**Notes on This Speech**

(NOTE 1: this speech is written for outreach purposes, meaning it is intended for external audiences during 239th Navy Birthday commemorations on or around 13 October. Minor modifications are necessary in order to tailor this speech for use at Navy Balls and other internal celebrations).

(NOTE 2: this speech is written to incorporate two videos. It is recommended that you may consider providing 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 ).

(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 23 minutes (including videos).**

**Being Where it Matters for 2XX Years**

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

I am happy to be with you on this jubilant occasion – a time when we gather to celebrate OUR Navy’s Birthday. OUR Navy has been defending America with pride since 1775. The United States Navy recognizes October 13, 1775, as its birth date, for on that date, in Philadelphia, the Continental Congress adopted the original legislation out of which the Continental Navy grew.

I am also happy for the opportunity to thank those who – day in and day out – support us - the United States Navy – while we defend our great Nation. Spouses, sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, extended families and friends; it is through their sacrifice that we are able to serve. Support for the Sailor comes in many forms; it comes in direct support through ensuring in our absence that check books are balanced, finances are managed and children are schooled, counseled, coached and fathered. Support for those who serve comes in the form of a myriad of commitments; individually and collectively through organizations like Readiness Groups, Fleet and Family Support Centers, MWR (Morale, Welfare and Recreation), the Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society, Navy League, our ombudsman, Red Cross and many others.

In the words of Commander Frank Brandon, commanding officer of USS Mitscher, on the occasion of that ship’s departure on a deployment to the Middle East: "We could not do this without the love and support of the families we leave behind."

The Navy Ombudsman program recently celebrated its 44th birthday. The Navy Ombudsman- most of whom are the spouses of active duty or selected reserve members of the command - plays an important role in the success of a command's mission. Ombudsmen are the first step for family members to turn to during a crisis, guiding Navy families to the proper resources they need. That, in turn, helps their Sailors with assurance that their families are being taken care of at home.

The American Red Cross’ Holiday Mail for Heroes program has collected more than 6.5 million cards filled with messages of gratitude, encouragement, and holiday greetings from the American public for members of the U.S. Armed Forces. These cards are distributed to American soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines on military installations around the world.

The Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society provides financial assistance and education, as well as other programs and services to members of the United States Navy and Marine Corps, their eligible family members, widows and survivors. In 2013, the Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society provided more than 65,000 clients with more than $48.6 million in financial assistance.

Throughout the United States Navy, on or around October 13th, many events and traditional observances are held which reaffirm our commitment to the United States Navy’s future by paying homage to our past. These events and traditions include Navy Birthday Balls, bell-ringing ceremonies, cake cutting ceremonies, classic Navy movie viewing, and the singing of “Anchors Aweigh”.

In fact, I am going to provide you the opportunity to hear “Anchors Aweigh” sung by some of the finest vocalists in the world, the United States Navy Band Sea Chanters:

(VIDEO 1: play “Anchors Aweigh” video.) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvJQusMVbAU>

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

Another United States Navy tradition that I am extremely proud of is that throughout our 239 year history, we have been where it matters, when it matters. I am extremely proud of our heritage of success in battle on, above, and below the sea.

In April 1778, Continental Sloop *Ranger*, under the command of Captain John Paul Jones, was there when it mattered, capturing the British Sloop of War *Drake* during the Revolutionary War.

Between 1801 and 1805, President Thomas Jefferson called on his Navy to project sea power forward, protecting United States commerce by blockading and bombarding Tripoli during the Barbary Wars.

During the War of 1812, the United States Navy scored many successes, including the destruction of the Royal Navy Frigate *Guerriere* by frigate *Constitution*, a ship that to this day serves in the United States Navy’s fleet.

Shifting to the modern era, the United States Navy was critical in the opening phases of the Persian Gulf War in 1991. Navy ships launched hundreds of Tomahawk cruise missiles, Navy aircraft flew combat missions from six aircraft carriers in the Persian Gulf and Red Sea, and battleships *USS Missouri* and *USS Wisconsin* fired their 16-inch guns for the first time since the Korean War on several targets in Kuwait.

