**Notes on This Speech**

(NOTE 1: 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. An alternate timed scrolling background of imagery is also available for use. 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).

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| **Speaker** |  |
| **Event** |  |
| **Date** |  |
| **Location** |  |
| **Duration** | 23 minutes approx.; can be edited to 15 minutes by deleting optional section |
| **Goal of Speech** | Rally, motivate and thank military members in attendance; connect civilians to what their modern military is accomplishing; acknowledge the sacrifices of the military family |
| **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/> |

**ARMED FORCES DAY 2014**

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

Ladies and gentlemen, it’s my honor and privilege to welcome all of you here today, and to thank you for joining us. It’s with particular pride that I welcome our men and women in uniform representing the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard as we celebrate Armed Forces Day. [PAUSE]

Today, we take a moment to honor those who serve and stand ready to sacrifice. They defend our sea lanes against those who would seek to interrupt the commerce that powers the world. They patrol and protect the streets of cities worlds away from the ones they grew up playing on. They guard our physical and digital borders against enemies who now operate in a world where boundaries only exist on maps.

Our Nation’s Soldiers, Sailors, Airman, Marines and Coast Guardsman make up the finest military force in the world. [Pause for applause if appropriate] They have volunteered to wear the uniform of the U.S. military, and to shoulder the heavy burdens that come with that service. They have committed to **being there** at times and in places that put them at great risk, because being there matters.

Being there matters – this is a phrase that especially applies to your United States Navy. On this day, a holiday for us, a day in which we celebrate the accomplishments and achievements of our military, the fine men and women of the United States Navy are deployed around the world, around the clock, protecting and defending America on the world’s oceans. Your Navy’s Sailors 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. Because being there matters

The past eleven years have exacted a toll, as we’ve dispatched our forces to the far corners of the world many times over. Our ask of our military members and their families has been significant--the sacrifices demanded great. And yet, time and again our Armed Forces have risen to the challenge.

Some have answered the call to deploy multiple times. Others have set aside personal goals and plans, in favor of the needs of their nation.

[Turn to military members in audience; on stage] For this, we owe you and your families an immeasurable debt of gratitude, and a commitment to support you now, and when you transition from service.

As we pivot to the next chapter in our military strategy after ground wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, I’m grateful that as a nation, Americans have come to value and connect with service more profoundly than we have in the recent past.

We do not know what this next chapter may bring – we can make highly educated guesses, but accurately predicting the future is very impossible. What we do know, however, is more than our 70 percent of our planet is covered by water – our nation needs the ability to act from the sea. We also know that more than 90 percent of the world’s commerce travels by sea. Being there - patrolling the world’s interstate ocean highway system, ensuring the free flow of global trade and preserving America’s economic prosperity – matters. 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, and at any time.

Stories of military bravery, ingenuity and strength now fill television programs and magazine pages, that they never appeared in before.

Those who wear the uniform are now the narrators of their own chapter of American history, sharing their experiences and images through channels and forums that didn’t exist for previous generations.

The story they collectively tell, is one that should fill each of you with pride as Americans. It’s the story of the greatest military force in the world.

Their dedication and selflessness is the inspiration for movies, television storylines and songs.

They will be **there** when it matters, wherever “there” may be.

-Fighting for those, who cannot defend themselves.

-Teaching new generations to sustain a way of life that isn’t reliant on those who would manipulate the basic rights of humanity.

-Building the basic structures, to create opportunity in communities and lands where there previously had been none.

Their stories are those of courage.

The courage to make the tough calls when there are no clear answers--only tough and tougher options to choose from. Stories like that of Captain Richard Phillips and the crew of the Maersk Alabama.

If you’ve been to the movies in the last year or are a Tom Hanks fan, you may have seen the movie adaptation of this harrowing tale.

In 2009, the Maersk Alabama was hijacked by pirates in the Indian Ocean. Captain Phillips and his crew did their best to thwart the pirates until assistance from the USS Bainbridge could arrive.

Commander Frank Castellano, the commanding officer of the Bainbridge was given difficult orders - prevent the pirates from reaching the mainland by whatever means necessary--even as the enemy was holding Captain Phillips hostage.

It was a critical decision – perhaps the most critical decision Commander Castellano would make to this point in his Navy career . A decision guided by years of military training and leadership. But for a theater of moviegoers, the full impact of “whatever means necessary” is an almost unfathomable order, practically crying out for a plot twist to save us from having to make that call.

Those who serve in the U.S. Armed Forces are asked to make impossible decisions daily. To execute their orders without question. Without hesitation. To respect and believe in the chain of command, and to trust in your training and your fellow shipmates to see those orders through to completion.

And then to carry on, regardless of what the costs and implications of those decisions are.

[Turn to military members]

Each one of you who has volunteered to wear the uniform, has chosen to be the man or woman who has to execute sometimes difficult orders--**to be there** when it matters.

