**United States Navy Memorial Day Speech**

For questions on this speech, please contact Todd Martin at [todd.martin@navy.mil](mailto:todd.martin@navy.mil) or 901 874 5805.

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| **Speaker** |  |
| **Event** | 2014 Memorial Day Events |
| **Date** |  |
| **Location** |  |
| **Duration** | Approximately 13 minutes |
| **Goal of Speech** | Recognize the importance of Memorial Day while conveying key Navy messages to audiences. |
| **Top Line Message Points** | - The Navy protects and defends America on the world's oceans.  - The Navy is deployed around the world, around the clock.  - The Navy is ready to defend America at all times. |
| **People to Acknowledge** | Consult with your Protocol Officer to determine order of acknowledgements |
| **Additional Resources** | <http://www.navyoutreach.org/programs/speakers/speakers-resources-archive/> |

(Note : the time of delivery is determined using a public speaking rate of 100 words per minute. Your actual time may vary).

THANK YOU (NAME OF PERSON WHO INTRODUCED YOU) FOR THAT VERY KIND INTRODUCTION. (ACKNOWLEDGE VIPS, DIGNITARIES, ELECTED OFFICIALS, AND OTHER NOTEWORTHY PEOPLE).

ON BEHALF OF ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN SERVING, BOTH HERE AND ABROAD, I THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME HERE TODAY. IT IS ALWAYS AN HONOR TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THE NAVY AND IT IS TRULY A PRIVILEGE TO RECOGNIZE OUR FALLEN AMERICAN HEROES WITH YOU ON THIS MEMORIAL DAY.

A KEY COMPONENT OF OUR NATION’S GREATNESS LIES IN OUR ABILITY TO REMEMBER AND HONOR THE COUNTLESS MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE DIED WHILE SERVING IN THE MILITARY - BONDED IN THE IDEALS OF SERVICE, SELFLESSNESS AND HONOR. AS WE STAND HERE TODAY, I ASK YOU TO CALL TO MIND THE LOST, THE WOUNDED AND ALL THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED ON BEHALF OF OUR GREAT NATION.

I ALSO ASK YOU TO CALL TO MIND THE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF AMERICA’S FINEST MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE RIGHT NOW DEPLOYED AROUND THE WORLD, PROTECTING AND DEFENDING AMERICA’S FREEDOM ON THE WORLD’S OCEANS, THE FREEDOM THAT OUR FALLEN BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN ARMS, GAVE THEIR LIVES IN DEFENSE OF. THESE UNITED STATES NAVY SAILORS ARE THERE RIGHT NOW. THEY WILL BE THERE WHEN WE ARE SLEEPING TONIGHT. THEY WILL BE THERE EVERY SATURDAY, SUNDAY AND HOLIDAY THIS YEAR. THEY ARE THERE AROUND THE CLOCK, FAR FROM OUR SHORES, DEFENDING AMERICA AT ALL TIMES.

THAT THEY ARE THERE IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT BECAUSE, AS IN VIRTUALLY ANY GLOBAL ENDEAVOR, BEING THERE MATTERS. IT MATTERS IN BUSINESS: IT IS WHY AMERICAN FIRMS MAINTAIN A PRESENCE IN THEIR OVERSEAS MARKETS. IT MATTERS IN POLITICS: IT IS WHY THE STATE DEPARTMENT MAINTAINS A DIPLOMATIC CONTINGENT IN NEARLY EVERY OTHER NATION ON EARTH. IT CERTAINLY MATTERS TO OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE: IT IS WHY U.S. FORCES ARE STATIONED AROUND THE WORLD.

ESTABLISHED ALMOST 150 YEARS AGO AS A TIME TO HONOR THE NATION'S CIVIL WAR CASUALTIES, MEMORIAL DAY HAS EVOLVED INTO WHAT IT IS TODAY. AN OPPORTUNITY TO REMEMBER THE VALOR AND SERVICE OF MORE THAN 1.1 MILLION VETERANS- BOTH MEN AND WOMEN - WHO HAVE PERISHED THROUGHOUT OUR NATION’S MILITARY HISTORY. VETERANS SUCH AS JASON WORKMAN, KEVIN HOUSTON AND THE 20 ADDITIONAL NAVY SEALS KILLED ON THAT GRIM DAY IN 2011 WHEN THEIR HELICOPTER WAS SHOT DOWN OVER AFGHANISTAN.

