***2015 Navy Birthday Speakers Resource***

**240 Years of Standing Ready – Then, Now and Always**

(Time of delivery: approximately 20-25 minutes)

Thank you for that wonderful introduction. (Acknowledge VIPs, dignitaries, elected officials, and other noteworthy people).

October 13th is a date that holds a special place in my heart. It is the day we recognize and celebrate the birthday of America’s Navy ..... 240 years of service to our great nation, and to the cause of freedom.

It is the day we honor the multitude of men and women who have chosen to proudly wear the Navy uniform, active or reserve, as well as civilians, during times of war, and during times of peace.

America’s Navy has been defending and protecting America on the world’s oceans since 1775. For 240 years, we have been there when it mattered, where it mattered, around the world, around the clock.

In a word, we were, are now and always will be …. READY.

When America has called, the Navy has always answered. Two hundred years ago our ships sailed for the shores of Africa and the Second Barbary War, having just concluded that decisive role during the War of 1812.

One hundred and fifty years ago, Admiral Farragut sailed up through Mobile Bay during the Civil War. One hundred years ago, as the First World War began, we prepared for convoy operations and anti-submarine missions in the battle for control of the Atlantic. Seventy years ago, Sailors and Marines fought their way across the Pacific toward Japan.

We were ready then.

And we are ready now. It is one of the great maxims of naval history that Sailors are the Navy’s greatest advantage and most important asset. We have the best people in the world, and we aim to keep it that way. We continue to build a total force that draws from every talent pool, values health and fitness, and attracts and retains innovative thinkers.

Ready Sailors remain the foundation of the Navy’s warfighting capability. Our people must be prepared, confident, and proficient. And so three years ago, we introduced the 21st Century Sailor Initiative, to provide a more coordinated and comprehensive approach to assuring we have the healthiest, fittest, most resilient, and best educated force in the world. The goal is to help our Sailors maximize their personal and professional readiness, and to assist them and their families with the mental, physical and emotional challenges of military service.

We are busy instilling a culture of fitness, moving away from the days when Sailors trained specifically for a bi-annual physical fitness test. We are revolutionizing the Navy’s personnel system to reflect the changing face of American society, increasing maternity leave, enhancing career flexibility and expanding graduate education opportunities.

We will continue our efforts to recruit and retain a diverse force, because we understand that a more diverse force is a stronger force. More than ever, today’s Navy is demographically representative of the nation we serve, which is critically important both to the quality of our all-volunteer force and to fulfilling the principles of the republic we defend. We are leading the military in our quest to ensure we’re using our best and most talented service members across the force.

We are ready now.

We have to be ready, because in today’s world, presence matters. Presence matters in business; it is why American firms maintain a presence in their overseas markets. Presence matters in politics; it is why the State Department maintains a diplomatic corps in nearly every other nation on earth. And presence matters to our national defense; it is why our Sailors are stationed around the world, protecting America at all times.

Uniquely, the United States Navy provides presence around the globe, around the clock. We are the nation’s first line of defense, ready for any challenge that might come over the horizon. Presence means we respond faster, we remain on station longer, we carry everything we need with us, and we carry out the missions assigned by our national leaders without needing anyone else’s permission.

Born a maritime nation, we have known throughout our 240 years that for America to succeed, we must have an exceptional Navy. Our nation’s founders considered a Navy critical to our nation’s success. Article One of our Constitution grants Congress the power to “raise” an Army when needed, but directs Congress to “provide and maintain a Navy.”

Today, the value and importance of our naval assets to security and stability here at home and around the world has never been greater. Nearly half the world’s population lives less than 60 miles from the sea. With ninety percent of global trade carried by sea, even those who live in landlocked states are dependent on the world’s oceans. In these days of an internet-connected world, 95 percent of all the voice and data goes under the ocean through cables, including the data keeping the world’s financial system running.

The shelves of stores of every variety are stocked through “just in time” delivery with products from all over the globe. Estimates show that a single major port facility in the U.S. impacts more than a million American jobs and contributes about a billion dollars a day to our nation’s economic productivity. Overall, some 38 million American jobs are directly linked to seaborne international trade.

America’s Navy is the primary protector of this international system. We keep the sea-lanes open. We keep freedom of navigation open for anybody engaged in peaceful and legitimate trade. That is why the ability of America’s Navy to be where it matters, when it matters, is vital to international stability. That is why presence matters.

Put quite simply, America’s Navy is at its best when operating forward. Our overseas presence gives the President options, and bolsters global stability through frequent engagement with allies and partners, building trust and confidence.

To that end, we are committed to providing a forward presence of about 120 ships by 2020, up from an average of 97 in 2014.

America’s Navy is continuing the Asia-Pacific rebalance, increasing presence from approximately 50 ships in 2014 to about 65 in 2019. Our most capable platforms will operate in the Western Pacific, including the newest destroyers and small surface combatants, and our most modern aircraft and weapons systems.