[Turn back to audience]

Now if you’ve seen the movie, you know that ultimately Captain Phillips is rescued when Commander Castellano and members of a SEAL rescue team convince the pirates to negotiate, ultimately capturing their leader, and killing those holding Phillips.

[Optional Joke]

[*We don’t rely on plot twists in the United States Navy. We bring in the people that know how to get things done.]*

And while these stories make for exciting, dramatic storylines for Hollywood, for our warfighters, it’s just another day on the sea, in the field or in the air.

The men and women of YOUR Armed Forces must dig deep daily, be resourceful and ultimately trust their training if they are to successfully achieve their missions.

They are warfighters, educators, negotiators, enforcers, technicians and stewards of the promises our nation makes to the global community. They are called to **be there**, when no one else will. Because being there matters.

As we stand here today, the world’s geopolitical and economic climates continue to evolve, and 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.

When it comes to protecting and defending America, being there matters. And America’s Navy is already there.

The men and women of YOUR United States Navy, along with their brothers and sisters in the other branches of the Armed Forces, ensure that each of us may speak our mind, cast our votes and live our lives under the freedoms that previous generations of military members fought so strongly for.

**OPTIONAL SECTION—CAN BE CUT FOR TIME**

We are embarking on the first pages of the story of our post-9/11 veterans. But early this month, we added another chapter to the story of the Greatest Generation.

On May 2, hundreds of World War II veterans made the pilgrimage to see the memorials that honored the sacrifices and contributions of this esteemed group through the Honor Flight program. The program brings WWII veterans from around the country to see the memorial dedicated to their service.

It was a milestone moment, as it marked the final flights some of the state chapters would make since the program launched in 2005.

Donald Buska, a Navy Veteran from Montana, boarded his flight, seated among those who had witnessed everything from the attacks on Pearl Harbor to the Battle of Guadacanal. They had changed the world as young men and women, and had been changed forever by it.

The trip was extremely meaningful and celebratory for Donald. Although his service had been many decades ago, it formed a core part of the man he became.

Hours after returning to Montana that evening, Donald passed away. Donald’s son said his father had the time of his life that day. A member of the Big Mountain Honor Flight committee eulogized, “A final mission was accomplished in more ways than one.”

It’s important on Armed Forces Day as we recognize those currently serving, that we also recognize the contributions of the generations of Veterans who came before them. That we not take for granted our responsibility in serving as the torchbearers of this generation ensuring that those who come next understand the fill impact their service had on the future of our nation.

These young men and women left small farms, neighborhood schools and bustling cities across the country, and came together to change the course of our American story.

Over the years, we’ve asked generations of young men and women to go. To march forward into Europe, the islands of the Pacific, Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama,the Balkans, the Middle East, and many other locations. Some stories receive headline treatment. Others are only recorded in the annals of our Special Operations teams - the true measure of their accomplishments never reaching the folks back home.

**CONCLUSION**

Our Armed Forces are on the job throughout the world. No matter where they are, they stand watch through holidays, late nights, natural disasters and against enemies that take many forms.   
They will be there around the clock and around the world, defending America at all times.

And we continue to ask them **to be there**.

To leave families, friends, jobs and the security of home, to contribute to something greater than them. To put themselves in harm’s way to ensure that others are not harmed.

When our national security is threatened by the existence of a weapons facility or a terrorist camp on the other side of the world, your armed forces are there, because being there matters.

Where these threats exist, Navy ships, Air Force jets, Army tanks and our Special Operations Forces are very close by, with the ability to destroy targets located hundreds of miles away.

On this Armed Forces Day, I am especially proud of the contributions made by my, and YOUR, Navy.

I am proud that when a humanitarian crisis strikes, like the devastating tsunami in northern Japan in 2011, or the earthquake which ravaged Haiti in 2010, your United States Navy was there, providing immediate humanitarian relief in the wake of a disaster, ferrying supplies, medicine and trained medical personnel ashore from Navy ships via helicopters and landing craft.

I am proud that when narcotics traffickers use speedboats and rudimentary submarines to ferry illegal drugs across the oceans and into America, being there matters. Navy ships and submarines work the waters near Central and South America with law enforcement agencies to intercept shipments of illegal narcotics before they reach our shores.

When it comes to protecting and defending America, being there matters. And I am proud that America’s Navy is already there.

Our Armed Forces can do all of these things from the land, sea and air.

Today, we celebrate these guardians who everyday give of themselves in ways we can never fully repay. You are the stewards of our heritage and we are forever grateful for the sacrifices you and your families have made. So please accept the full weight of our admiration for you, and our gratitude for the way of life you fight so valiantly to protect.

Being there has mattered, yesterday, today and it will continue to matter tomorrow. And America’s Armed Forces are already there.

Thank you so much for having me here today.