



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
Bowfin's Memorial Day Remarks
USS Parche Memorial
Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
Admiral Cecil D. Haney
28 May 2012
As prepared for delivery**

Aloha and thank you Ken for that kind introduction.

It is so good to see each and every one of you out here today. I would like to particularly thank all the participants for this remarkable ceremony.

Thank you Admiral Caldwell for your leadership here with the Submarine Force in the Pacific.

I would also like to recognize the participation from both of the Consuls General Offices. Representing the Philippines, Consul General Julius Torres, it's good to see you again, and from Australia, Colonel Linda Meyers.

I really like the spectrum I see from this podium, from the veterans on the rather mature side, all the way down to the young JROTC Cadets from Radford High School. It's good to have this spectrum of folks represented here for such a great and noble occasion.

So my fellow Sailors, submarine veterans, families and friends, it is a privilege to be here with you today and to have the opportunity to honor those who have sacrificed their lives while serving our grateful nation.

From those conflicts that have occurred before we were born to those that have occurred, or are occurring, during our lives, it is important that we pause and remember to honor the sacrifices of so many for the freedoms we enjoy.

On Memorial Day, 50 years ago, just off the shore of Ford Island, the Arizona Memorial was dedicated to the memory of the gallant Sailors who gave their lives for their country during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Since that dedication, the Arizona Memorial has had more than 50 million visitors. Last year 1.7 million visitors came to visit the memorial. It is the number one destination for visitors coming to Oahu.

So why do so many come from around the world to visit the Arizona Memorial? Why does anyone go out of their way to visit the museums, the battlefields and the cemeteries of wars from years gone past? For many, they come to mourn the loss of a family member, friends or shipmates. Some come to reconcile the costly toll of war with the relative peace that typically follows each conflict. Others visit these historic sites as they hope to gain a deeper connection to the events that moved a nation and shaped the world.

No matter why they come, no matter what they hope to find, when they visit these great memorials, they are often humbled by the presence of those who are forever represented there.

I can attest to this feeling. Having visited a number of cemeteries such as Arlington National Cemetery and the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl; you cannot miss the endless rows of markers placed in perfect formation in this imperfect world. There, one quickly gains a sense of the magnitude of our nation's loss while realizing the true commitment on the part of those who have served and died in our nation's conflicts.

Having also visited the Arizona Memorial numerous times here in Hawaii, I am always humbled when I see the names of those listed on the Shrine Room's Memorial Wall. 1177 Sailors lost their lives when the Arizona was attacked.

Throughout our history, our sons and daughters have donned the cloth of our nation, taken up arms, and fought and died to preserve our rights and our freedom. They were our nation's best and brightest and we cannot help but mourn their passing as we celebrate their victories.

From our nation's very beginning, the families, friends, towns and communities of our fallen have mourned their loss in their own way, and in their own time. It was not until after the Civil War that cities and regions started to collectively honor those who sacrificed all. Decoration Day, as it was called in the earliest days, came about as the living decorated the graves of the fallen heroes with flowers. It later became nationally recognized, of course, as Memorial Day.

So today, just as years gone past, we decorate the memorials with flower leis and we pay tribute to those who gave their all in service to their nation. The observance of their names, the acknowledgement of their contribution during their shortened lives, and the recognition of their sacrifice is the greatest honor we can give them. When we think about them, for a time they live again, in our memories, in our imagination, and in our hearts while stirring up our pride and our patriotism. As their remarkable performance is etched in our memories, they live on.

This morning, as we gather here at this unique Submarine Memorial Park, the *Parche* Submarine Memorial, with the plaques of these lost boats and their heroic Sailors, we recognize those lost in the submarine service in World War II. We recognize the importance of their sacrifice and the legacy they have bestowed upon us. For it was through their effort, and ultimately their sacrifice, that our submarine force has become what it is today, a formidable force capable of protecting the very nation that they gave their lives to defend.

As a result of the surprise attack here at Pearl Harbor in December 1941, as you know, much of our fleet in the Pacific was destroyed. The enemy continued to grow in strength and confidence as it rushed to accomplish its war plans, ahead of schedule. It was our submarine force that was called on to take the fight to engage this formidable enemy.

ADM Nimitz framed it this way: "When I assumed command of the Pacific Fleet on 31 December, 1941; our submarines were already operating against the enemy, the only units of the Fleet that could come to grips with the Japanese for months to come. It was to the Submarine Force that I looked to carry the load until our great industrial activity could produce the weapons we so sorely needed to carry the war to the enemy. It is to the everlasting honor and glory of our submarine personnel that they never failed us in our days of peril."