In March 2011, During Operation Odyssey Dawn, the code name for the American role in the international military operation in Libya which enforced United Nations Security Council Resolutions, United States Navy ships and submarines launched Tomahawk missiles, and aircraft from *USS Kearsarge* participated in rescue operations of two airmen who had been shot down.

In early August of this year, F/A-18s from the aircraft carrier *USS George H.W. Bush* conducted strike missions in Northern Iraq against the terrorist group known as ISIL. And, at the end of September, cruiser *Philippine Sea* and guided-missile destroyer *Arleigh Burke* launched Tomahawk missiles into Syria, supporting our President’s goal to defeat and destroy ISIL.

The United States Navy, for 239 years, has been there where it matters, when it matters.

Today, there are 291 warships and more than 3,700 aircraft 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.

The United States economy depends on the free flow of commerce and information on and under the sea.

More than 70% of our planet is covered by water, 80% of the world’s population lives close to a coast, 90% of global trade by volume travels by sea, and 95% of international internet and phone traffic to and from the United States are carried by undersea communication cables.

The United States Navy, being there where it matters, when it matters, operating forward, peacefully underwrites the security of the U.S. and its economy.

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. 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.

In addition to ensuring our fine Sailors have all they need in order to be ready, operate forward, and remain the premier maritime warfighting force in the world, the United States Navy is investing in cutting edge innovations.

One example of this innovativeness was demonstrated in 2012 by *USS Dewey*, a guided-missile destroyer that used a solid state laser to shoot down a drone. The laser weapon system is being installed on USS Ponce for at sea testing. Keep in mind a standard missile costs $3 million – the laser which shot down the drone cost 85 cents. One doesn’t need to be a math major in order to understand the cost savings brought on by this new technology.

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 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 strike fighters or unmanned Navy aircraft from aircraft carriers, firing Navy cruise missiles from ships or submarines, or inserting a team of Navy SEALs to do what only SEALs can do.

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

The Navy is also well-prepared to provide humanitarian assistance in response to crises around the globe. Just this past May, aircraft from Carrier Air Wing 8 provided humanitarian assistance to Iraqi people who were forced to flee from their homes and towns because of threats and actions by ISIL.

 Following the devastating tsunami that struck northern Japan in 2011, and the earthquake which ravaged Haiti in 2010, the United States Navy was there when it mattered, providing support and assistance to our global neighbors. 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 helicopters and 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 submarines work the waters near Central and South America with law enforcement agencies, intercepting shipments of illegal narcotics before they reach our shores.

Today – and for the past 239 years - the United States Navy operates around the world around the clock, defending and protecting America at all times on the world’s oceans. YOUR United States Navy has been where it mattered, when it mattered.

In the words of our Commander in Chief, President Barack Obama: “Our Sailors have performed brilliantly in every mission given to them - from Coral Sea to Midway to Guadalcanal; from Iwo Jima to Inchon; from the Mekong Delta and Desert Storm to Baghdad and Kabul. They continue to answer our Nation's call as a global force for good, safeguarding vast oceans, bringing justice to terrorists around the world, and providing assistance during times of humanitarian crisis. At sea, on land, and in the air, our brave men and women of the United States Navy, like all who wear the uniform of our country, represent what is best about America. We are forever indebted to these selfless heroes.”

I’ve talked about the United States Navy, but seeing is believing. Here is a video showing your Navy in action recently.

(VIDEO 2: play “Navy Week in Review” video.)

<http://www.navy.mil/viewVideo.asp?id=19861>

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

Being there matters.

It is worth repeating - for 239 years, being there has 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.

The Navy will continue to be at the front line of our nation’s warfighting efforts in war and peace.

Being there matters.

Most importantly, today, right now, America’s Navy – YOUR Navy - is already there.

God bless our Sailors.

God bless the United States Navy.

And may God continue to bless our great Nation – the United States of America.

Thank you so much for having me here today.