



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
70th Anniversary Pearl Harbor Day Commemoration
Pearl Harbor Visitor Center
Admiral Patrick M. Walsh
Wednesday, 7 December 2011**

Senator Akaka, Congressman Young, Secretary Mabus, Admiral Willard, Lieutenant Governor Schatz, Mayors, community leaders, Director Jarvis, distinguished guests, Pearl Harbor survivors and World War II veterans ...I would like to recognize a special friend joining us in the audience today -- Beverly Young who has been a tireless friend and proud sponsor of USS PEARL HARBOR –

... I am humbled, honored and especially grateful to be part of the commemoration today.

Each year, the National Park Service, in concert with many partners, assembles a program that captures the essence of this commemorative event. In the past, we have gathered together under a variety of banners that honor the history before us including:

“A Nation Remembers”

“Honoring the Past – Building for the Future”

“Pacific War Memories – The Historic Response to Pearl Harbor”

“A Promise Fulfilled”

...and this year...

“The Enduring Legacy.”

Each year gives us an opportunity to stand proudly, shoulder-to-shoulder, with men and women who have an extraordinary place in history...and, each year...we are better people for it.

Each program has given us another view into their remarkable lives, a window into the enormity of their task, an appreciation for the heaviness of their burden, the strength of their resolve, and the powerful commitment they undertook for their fellow man...and, with each program...we are better sailors for it.

Each commemoration has given us an opportunity to stand and recognize noble sacrifice, courage under fire, and say “thank you” one more time...for the risk that you took, the future that you built, and the inheritance that you bequeathed to us...so that we could have lives of promise, potential, and opportunity and, with each commemoration... we are a better nation for it.

Today our flag is at half-mast, so that we pause, reflect, recognize, and memorialize the men and women who gave their lives in service to our country on this fateful day. All that is asked from us is simply to appreciate their sacrifice and to remember their loved ones.

Today is important...for honor, for opportunity, and for reasons that connect and cross generations because those who serve in uniform are part of a great circle of community, history, and tradition, where one generation cares for, mentors, and nurtures the next. At this hallowed setting, an extraordinary legacy...endures...for all to see.

I want to convey to you my appreciation for what you gave to the Pacific Fleet. You not only gave us the opportunity for peace in the Pacific, you gave us the opportunity to have a strong relationship with our counterparts from the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force. It is a friendship made possible by the battles that you fought and the conduct of the peace that you won. It is a relationship that exists now between families, based on trust, mutual respect, and an inner strength...understood and respected by the descendents of former combatants and further reinforced by our shared response to modern-day challenges and tests – as remarkably demonstrated in Northern Japan when US Armed Forces stood side-by-side with the Self Defense Force, within hours of an unprecedented crisis, and proved beyond measure, what it means to be a friend.

You represent the pride of our history, who gave more than you received and positively affected the lives of more people than you will ever know...and that ladies and gentlemen, is our naval heritage and tradition. On behalf of Pacific Fleet men and women on watch around the world today, thank you.

Strong leaders are needed in order for the pivotal lessons of this extraordinary legacy to endure. Today's guest speaker is such a leader. Secretary Mabus brings a unique combination of life experiences to the Department of the Navy for the benefit of Sailors, Marines, and their families. He is a visionary leader with a distinguished record of public service that began in the Navy.

He is a veteran, he is the former Governor of Mississippi, served as Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and was a leader in the business community. He is a graduate of the University of Mississippi, holds a Masters Degree from Johns Hopkins, and a law degree from Harvard Law School.

He understands our operational and tactical requirements, encourages an environment for innovation and experimentation to tackle our most vexing challenges, and most importantly, understands our people, the needs of those who serve, and the special covenant that we share with the families of those who serve. I am proud to have the distinct honor and privilege to introduce to you the 75th Secretary of the Navy. Ladies and Gentlemen, the Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Ray Mabus.