We are increasing our presence in the Middle East from around 30 ships today to around 40 in 2019. Ten of our Patrol Craft operate out of Bahrain, and four Littoral Combat Ships will join them by the end of 2019.

Our posture in Europe is evolving with advanced radar sites in Romania and Poland to protect against potential enemy missile threats. And by the end of the year, four destroyers will be forward stationed in Rota, Spain to provide a critical and much-needed Ballistic Missile Defense capability.

And we are establishing a form of presence in a place not many would have foreseen a hundred years ago ...... the Arctic. As a matter of fact, the Navy has been operating in the Arctic for decades, and we expect our presence requirements will likely increase as shipping traffic in the region increases. To that end, we have developed a sort of road map for the Arctic, which outlines our plans to build a sustainable, Arctic-capable force as the region becomes more accessible in the coming years.

Over the next five years, the Navy will focus on refining procedures, developing relationships, growing expertise, and making informed decisions on operations in the Arctic. Navy scientists are currently studying environmental changes in the region using a large array of robotic technologies for autonomous observation of the atmosphere, ice, and sea. The Navy conducts Ice Exercises which enable our personnel to train in the unique Arctic environment and refine operational procedures.

From 2020-2030, Navy efforts will center on providing support while operating periodically in the region and conducting exercises with regional partners. And from 2030 onward, the Navy will support Arctic operations as needed on a routine basis, providing surface, subsurface and air assets to the region and dedicating a greater focus to maritime security and freedom of navigation.

We’re making every preparation, looking far over the horizon, to ensure we are ready always.

Today’s Navy faces a vast array of demands from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, to working with partners and allies, to dealing with multiple threats and potential conflicts. We meet these demands, and many more, using talented and resourceful people, superior platforms and equipment, demonstrating the versatility and flexibility that is the hallmark of our force.

The reality of providing the presence the American people and our nation’s leaders expect is that it requires platforms. To be where we are needed, when we are needed, we must have the ships, submarines, aircraft, vehicles, and equipment for our Sailors to operate. That means we must have a properly sized fleet.

Our fleet is growing and will number greater than 300 ships before the end of this decade, and we have charted a sound course to ensure we are making the right investments in all of our programs to maintain our warfighting edge.

Under the sea, we are guaranteeing the future of the most survivable leg of the nation’s strategic nuclear deterrence platform by planning for the replacement of our fleet of OHIO-class ballistic missile submarines and the Trident D5 ballistic missile. Also in the undersea domain, we continue to put to sea modern VIRGINIA-class attack submarines, with eight more planned for delivery through 2019.

Above the sea, we are modernizing our Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Force with the advanced P-8A POSEIDON aircraft, building approximately 80 by the end of 2019. We are pursuing the Next Generation Jammer, providing the EA-18G GROWLER with enhanced Airborne Electronic Attack capabilities starting in 2021. We are upgrading our electronic early-warning aircraft, the E-2D Hawkeye, and we continue to invest in the next-generation F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

On the sea, we are fielding the lead ships of two new classes of warships. PCU ZUMWALT, the first of three multi-mission advanced destroyers, will join the Fleet soon. PCU GERALD R. FORD, our new aircraft carrier class, will deliver in early 2016. We continue to expand the role of small surface combatants, to include Littoral Combat Ships, Joint High-Speed Vessels and Mobile Landing Platform Afloat Forward Staging Bases.

In the cyber and electronic warfare domain, we are equipping our ships with more capability to intercept signals and conduct information warfare. And we are strengthening our cyber posture by developing systems to deter, detect, and mitigate insider threats and safeguard classified national security information. We are also proceeding to recruit, train, and hire almost 1,000 cyber operators, and are on track to form 40 specialized cyber mission teams by the end of 2016.

But all of these platforms don’t run on magic. Fueling the ships, aircraft, and vehicles of our Navy is a vital operational concern and enables the global presence necessary to keep the nation secure. Power and energy are an important part of ensuring our people have what they need and can get where they are needed. It is a critical element of our presence and why the Navy has always been an energy innovator.

The ships and aircraft that we deploy include advanced capabilities that make us the most effective expeditionary fighting force in the world. But our weapons and platforms also use far more energy than their predecessors. Our ability to maximize our capabilities depends on having the energy available to power them.

We have made real progress over the last few years in the energy arena. PCU Zumwalt has an electric propulsion system. We recently commissioned USS America which is driven by hybrid electric power plants. This is the same engineering design used in USS Makin Island that, for her maiden deployment, cut her fuel consumption nearly in half when compared to other big deck amphibious ships. At our shore installations, we continuously strive to be smarter and improve energy efficiency.

Diversifying our energy supply for our ships, our aircraft, and our bases helps ensure we have viable alternatives to achieve the presence to preserve peace and the ability to respond to any crisis. Increasing our energy efficiency assures that we can remain on station longer or extend our range, without the delays and vulnerability of refueling. In these ways, our focus on power and energy is helping to ensure America’s Navy remains the most powerful expeditionary fighting force in the world and ensures their ability to protect and advance American interests around the globe.

