Diego. In what was finally called a Transition Ceremony, SPAWAR celebrated the end of its 3,000 mile westward trek that had begun in April

1997, and recognized the accomplishment of its simultaneous reorganization. The result: more than 1,000 new jobs in San Diego and an enriched community.