**Notes on This Speech**

(NOTE 1: this speech is written for outreach purposes, meaning it is intended for external audiences during Veterans Day commemoration ceremonies.)

(NOTE 2: this speech is written to incorporate an optional video. Because many Veterans Day events are outdoors, the use of videos may not be possible. However, if the venue at which you are speaking has video capability, it is recommended that provide the video files to the venue prior to your speech, as well as the file titled “Background Display”, which is a static display which may appear in the background as you speak. For questions on this, please contact Todd Martin, Navy Office of Community Outreach, 901.874.5805, [todd.martin@navy.mil](mailto:todd.martin@navy.mil) ).

(NOTE 3: the time of delivery is determined using a public speaking rate of 100 words per minute. Your actual time may vary).

**Time of Delivery:**

**Approximately 14 minutes without video.**

**Approximately 16 minutes with video.**

**Being There Matters Veterans Day**

Thank you (name of person who introduced you) for that wonderful introduction. (Acknowledge VIPs, dignitaries, elected officials, and other noteworthy people).

I would like to begin today by quoting our Commander in Chief, President Barack Obama:

“The United States military is the strongest, most capable fighting force the world has ever known. The brave men and women of our Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard demonstrate a resolute spirit and unmatched selflessness, and their service reminds us there are few things more American than giving of ourselves to make a difference in the lives of others.”

Our men and women in uniform have taught us about strength, duty, devotion, resolve—cornerstones of a commitment to protect and defend that has kept our country safe for over 200 years. In war and in peace, their service has been selfless and their accomplishments have been extraordinary.

Even after our veterans take off the uniform, they never stop serving. Many apply the skills and experience they developed on the battlefield to a life of service here at home. They take on roles in their communities as doctors and police officers, engineers and entrepreneurs, mothers and fathers. As a grateful Nation, it is our task to make that transition possible—to ensure our returning heroes can share in the opportunities they have given so much to defend. The freedoms we cherish endure because of their service and sacrifice, and our country must strive to honor our veterans by fulfilling our responsibilities to them and upholding the sacred trust we share with all who have served.

On days like this, we are called to reflect on immeasurable burdens that have been borne by so few. We pay tribute to our wounded, our missing, our fallen, and their families—men and women who have known the true costs of conflict and deserve our deepest respect, now and forever. We also remember that our commitments to those who have served are commitments we must honor not only on Veterans Day, but every day. As we do so, let us reaffirm our promise that when our troops finish their tours

of duty, they come home to an America that gives them the benefits they have earned, the care they deserve, and the fullest opportunity to keep their families strong and our country moving forward.”

I began with that statement not only because it honors our Nation’s veterans, but also serves as a reminder that our Commander in Chief calls on the United States Navy in times of crisis, and fully expects us to answer the call.

Throughout her history, the United States Navy, and her veterans, have answered the Commander in Chief’s calls. In fact, a few Navy veterans have gone on to become Commander in Chief themselves. Two Navy veterans who went on to become Commanders in Chief, Presidents John F. Kennedy and Gerald R. Ford, currently have aircraft carriers under construction in their honor.

Your Navy’s current ability to answer the Commander in Chief’s call relies on our men and women who don Navy uniforms – today’s veterans – as well as our presence throughout the world. As the Chief of Naval Operations recently said “Presence is our mandate. We have to be where it matters. We need to be there when it matters. And we need to be ready when it matters,”

There are currently 285 warships in the Navy’s inventory. They most certainly are yours. You have invested in them, and in the talented Sailors that crew them. You have invested in the capabilities they bring to the defense of our great nation. Let me tell you just a little about the return you are getting on that investment.

Right now, as we gather together, YOUR Navy is protecting and defending America on the world’s oceans. Navy ships, submarines, aircraft and, most importantly, tens of thousands of America’s finest young men and women, today’s veterans, are deployed around the world doing just that.

They are there now. They will be there when we are sleeping tonight. They will be there every Saturday, Sunday and every 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 being there matters.

- Being there matters in business. It is why American firms maintain a presence in their overseas markets.

- Being there matters in politics. It is why the State Department maintains a diplomatic force in nearly every other nation on earth.

- Being there matters to our national defense. It is why U.S. soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines are stationed around the world.

70 percent of the planet we live on is covered by water. Being there means having the ability to act from the sea. The United States Navy is uniquely positioned to be there. The world’s oceans give the Navy the power to protect America’s interests anywhere, at any time. Being there matters.

When America’s national security is threatened by the existence of a weapons facility or a terrorist camp on the other side of the world, being there matters.

Where these threats exist, chances are high that Navy ships, submarines, aircraft and special forces are very close by, with the ability to destroy targets located hundreds of miles inland.

When the decision is made to act on one of these threats, the solution may involve launching Navy attack jets or unmanned Navy aircraft from Navy aircraft carriers, firing Navy cruise missiles from Navy ships or Navy submarines, or inserting a team of Navy SEALs to do what only Navy SEALs can do.

The United States Navy can do all of these things, and do all of these things from the sea, without needing to get another country’s permission to operate within its borders, because being there matters.

Following a humanitarian crisis, like the devastating tsunami that struck northern Japan in 2011, or the earthquake which ravaged Haiti in 2010, being there matters. Because the Navy is always deployed around the world, it can provide nearly immediate humanitarian relief in the wake of a disaster, transporting supplies, medicine and trained Navy medical personnel ashore from Navy ships via Navy helicopters and Navy landing craft.

When narcotics traffickers use speedboats and makeshift submarines to bring illegal drugs across the oceans and into America, being there matters. Navy ships and Navy submarines work the waters near Central and South America with law enforcement agencies, intercepting shipments of illegal narcotics before they reach our shores.

(OPTIONAL VIDEO: I’ve talked about the United States Navy, but seeing is believing. Here is a video showing your Navy in action recently. (Play “Navy Week in Review” video.<http://www.navy.mil/viewVideo.asp?id=18949>).

Allow time for applause. Thank the audience for their applause).

(If video not used, proceed to next line of text).

Being there matters.

Throughout her history, YOUR United States Navy, and her veterans, have been where it mattered, when it mattered.

Being there matters.

Tomorrow, and well in to the future, the United States Navy, YOUR Navy will be there when it matters, where it matters.

Being there matters.

Most importantly, today, right now, America’s Navy – YOUR Navy -

is already there.

In closing, I would like to quote from Navy Veteran John F. Kennedy, words spoken more than fifty years ago that still resonate today with Navy veterans: “I can imagine no more rewarding a career. And any man who may be asked in this century what he did to make his life worthwhile, I think can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction: 'I served in the United States Navy.”

Thank you so much for having me here today.