We will also ensure our future readiness through partnerships. In the 21st century, to be effective, all nations and people that seek freedom and security have to carry their own share of the responsibility of defending the global system. A collective effort will assure our navies can provide the necessary presence to maintain freedom of navigation and maritime security around the world. Whether blue water or brown, America’s Navy and our other allies and partners help assure stability and security, creating and strengthening global relationships, providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, deterring adversaries when possible, and defeating aggression when necessary.

Cooperation on the world’s global commons helps us diffuse tensions, reduce misunderstandings, and mitigate conflict. The world’s maritime tradition is nearly as old as human history. From harbors near the Arctic Circle and around the Mediterranean, from the littorals of Asia to the shores of Africa, the Americas and Australia, human civilizations have launched one great fleet after another toward the horizon. Again and again naval forces have proven themselves the most immediate, the most capable and the most adaptable option when a crisis develops. This is even more true when like-minded navies, with similar national policy objectives, can find ways to work together. Whether exercising together in the Baltic or in Southeast Asia, operating against pirates in the Gulf of Aden, or cooperating to provide relief in the aftermath of natural disasters, the strong cooperation between the United States and our partners and allies makes a difference all over the globe. Partnerships are a key contributor to presence.

While the Navy celebrates its 240th birthday, two very important elements of the Navy are celebrating their centennials this year.

For more than 100 years, we have repeatedly called upon the dedication and talent of our Navy Reserve Force. Trained and ready, Reservists have been mobilized in times of crisis, whether it’s to support humanitarian operations or boots on the ground conflict. They’ve augmented our active Navy in every operation since May 1915, rapidly expanding our capacity and professional capability …. today is another day for us to celebrate and honor that part of our Naval heritage.

Approximately 20 percent of the Navy Total Force is made up of Reserve Sailors. The role and contributions of the Navy Reserve are as vital as ever.

Our Navy Reservists trade their civilian clothes for Navy uniforms to serve on all fronts - from conflict prevention to conflict support, from combat to peacekeeping, from disaster relief to humanitarian assistance - a Reserve Force that is ready, relevant, and responsive to the nation’s needs is critical to our day-to-day operations, surge capability and sustainability.

From the beginning, our Navy has relied on the inspirational leadership: Barry, Bainbridge, Perry, Porter, and Dewey. The achievements of the 18th- and 19th-century U.S. Navy are self-evident and many. In the 20th century, known by some as the American Century, the need for a general staff was recognized as essential to the success of a modern Navy in wartime. On March 3, 1915, President Woodrow Wilson signed into law an act that provided for “an officer on the active list of the Navy appointed by the President . . . who shall, under the direction of the Secretary of the Navy, be charged with the operations of the fleet.” With the enactment of the law, and with the nation soon to be embroiled in World War I, the U.S. Navy for the first time had a professional naval officer, the Chief of Naval Operations, who had statutory authority and responsibility for war plans, preparation for combat, and operations of the fleet.

For more than 100 years, the Chief of Naval Operations has ensured the fleet is able to conduct prompt, sustained combat operations at sea . However, the office has changed quite a bit since May 11, 1915, when Adm. William S. Benson took office as the first CNO. Still, the office’s important mission remains the same: to ensure our globally deployed Sailors have all the tools and training necessary to successfully achieve their mission and return home safely.

While credit for the operational success of the Navy lies squarely on the shoulders of our Sailors, it’s important to know that the tools they use, many of them technological marvels, didn’t just happen. Putting those tools in the hands of Sailors, making it possible for them to sail into harm’s way and emerge victorious, takes a complex structure of setting requirements, development, evaluation, acquisition, and distribution on the front end, and detailed plans for manning, training, equipping, and maintaining it all on the backend. Benson and the 29 leaders who have followed in his footsteps, as well as the dedicated military and civilian personnel of the OPNAV staff, have performed the vital functions of resource allocation, risk assessment, and balancing.

Taken together, everything we have talked about this evening, these advancements are extraordinary. I can only imagine what we’ll be highlighting at our 250th birthday.

I’d like to close by reminding everyone here that as we speak, today, right now, America’s Navy – YOUR Navy is ready. From the coast of Africa to the wide expanse of the Pacific, from the Arctic to the Antarctic, our Sailors continue to deploy to protect and defend the American people and our national interests. They continue to ensure that America’s Away Team is ready and present around the world, prepared for action in times of crisis or working with our partners in times of peace.

And as President Theodore Roosevelt once said, “A good Navy is not a provocation to war. It is the surest guaranty of peace.”

May God bless our Sailors.

May God bless our Navy Reserve.

May God bless the United States Navy.

And may God continue to bless our great Nation – the United States of America.

Thank you so much for having me here today – and join me in wishing a VERY HAPPY 240th BIRTHDAY to OUR UNITED STATES NAVY!