THE SACRIFICES MADE BY AMERICA’S SAILORS CAN NEVER TRULY BE MEASURED, BUT THEY CAN BE APPRECIATED. THEIR HISTORIES CAN BE RETOLD AND THEIR MEMORIES CAN BE KEPT ALIVE.

LET US TAKE A MOMENT TO ENSURE THESE SACRIFICES ARE NEVER FORGOTTEN. SAILORS SUCH AS:

• LIEUTENANT VINCENT CAPODANNO, A NAVY CHAPLAIN SERVING DURING THE VIETNAM WAR WHO “RAN THROUGH AN OPEN AREA RAKED WITH FIRE…AND DESPITE PAINFUL, MULTIPLE WOUNDS TO HIS ARMS AND LEGS, REFUSED ALL MEDICAL AID, AND CONTINUED TO MOVE ABOUT THE BATTLEFIELD AND PROVIDE ENCOURAGEMENT AND EXAMPLE TO THOSE UNDER FIRE.” STRUCK DOWN BY A BURST OF MACHINE-GUN FIRE WHILE RUSHING TO THE AID OF OTHERS, HE IS A SHINING EXAMPLE OF ONE MAN’S WILLINGNESS TO MAKE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE. TODAY HE IS RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE NAVY’S MOST DEDICATED CHAPLAINS,

• NAVY CAPTAIN LAUREL CLARK, A MEDICAL DOCTOR AND ASTRONAUT, WHO GAVE HER LIFE FOR SCIENCE ALONG WITH 6 OTHER CREW MEMBERS WHEN SPACE SHUTTLE COLUMBIA BROKE APART DURING RE-ENTRY IN THE SKIES OVER TEXAS,

• HOSPITAL CORPSMAN, MICHAEL V. JOHNSON JR., AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN SAILOR KILLED IN COMBAT WHILE SUPPORTING OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM WHO SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH, SENT A LETTER HOME SAYING “MOM, I LOVE YOU, AND DON’T BE AFRAID IF I DON’T RETURN, REALIZE I’M IN HEAVEN WITH GOD,” AND

• PETTY OFFICER 3RD CLASS RONCHESTER MANANGA SANTIAGO AND THE 16 ADDITIONAL SAILORS KILLED ABOARD THE USS COLE DURING A TERRORIST ATTACK WHILE REFUELING IN YEMEN.

THESE INSPIRING SAILORS ARE JUST A FEW OF THE THOUSANDS THAT MAKE UP AMERICA’S NAVY AND SUPPORT OUR GLOBAL MISSION -- A MISSION THAT PROTECTS U.S. VITAL INTERESTS AND PROMOTES GREATER COLLECTIVE SECURITY, STABILITY, AND TRUST.

-- A MISSION THAT SENDS MORE THAN 44,000 SAILORS AND 100 SHIPS TO LOCATIONS AROUND THE WORLD ON AN AVERAGE DAY, BEING THERE, HELPING TO PROTECT:

* THE MORE THAN 70 PERCENT OF OUR PLANET WHICH IS COVERED BY WATER, BEING THERE MEANS HAVING THE ABILITY TO ACT FROM THE SEA. THE NAVY IS UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO BE THERE; THE WORLD’S OCEANS GIVE THE NAVY THE POWER TO PROTECT AMERICA’S INTERESTS ANYWHERE, AND AT ANY TIME.
* THE 90 PERCENT OF GLOBAL COMMERCE THAT IS CONDUCTED AT SEA WHICH CARRIES THE LIFEBLOOD OF A GLOBAL SYSTEM THAT LINKS EVERY COUNTRY ON EARTH. WHEN PIRACY THREATENS INNOCENT LIVES AND DISRUPTS SHIPPING TRAFFIC IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, WHEN ROGUE NATIONS THREATEN TO DENY ACCESS TO VITAL MIDDLE EAST WATERWAYS THROUGH WHICH MUCH OF THE WORLD’S OIL IS SHIPPED, BEING THERE MATTERS. AMERICA’S NAVY IS THERE, PATROLLING WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY THE WORLD’S INTERSTATE OCEAN HIGHWAY SYSTEM, ENSURING THE FREE FLOW OF GLOBAL TRADE AND, IN TURN, PRESERVING AMERICA’S ECONOMIC PROSPERITY.

