

## 2012 NAVY BIRTHDAY HISTORICAL MESSAGE

“AS WE CELEBRATE OUR NAVY'S 237TH BIRTHDAY, OUR HISTORY AND HERITAGE FORMS OUR IDENTITY, TELLING US WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE STAND FOR. OUR CORE VALUES OF HONOR, COURAGE AND COMMITMENT HAVE BEEN PASSED DOWN FROM OUR FOUNDERS, WHO CHARGED THE NAVY WITH THE SOLEMN DUTY TO SERVE AS THE "SHIELD" OF OUR REPUBLIC. THE FIRST REAL TEST OUR NAVY FACED WAS DURING THE WAR OF 1812. THIS WAR BEGAN AT SEA WHEN UNITED STATES SHIPS WERE ORDERED TO HEAVE TO UPON THE HIGH SEAS AND U.S. CITIZENS WERE FORCEFULLY TAKEN, OR IMPRESSED, INTO THE CREWS OF ANOTHER NATION'S SHIPS. THE GREAT BATTLES THAT FOLLOWED PROVED THE FIGHTING METTLE OF OUR SAILORS AND THE CUTTING EDGE OF OUR SHIP DESIGNS. THESE BATTLES ESTABLISHED BOTH FREE TRADE AND FREE NAVIGATION AS CRITICAL NATIONAL INTERESTS OF OUR COUNTRY, INTERESTS THAT ENDURE TO THIS DAY. THE WARRIOR CHARACTERISTICS OF CUNNING AND BOLDNESS EXHIBITED IN 1812 INSPIRE OUR SAILORS OF TODAY'S NAVY AS THEY CONTINUE TO SERVE AROUND THE WORLD. THE WAR OF 1812 SERVED AS A CRITICAL TURNING POINT FOR OUR NAVY. ON THIS 237TH BIRTHDAY OF OUR NAVY, WE HAVE THE HONOR TO SERVE IN THE GREATEST MARITIME FIGHTING FORCE THE WORLD HAS EVER SEEN, BUT WE DO SO WITH HUMILITY, CONTINUING TO BUILD UPON THE FRAMEWORK THOSE FIGHTING SAILORS FORGED BEFORE US. HISTORY TEACHES US THAT WITH GREAT POWER COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY. FROM THE GREAT CAPTAINS AND CREWS WHO FOUGHT SINGLE SHIP ACTIONS IN 1812 TO THE COMMERCE RAIDERS OF THE CIVIL WAR; FROM THE CONVOYS OF WORLD WAR I TO THE MAJOR FLEET ACTIONS AT CORAL SEA AND MIDWAY; FROM THE BLOCKADE OF CUBA IN OCTOBER OF 1962 TO THE RIVERINE OPERATIONS ON THE TIGRESS AND THE EUPHRATES, OUR NAVY HAS BOLDLY AND PROUDLY PUT OUR SHOULDER TO THE WHEEL. WE HAVE CHAMPIONED PEACE AND WE CONTINUE TO SHIELD THE REPUBLIC. HERE IS TO 237 YEARS OF PROUD NAVAL HERITAGE, AND MANY MORE!”