



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet  
235<sup>th</sup> Navy Birthday Officers Ball  
Hilton Hawaiian Village  
Admiral Patrick M. Walsh  
Saturday October 9, 2010**

Good evening and Happy 235<sup>th</sup> Birthday to the United States Navy! Distinguished Guests, ladies and gentlemen, and especially the officers of the U. S. Pacific Fleet and all those who support us...Aloha!

Thank you for pausing from your very demanding schedules as we come together to honor and celebrate our proud heritage. Tonight's event has been planned for many months...so when you relax and enjoy the evening, remember your shipmates and colleagues in N6 and the Navy Ball Committee for making this evening special and possible for all of us.

It is a distinct privilege to participate in tonight's festivities. Andy Kaye and I have so much admiration, respect, and appreciation for the many talented men and women who put our important mission into action – protecting and defending the maritime interests of the United States and our allies and partners in the Asia-Pacific...each day – on and under the sea, in the air, and ashore, in an amazing range of missions, often involving long family separations. This evening is an especially important opportunity to remember those who stand the watch at sea, as well as those serving in Djibouti, Baghdad, Kabul, along with their families at home. We are especially proud of their service.

For many years the U.S. Pacific Fleet has been a **guarantor** of peace in the Asia-Pacific region – bringing the security that enables prosperity. Our fleet has adapted to changes in the strategic landscape and challenges to collective security. As we tackle today's challenges, we continue to draw on the rich heritage of our Navy for inspiration – and the naval heroes whose names live on in ships of the Pacific Fleet – the courage of Reuben James, the technology innovations of Grace Hopper, and the combat leadership of Hawaii native Gordon Chung-Hoon.

Our responsibilities cover a vast and dynamic region – represented by half the earth’s surface and fifteen time zones. It is the home of four of the world’s largest economies (US, PRC, Japan, India) and eight of the world’s busiest container ports. The region’s prosperity depends on freedom of the seas, as evidenced by the 70,000 ships that bring trillions of dollars of economic activity through the Malacca Straits each year.

Recent events, however, provide stark reminders of historic conflicts and disputes that continue to play-out today. Earlier this year, the egregious attack on South Korean Navy ship Cheonan affected Sailors everywhere with the loss of the ship and 46 members of the crew...and it was the loss of Warrant Officer Han, a rescue diver with 30 years of service, who despite warnings to the contrary, continued to risk his life in the moments after the tragedy, that touched the world with his commitment to his fellow man. Today, his final words to his family before departure on this fateful mission now ring eternal. His words, “I do it for honor,” remind us of the ultimate sacrifices made by honorable men and women to keep the sea free from threats.

As a Navy we have demonstrated the flexibility and effectiveness of conducting operations from the sea – not only in conflict, but also to save lives and relieve suffering. This year, 14 partner nations and numerous non-governmental organizations participated in Pacific Partnership with hospital ship Mercy as the flag ship during visits to five nations. Over a four-month period, over 100,000 people received medical treatment and engineers built water wells and renovated community buildings such as schools and clinics. The participation by doctors from South Korea, Japan, Australia, and other nations alleviated suffering and fostered goodwill throughout the region. This proactive humanitarian work during periods of calm helps us prepare to work together in a crisis. Our presence in the region and the enduring relationships we’ve established enable us to respond quickly to disasters such as the recent, near simultaneous, flooding in the Philippines, the tsunami in Samoa, and the earthquake in Padang, Indonesia.

Many of you in the audience had a role in these operations and missions that enhance fleet readiness, promote maritime security, and alleviate pain, suffering, and build trust. Whether your work environment is in a headquarters or in the field, at sea or undersea, in the air or on the

flight line, your contributions fuel the engine of our Navy in the Pacific. For your invaluable efforts and contributions, I thank you.

This month we mark the 10 year anniversary of the attack on USS COLE. Last month, we had memorial services to remind of the nine year anniversary since the attacks on New York, the Pentagon, and Pennsylvania. During this prolonged period of conflict, many of us have experienced the pain of separation from our families as well as sorrow with the loss of our colleagues, shipmates, and loved ones. So this time of year is important because it is an opportunity to remind ourselves, who we are, and thank each other for what we do.

We serve at a time when our country needs us. We wear the cloth of the nation; we work on behalf of others; we sacrifice the routine and normalcy of our own and our family's lives for the needs of the country that we represent. While, relatively speaking, our tour here in the Pacific is short, the contribution that we make to our fellow man, lasts a lifetime.

Today, we read about how the country has grown weary of conflict. We know and understand the impact that the war has had on the economy, on our families, and on each other. We know and are witness to...the impact of continuous duty, the demand for individual sailors to support the ground mission, and the effect of extended deployments at sea.

But this I can say with confidence and pride –  
If ever...there was a country worth living in...  
If ever...there was a country worth defending...  
If ever...there was a country worth fighting for...  
If ever...in the history of the world, there was a country whose values and principles were worthy of our sacrifice...it is the United States of America.

And if ever there was a navy whose service, sacrifice, and duty was worthy of your honor, your commitment, and your courage, it is our own.

We are Sailors -- we do it for honor.

Thank you, for that you have done and all that you continue to do.

God Bless you, our country, and all those who stand with us.