**Notes on This Speech**

(NOTE 1: this speech is written to incorporate two videos, which are optional. If you are speaking at a venue that has the capability to display video independent of your speech, you may consider providing the video files to the venue to play prior to your speech. Alternatively, for venues which have video capability independent of your speech, you may provide the venue with 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 2: the time of delivery is determined using a public speaking rate of 100 words per minute. Your actual time may vary).

**Time of Delivery:**

**With videos approximately 13 minutes.**

**Without videos approximately 10 minutes.**

**One Day, Three Ships, One Spirit**

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

It is truly an honor and a privilege to be here today, a day on which we as a nation pause to remember those lost, pay tribute to the countless heroes who selflessly ran to aid, and comfort the survivors of the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.There are certain events in life that are transcendent, life altering, because the world is different after they occur. We remember exactly where we were. We remember exactly what we were doing. We remember our reaction. 9/11 is most certainly one of those events.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., famously said that the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. I believe the same can be said of organizations .... or even of nations. On September 11, 2001, the United States faced one of the greatest challenges in its existence. I’d like to share with you one example of where our country chose to stand following our time of great challenge and controversy.

I would like to tell you a story today of three ships. Like each of the Navy’s 290 deployable battle force ships, these three ships represent the fighting spirit of the Navy. But they also represent something more which is particularly important on this day. They represent the memory of those lost. They represent the heroism of the first responders and the volunteers who ran toward danger, instead of away from it. They represent the courage and steely resolve of the survivors. And they represent our nation’s enduring commitment to victory in the global war on terrorism.

Let me take you back to Amite, Louisiana, September 11, 2003 -- two years to the day following the attacks. Steelworkers from the Amite foundry solemnly pour 20 tons of molten steel salvaged from the wreckage of the World Trade Center into a mold that will form the bow stem of what will one day become USS New York.

This act is rich with meaning on so many levels. A powerful message to those who perpetrated the attacks. A Navy warship forged from the wreckage of one of our nation’s greatest tragedies. A ship built that will serve as a living tribute the memory of the victims, the heroes and the survivors. A symbol of national pride for every American.

Dotty England, wife of former Secretary of the Navy Gordon England, said this about the moment:

“I went to the pouring of the steel down at Amite, Louisiana, and not just myself, but everybody connected in that steel mill, treated that steel with utmost dignity. It was rather quiet, everybody handled it with dignity. The steel workers in Amite felt like they were contributing to the defense of the nation."

No question they were.

In a poetically apropos gesture, USS New York was delivered to the fleet on August 21, 2009 -- at 9:11 a.m., and shortly before Christmas 2012, the ship and crew returned to Naval Station Norfolk from its maiden deployment. Perhaps fittingly, that deployment was to the Middle East, and the ship participated in, among other operations, Operation Enduring Freedom, which refers to the war on terror in Afghanistan.

I’d like to show you a short video about this great warship, and her even greater crew, so you can hear in their words what it means to serve on this particular ship on this particular day.

<http://www.navy.com/about/equipment/vessels/uss-new-york.html>

Fast forward to July 28, 2012, Avondale, Louisiana. A Navy warship is christened “Somerset” at Huntington Ingalls Industries Shipyard. Like her sister ship USS New York, Somerset is a living tribute. The ship is named in honor of the courageous passengers and crew of United Airlines Flight 93. Their actions prevented terrorist hijackers from reaching their destination only to have the airplane crash near Shanksville in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.  
  
Patrick White, president of the Families of Flight 93, had these words at the ceremony:

"We thank our nation for honoring and remembering those 40 aboard Flight 93 with this extraordinary tribute, the Somerset. These passengers prevented additional tragedy on Sept. 11 through their selfless actions. The Somerset and her steadfast crew - now and in the future - are both a living tribute and vigilant reminder of the sacrifice made to protect the lives of unknown others."

During the weeks following the Flight 93 crash, recovery personnel retrieved more than 95 percent of the airplane's wreckage from the crash site. An American flag was hoisted on the top of a power shovel or "dragline" on a hill dominating the area. The dragline had been used in coal stripping at one time, and the equipment with the flag became a symbol of the effort. In the summer of 2008, steel from the dragline's bucket was melted down and cast into Somerset's bow stem.

Let’s go forward now to April 6, 2013, Norfolk, Virginia. A new Navy warship is born as the ship’s sponsor, Mrs. Joyce Rumsfeld, gives the order to the crew to “Bring this ship to life.” Five thousand spectators cheer as the Sailors run aboard USS Arlington, named for the county of Arlington, Virginia to honor the first responders and the 184 victims who died when American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon.

Among the five thousand are nearly 200 first responders who performed emergency medical, police and firefighting services at the Pentagon. The ship's Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Darren Nelson, had this to say: "The first responders have been tremendously supportive throughout the last two years. To be able to present to them their ship is an awesome occasion.”

He presented them “their ship.” What a moment of pride that must have been for the first responders, and for the USS Arlington crew.

There is a great deal of truth in Cmdr. Nelson’s words. It is their ship. But it is also your ship, as is the New York, as is the Somerset as are – in addition to these three - the 287 other 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 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. USS New York was there in 2012. USS Arlington and USS Somerset will be there one day not long from now.

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. Your Navy protects the US Economy, prevents and deters war, and provides the Nation with global influence and power. It is indeed a solid return on our Nation’s investment. Our US Economy depends on the unimpeded flow of commerce and information on and under the sea lanes. 70% of the Earth’s surface is covered by water, 80% of the world’s population lives close to a coast, and 90% of all global trade by volume travels by sea.

The free flow of goods over the oceans is a National interest. One quarter – that is 38 million- of all U.S. jobs are directly or indirectly tied to trade

One quarter of U.S. Manufacturing jobs depend on exports.

One fifth of all U.S. Agriculture products -- by volume -- are sold overseas

The Navy, operating forward ensures this flow of goods remains unimpeded. Your United States Navy also protects undersea communication cables, which carry almost all international internet and phone traffic to and from the US.

- 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.

I will say it again -70 percent of the planet we live on is covered by water. Simply put, this means 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 INTRO: (if you are not using video, please skip to next paragraph). In closing, I offer the United States Navy Band’s Sea Chanters rendition of the Navy Hymn. Play video. Allow time for applause. Thank the audience for their applause).

The three ships I mentioned – USS Arlington, USS New York, and USS Somerset – represent only a small part of the United States Navy’s investment in cutting edge innovations. In 2012 USS DEWEY, a guided missile destroyer, used a solid state laser to shoot down a drone, at a cost per shot of 85 cents – in stark contrast to the $3 million dollars one standard missile costs. This laser is now deployed aboard USS PONCE – although I note that the laser is not being tested nor used in the Persian Gulf.

We are working on the Rail Gun, which, like the solid state laser, has the potential to defend against enemies at a fraction of the cost of current missiles.

We have also invested in countermining – already deployed in the Persian Gulf, these new systems have remote vehicles deployed from small rubber inflatable boats, thus freeing up our combatants ships for other missions.

Your Navy protects the US Economy, prevents and deters war, and provides the Nation with global influence and power. It is indeed a solid return on our Nation’s investment.

Remaining pierside for the Navy doesn’t make sense economically or strategically – if we do, our Navy & our Nation cede our advantage and diminish our global power and influence. That is why your Navy is already there – because yesterday, today, tomorrow, being there matters.

Thank you so much for having me here today. God bless the victims of 9/11, the heroes who rushed to their aid, and the survivors who live with the memories of that fateful day. And God bless America.