**240 Years of Standing Ready – Then, Now and Always**

(Time of delivery: approximately 17 minutes based on a speaking rate of 100 words per minute)

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

It is my distinct honor to be with you today. It’s been a tremendous season of patriotic holidays, parades and observances over the last few months. In fact, in the last decade, we have enjoyed an incredible amount of support from the American public as they have rallied around our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines.

But October 13th is a date that holds a special place in my heart.

It is the day we recognize and celebrate 240 years of service to country and nation by our U.S. Navy.

It is the day we honor the multitude of men and women who have chosen to proudly wear the Navy uniform during times of war and during times of peace.

It is the day we celebrate the birth of the greatest Navy the world has ever known. It is the day we celebrate OUR Navy.

OUR Navy has been defending and protecting America on the world’s oceans since 1775. For 240 years, we have been there when it mattered, where it mattered, around the world, around the clock, defending and protecting America on the world’s oceans.

When our founding fathers needed a military force that could defend the shores of our fledgling nation, we were there.

When our allies called upon us in World Wars I and II to battle dictators and unspeakable evil, we took to the oceans and skies around the globe to protect those who needed us.

And today, when cyber warfare is eradicating borders, and redefining the capabilities of our enemies, OUR Navy is answering the call in new and innovative ways.

America’s Navy has been uniquely positioned to do all of this because the world’s oceans give the Navy the power to protect America’s interests anywhere and at any time.

As I stand here looking at the men and women who have volunteered to wear our uniform, the pride I feel for what our Navy has accomplished in 240 years is immeasurable.

We are an incredibly diverse group, reflecting the ever-changing face of our nation. We’ve joined from small rural communities, big cities and towns in between. All of us have stepped up to defend and protect the nation we love.

This year, as we celebrate our 240th, the Navy Reserve is also celebrating its centennial.

Our Navy Reservists trade their civilian clothes for Navy uniforms to build needed schools in Haiti, provide critical medical care in Afghanistan, and fly relief supplies to Cuba.

The Navy Reserve has been there since the first U-boat surrendered in World War I and have treated casualties on the battlefields in Vietnam.

Navy Reservists bring unique skillsets, honed by their civilian jobs and military training, and an ability to live in two worlds with a skill most superheroes would envy.

Being a citizen Sailor is perhaps one of the toughest balancing acts there is. Jumping in and out of civilian and military life. Ensuring that our Navy forces can surge in powerful numbers when their country needs them. Then heading back to lead companies, communities and families throughout the country without missing a beat.

The foundation of our Reserve force came at a particularly pivotal time for our country. Prior to the beginning of World War I, a young Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Franklin D. Roosevelt, anticipated the need for a federal maritime reserve force and began to push Congress to enact legislation to accomplish this goal.

In every conflict since “the War to end all wars”, Navy Reserve Sailors have deployed to protect our nation’s freedom.

When the U.S. entered World War I on April 6, 1917, there were 8,000 Sailors serving in the Navy Reserve Force.

When the fighting ended on November 11, 1918, more than 250,000 Reserve Sailors were on active duty--which was more than half of the wartime Navy.

During World War II, 84% of the 3.4 million Sailors serving on active duty came from the Navy Reserve – including **FIVE** future U.S. Presidents.

It’s also worthy to note 100,000 of those sailors were women, forming the foundation for the many women who chose to serve and lead in our Navy today.

From Korea to Vietnam, from the Gulf War to Iraq and Afghanistan, and to humanitarian missions toHaiti and Japan, Navy Reserve Sailors have been there providing critical support and capabilities to our active duty counterparts and making a difference across the Navy.

So today, on the Birthday of our Navy, as we hold events and traditional observances to proudly honor our past and look with boundless confidence to our future, I also ask you to reflect on the impact the Navy Reserve has had on our glorious history. They have been there when we needed them then, now and will be there always.

I’d like to also thank the incredible support network of employers, families and communities that stand behind our Reservists, wishing them well when they leave for duty and welcoming them home with open arms when they return again.

I would like to have all our Reservists stand for a moment to allow us to properly recognize 100 years of excellence.

(Allow for applause)

Let me be clear – the Navy Reserve is not a stand-alone entity, something we keep on the shelf, an organization we only call on in times of war and crisis. The Navy Reserve is **the** key component of our total Navy force, enabling us to perform the day to day missions our Nation expects of her Navy.

Birthdays and centennials give us the opportunity not only to pay homage to our past, but also to look to our future.

Sitting among us today may be a future sailor, or a future citizen sailor – a sailor who could be a surface warfare or expeditionary warfare specialist, a SEAL, a submariner, an aviator, a SEABEE or civil engineer, a nurse, a doctor, a lawyer, a cyber specialist, or serve in many other career fields.

I can tell you, we need you all. And I will be proud to read the new chapters you add to our Navy story.

Today, there are about 275 warships and more than 3700 aircraft in the Navy’s inventory. We are investing in cutting edge innovations in weapons systems, multi-mission ships and submarines, and the next generation of strike, patrol and electronic warfare aircraft. Our toolbox is constantly changing and it certainly looks different from when I first joined the Navy in xxxx.

Throughout our history, the Navy has been agile in adapting to new challenges and maximizing new opportunities, and we will continue to adapt to the challenges and opportunities that a digital landscape present to us.

In addition to ensuring our 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 is a solid state laser to that can shoot down missiles or other airborne threats. A standard missile - the longstanding arrow in our quiver used to address these threats in the past - costs $3 million. The cost per shot of the laser is 85 cents.

The Navy is also actively seeking a game-changing approach that will transform how we use energy and help us create a sustainable national security force.

In October 2014, the Navy commissioned USS America (LHA 6). USS America is equipped with a hybrid electric propulsion system that will make it one of the most energy efficient amphibious ships in the Fleet. These changes will help us stay in the fight longer, refuel less, and extend our operational reach. If the Navy can travel farther on less fuel, we can increase our range and allow us to stay on station longer.

These advancements are extraordinary. I can only imagine what we’ll be highlighting at our 250th birthday.

So why is our Navy so critical to national security and prosperity? Well, 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. 95% of international internet and phone traffic to and from the United States are carried by undersea communication cables. These facts, along with the ever changing geopolitical and world economic climate, places tremendous responsibility on a maritime force to protect the American way of life. That maritime force, the force so critical to our nation’s security and prosperity is THE – YOUR – United States Navy.

Right now, as we gather to celebrate two tremendous milestones – the 240th birthday of the United States Navy and the 100th anniversary of the Navy Reserve -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.

It is also important to note that the United States Navy can perform her myriad missions from the sea, without needing another country’s permission to operate within its borders.

Today – and for the past 240 years - the United States Navy operates around the world around the clock, defending and protecting America at all times on the world’s oceans.

For 240 years, 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.

And as we are there - we will be ready – we were ready tin the past, we are ready now, we will be ready always.

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

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

May God bless our Sailors.

May God bless our Navy Reserve.

May 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 – and join me in wishing a VERY HAPPY 240th BIRTHDAY to OUR UNITED STATES NAVY!