It's been just over 70 years ago since the attack on Pearl Harbor. Over the next several years we will see the 70th anniversary of many great battles in the Pacific. We just celebrated the 70th

anniversary of the Battle of Coral Sea and soon I will attend the celebration on Midway Atoll of the 70th anniversary of our victory in the Battle of Midway. The men of our Armed Forces fought and died valiantly as they pushed back the enemy and were ultimately victorious in the Pacific. Earning a special place of distinction in that victory were our Submarine Sailors.

As shown here by the plaques on the wall, that remarkable performance came at a cost. We lost some 52 boats and more than 3,500 submariners that we recognized during the tolling of the bells.

We just observed with the addition of a second lei on USS *Growler*'s plaque, the Hawaii Chapter of the U.S. Submarine Veterans of World War II has designated the state submarine lost in that war as SS 215, USS *Growler*.

As mentioned, indicative of the courage and commitment and arduous conditions *Growler* experienced on her fourth war patrol, during a night surface attack on a Japanese gunboat, the gunboat suddenly turned to ram *Growler*. Unable to avoid collision, Commander Howard Gilmore while on the bridge ordered all ahead flank and left rudder to strike the gunboat amidships.

He was seriously wounded from gunfire. Gilmore could not get below decks, so he ordered the crew in those remarkable words "take her down!" and saved the submarine by ordering *Growler* submerged. No wonder he was one of seven submariners awarded the Medal of Honor for service during World War II.

On November 8th, 1944, on her 11th war patrol, the USS *Growler*, who earned eight battle stars, was hunting in a wolf pack with the submarines *Hake* and *Hardhead*. As they hunted an enemy convey, the order to launch the attack was the last communication heard from *Growler*. The sacrifice of her 86 Sailors and the sacrifice of the brave Sailors on the other 51 submarines lost in World War II, serves as a reminder of the deadly cost of war and the fighting spirit of our Submarine Warriors.

Today their legacy lives on as our valiant Submarine Sailors surge beneath the waves and sail the seas in the most technologically advanced submarines imaginable. Whether it is the *Los Angeles* class, *Seawolf*, *Ohio*, or *Virginia* class submarine, our Sailors continue to exploit and dominate the underwater domain. With stealth, endurance, unmatched firepower and courageous teamwork, they are on mission at undisclosed locations about the globe.

We live in an unpredictable world and our Navy, including our submarine force, provides purposeful forward presence far away from America's shorelines. We remain battle ready in the traditions of our forefathers as we maintain our war fighting readiness. Through operations and exercises we continue to work to strengthen relationships with our allies and partners. That's why it is so unique to have the Philippines and Australia represented here.

As we remember these brave Sailors on the plaques behind me, consider for a moment the heroism, dedication and devotion they had for our country. These individuals serve as a reminder to the world that the U.S. military personnel of today have inherited much from our forefathers. We have a long-standing tradition of calling on the best our nation has to offer and taking the fight to the enemy. Any nation, or group, that conspires to do harm should think again.

As I conclude my remarks here today, I am reminded of a quote from John F. Kennedy. He said, "A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces, but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers." Today we are gathered to honor and remember not just those brave men of the submarine force who paid the ultimate price in service to our country, but all who gave their lives throughout the history of this grateful nation.

We salute Medal of Honor recipients – SEAL Lieutenant Michael Murphy and Master at Arms Second Class Michael Monsoor for their participation in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom respectively.

We also salute one of our more recent casualties associated with Operation Enduring Freedom, Navy Petty Officer First Class Ryan Wilson, an Intelligence Specialist who CNN recently reported was the 3,000th overall death from the U.S.-led international coalition. He died on May 20th.

We salute over a million Americans who have died in their country's wars since its first, the American Revolution.

We honor them when we reflect upon their lives, when we recall our cherished moments of them, and when we retell their stories.

We honor them when we celebrate the anniversary of the historic events that their efforts helped shape.

We honor them when we come together on Memorial Day and reflect on their achievements and the high price they paid.

The men and women of our Armed Services, who sacrificed their lives for our nation, represent the greatest examples of heroism, self-sacrifice and patriotism.

I am proud that our nation pauses to acknowledge their sacrifices. May we remember and not forget what they represent and the importance of resourcing the defense of our nation.

Thank you for being here to honor and recognize them with me.

May God bless the families who have lost loved ones in war, may God continue to bless our United States Navy, our grateful Nation, and all those who serve.

Mahalo.