**Notes on This Speech**

(NOTE 1: this speech is written for outreach purposes - it is intended for external audiences during Pearl Harbor 2013 commemoration ceremonies.)

(NOTE 2: If the venue at which you are speaking has audiovisual capability, it is recommended that you provide to the venue prior to your speech: the audio file; the Power Point slideshow; and 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.**

**Being There Matters Pearl Harbor Commemoration**

***“Those Who Have Gone Before Me”***

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

There is a line in the Sailor’s creed, something every Sailor in the U.S. Navy knows and reveres, which says, “I represent the fighting spirit of the Navy, and those who have gone before me to defend freedom and democracy around the world.”

Those who have gone before me. That is what today is about. That is why we are here.

That particular line from the Sailor’s creed, those six words, have special meaning today, as we pause to commemorate the December 7th, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, a United States Navy base that served as home to the Pacific Fleet and gateway to the Western Sea Frontier.

They have special meaning today, as we gratefully pay tribute to the heroes of that fateful day to whom we owe a great debt, perhaps the greatest of debts, for their sacrifice, their courage and their steely determination to ensure freedom and democracy were resolutely defended.

The attack on Pearl Harbor brought us into a war of such magnitude, that when our Allied victory was finally won, tens of millions of people were killed or crippled in body and mind, and much of the civilized world had been reduced to ashes and rubble.

The events of December 7th, 1941, are well-documented. In the destruction of that day, heroes were born, the history of the world was forever altered, and a nation’s resolve was cemented.

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 December 7, 1941, the United States faced one of the greatest challenges in its existence.

I’d like to share with you the story of how our country chose to stand following our time of great challenge and controversy, and I’d like to do this by taking a look at what the world looked like one year AFTER the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Seventy one years ago, December 7th, 1942, Americans were in the first phase of the terrible scourge of World War, learning the awful price they would have to pay to bring it to an end.

From the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, on small islands and across entire continents, the United States Navy, along with the other branches of the Armed Forces, brought the war back to the enemy.

They were heroes then, those World War Two American Veterans, who fought, suffered, and died to free the world from the pitch black night of war and oppression.

Take a moment with me to imagine them, the American Heroes of World War Two. Many, many veterans came from this era. Seventy one years ago they were young men and women, some still teenagers. These were our fathers and mothers, grandmothers and grandfathers, great grandmothers and grandfathers.

On the first anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, they were either in training to be warriors, or they were already fighting, in battles in places that had yet to become part of the American lexicon: Coral Sea, Midway, Guadalcanal.

On the home front, Americans were simultaneously engaged in both their daily business and contributing to the war effort, by means of their taxes, donations, and volunteer work. Americans on the home front played a vital role in building the biggest and most powerful Navy in the history of the world to that point in time.

And for more than 70 years your Navy has maintained that distinction, of being the world’s most powerful, capable and technologically-advanced Navy, manned by America’s finest men and women.

Right now, as we gather together, just as the America’s intrepid heroes of Pearl Harbor did seven decades ago, 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, just as it did more than 70 years ago, 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 is attacked as it was at Pearl Harbor, or today, when our 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.

Following a humanitarian crisis, like the devastating typhoon that recently struck the Philippines, where U.S. Navy ships and Sailors are, at this very moment, providing critical aid, 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.

Throughout her history, YOUR United States Navy has been where it mattered, when it mattered.

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

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

is already there.

I would like to quote from Captain H.C. Train’s official report on the attack on Pearl Harbor, which was dated January 9th, 1942 and sent to the Commander in Chief of the US Pacific Fleet, a quote which captures the fighting spirit of the Navy then, and inspires today’s Sailors to live up to the challenge presented by Captain Train in the final sentence: “From my observation, fire on all ships in the harbor was taken up very quickly after the first attack, which came without a semblance of warning. All officers and men I observed were cool and collected and went about their jobs of manning and firing the guns, attempting to salvage ships, or other duties in a calm and efficient manner. I do not believe any body of officers or men could have done better.”

Let us praise the veterans of Pearl Harbor, and the brave Americans who fought and won the war that began there. Let us take strength from their example, and wisdom from their history. God bless our country and those who fight to keep it secure and free.

Thank you so much for having me here today.