***“AMERICA'S SAILOR: FOR 241 YEARS - TOUGH, BOLD, AND READY.”***

The U. S. Navy has been the cornerstone of American security and prosperity for almost two and a half centuries. At the heart of our success is the American Sailor, serving afloat and ashore to the far reaches of the globe, protecting our country, advancing our interests, supporting our allies, delivering aid to peoples in crisis, and vigilantly guarding the sea lanes that are so necessary to our economic stability. Throughout history, our Navy has been a force to be reckoned with. The perseverance and fighting spirit of our sailors have always enabled us to prevail in the most dire circumstances and against the most daunting odds. On this, our 241st birthday as a service, we stand ready to defeat any enemy who challenges while we simultaneously evolve to outpace those with aims to challenge our control of the seas. Our Sailors’ unique ability to learn, adapt, innovate on the fly, and ultimately overcome will continue to make the U. S. Navy the most formidable sea power and benchmark that others measure themselves against. Three core characteristics have defined our Navy since its inception. They will continue to supersede all technological advances in importance as we move forward into an uncertain future. Our sailors … our center of gravity … have always been and will certainly continue to be Tough, Bold and Ready.

**Tough**. Life afloat can be unforgiving. Two hundred plus years of arduous operations at sea have produced a culture of toughness that has equipped our forces to succeed in any environment. This culture, combined with the intrinsic American traits of perseverance and selfless dedication, engenders a spirit that separates us distinctively from the other navies of the world. It is the spirit that infused Gunner’s Mate Paul Carr of USS SAMUEL B ROBERTS, who fired 324 five-inch rounds at the battle of Leyte Gulf before being pulled mortally wounded from his mount … clutching the last unfired round from the magazine in his arms. It is also the spirit that drove a young Lt. j. g. John F. Kennedy to swim 3.5 miles to a deserted island while clinging to a severely burned shipmate after his PT boat was rammed by an enemy destroyer. Toughness has served our Navy well in time of war. But that same level of determination must now drive the refinement of our problem solving skills; instilling our sailors with the mental stamina to persist and thrive through adversity, to embrace shortfalls as challenges and to stimulate creative thinking that includes an aggressive willingness to question traditional paradigms.

**Bold**. John Paul Jones framed it best with these words: “I wish to have no connection with any ship that does not sail fast, for I intend to go in harm's way.” Gone are the days when the U. S. Navy sailed the oceans of the world unchallenged. New and sophisticated threats are emerging with each passing day. We must learn from history, embrace the wisdom and mentality of forbearers like John Paul Jones and willingly accept risk if we expect to maintain global maritime superiority. As technology continues its inexorable forward march, it is important to remember that the courage, ingenuity and resolve of our Sailors will remain the most critical elements to our success. An old idiom tells us that fortune favors the bold. As our well-armed and equipped geopolitical rivals expand their reach into new oceans, it is incumbent on sailors of all ranks to continue to exhibit the courage that has defined our Service over the centuries. They must challenge the status quo to construct a framework for rapid learning and adaptive problem resolution. And our leaders must be sufficiently bold to trust, encourage and empower them as they do so.

**Ready**. From the early days of sail to the rescue of MV Maersk Alabama, the U. S. Navy has been organizationally ready to do its job, effectively delivering combat power at a moment’s notice. But the American Sailor must be individually ready as well. Training will forever be the lynchpin to readiness, but the warrior spirit is the attribute that inspires us – mentally and temperamentally – to make the hard fight in defense of this nation. From Petty Officer Dorie Miller manning the .50 caliber gun on the burning decks of USS WEST VIRGINIA at Pearl Harbor to Lt. Mike Murphy making the ultimate sacrifice in the mountains of Afghanistan, the trained and combat ready American Sailor must be willing to pay any price necessary to accomplish the mission.

Ours is a nation of innovators, never satisfied with the status quo. Consistent with this premise, American Sailor initiative has made the U.S. Navy the greatest maritime power ever, always pushing physical and mental boundaries to their limits and beyond. We have created warfighting advantages in nuclear, carrier aviation, and cyber warfare – areas and disciplines undreamed of not so long ago. Those advances must and will be augmented by an institutionalized culture of ingenuity that fosters innovation, creativity and unfettered feedback. Despite the expanding geopolitical challenges, we face the future with confidence. That’s because it is the American Sailor – Tough, Bold and Ready – who remains the heart of our current success and eternally stands tall as the key to maintaining our competitive maritime advantage.