



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 13, 2019

Presidential Message on the 244th Birthday of the United States Navy

On the 244th birthday of the United States Navy, I send greetings to the sailors currently serving and those who have served our Nation with honor, courage, and commitment in times of war and peace, at home and around the world.

The Continental Congress created America's first national navy in October 1775, just months after the onset of the Revolutionary War. John Adams led a visionary group of delegates who championed the idea of a national navy before the Continental Congress. Our young Nation needed maritime protection and a means of taking the fight to our enemy on the seas. Congress authorized the acquisition of two vessels, which would be armed against the world's greatest naval power of that era. From this two-vessel fleet, our Navy has grown into the largest and most formidable naval force the world has ever known.

This month, America will commemorate the 75th anniversary of an epic moment in United States Naval history: the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the largest naval battle of the modern era. Among the heroic stories from that epic fight is the tale of Task Unit 77.4.3, call sign "Taffy 3," in which three destroyers and four destroyer escorts took on a much larger enemy force. Outgunned and outmanned, American destroyers charged into a line of massive Japanese battleships in order to protect the rest of the force attempting to liberate the Philippine Islands. The ferocity with which the American sailors fought gave the Japanese pause and secured the Philippines and diminished the threat posed to our troops by the Imperial Japanese Navy. Lieutenant Commander Robert W. Copeland, the commanding officer of one of the American ships, USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (DE-413), later said he could think of no higher honor than the privilege of commanding such a crew. Drawing on the legacy of their World War II shipmates, today's sailors embody that fighting spirit, excellence, integrity, and accountability.

As Commander in Chief, I join a grateful Nation in thanking America's sailors and all of our country's service members for their willingness to defend our precious liberties and unparalleled prosperity. May God bless you, and may He always bless the United States of America.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Donald Trump, positioned at the bottom of the page.