THE SAILORS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY ARE THERE, WHERE IT MATTERS, WHEN IT MATTERS, DOING SPECTACULAR THINGS, MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD.

THE HEROES THAT WE HAVE LOST IN SUPPORT OF THAT MISSION REPRESENT THE BEST IN EACH OF US - COMING FROM EVERY BACKGROUND AND EVERY WALK OF LIFE. THEY ARE THE ESSENCE AND THE HEARTBEAT OF AMERICA’S NAVY AND OUR COUNTRY.

TODAY WE HONOR THESE MEN AND WOMEN AND WE DO SO WITH REVERENCE AND A GRATEFUL HEART. WITHOUT THEIR COMMITMENT AND SERVICE OUR NAVY AND OUR NATION WOULD NOT BE WHAT IT IS TODAY.

THE SACRIFICES WILLINGLY ASSUMED BY SAILORS AND ALL OTHER SERVICE MEMBERS ARE ROOTED IN AN UNWAVERING COMMITMENT AND DESIRE TO SERVE IN SOMETHING GREATER THAN THEMSELVES. TODAY WE HONOR THAT DESIRE AND THEIR COMMITMENT. AND WE HONOR THE FAMILIES THAT SUPPORTED THEM, WHO NO DOUBT ARE CELEBRATING THEIR LEGACY WHILE GRIEVING THEIR ABSENCE.

ON MEMORIAL DAY, WE LOOK TO THE PAST AND REMEMBER THE DEEDS OF THOSE WHOSE FINAL MOMENTS IN SERVICE EMBODY THE HIGHEST VALUES THAT WE AS A NATION HOLD DEAR.

AS WE LOOK TO THE PAST, WE MUST ALSO LOOK TO THE FUTURE. IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY, WE MUST CONSTANTLY SCAN THE HORIZON TO IDENTIFY AND RESPOND TO EMERGING THREATS. AND, IMPORTANTLY, WE MUST BE THERE WHEN IT MATTERS.

THE WORLD’S GEOPOLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CLIMATES CONTINUE TO EVOLVE, THE CASE FOR AMERICA MAINTAINING A STRONG NAVY GROWS. THE PRESIDENT’S NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY CALLS FOR A RENEWED FOCUS ON ENDURING THREATS IN THE MIDDLE EAST REGION, AS WELL AS AN INCREASED AMERICAN COMMITMENT IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION -- A VAST, MOSTLY OCEAN-COVERED AREA OF THE WORLD IDEALLY SUITED FOR OPERATIONS FROM THE SEA AND IN WHICH THE NAVY MAINTAINS A ROBUST PRESENCE.

AS OUR FALLEN ANCESTRAL BROTHERS AND SISTER IN ARMS WHOM WE HONOR HERE TODAY REMIND US THAT THEY WERE THERE WHEN IT MATTERED – REMINDING US THAT BEING THERE MATTERS – YOUR UNITED STATES NAVY IS ALREADY THERE, PROTECTING AND DEFENDING AMERICA.

BEFORE WE GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS, LET ME LEAVE YOU WITH THIS: AS YOU LAY YOUR EYES ON THE AMERICAN FLAG WHICH IS SO PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED, BE PROUD OF WHAT IT REPRESENTS. OUR FREEDOM. AND NEVER FORGET THE IRREPLACEABLE LIVES THAT HAVE BEEN SACRIFICED WHILE DEFENDING AND PRESERVING THAT FREEDOM. AS YOU LOOK AT THE RED, WHITE AND BLUE, BE REMINDED THAT EACH COLOR REPRESENTS THE VALOR, VIGILANCE, AND PERSEVERANCE FOUND IN THE HEART OF EVERY UNITED STATES NAVY SAILOR. AND JUST AS WE NEVER FORGET A FALLEN SHIPMATE, NEVER FORGET THOSE WHO HAVE DIED SO FREEDOM CAN LIVE ON.

MAY GOD BLESS OUR FALLEN BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

MAY GOD BLESS ALL OF US GATHERED HERE TODAY.

MAY GOD BLESS THE MORE THAN 300 MILLION FOLKS WHO CALL AMERICA THEIR HOME.

MAY GOD BLESS OUR UNITED STATES NAVY, AND ALL BRANCHES OF OUR ARMED FORCES.

AND MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS AMERICA.

THANK YOU!