



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
Wounded Warrior Pacific Trials
Battleship Missouri Memorial
Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
Admiral Cecil D. Haney
16 November 2012
As Prepared for Delivery**

Good Evening and Aloha!

I appreciate the tremendous turnout for this important ceremony, thank you for being here this evening.

It's great to see our event coordinators from Safe Harbor, Marty Martinez and Marisa Larson. I also see Senior Chief Acosta with the Joint Weather Center here. Senior, I know that you did a lot of the heavy lifting for many of these Pacific Trial events over this past week. Thank you.

I also see some good friends with the Navy League here tonight, welcome.

This event has the attention and support of so many, just look at the stars here tonight. We have flag officers in attendance, we have Senior Chiefs and Master Chiefs and most importantly the true stars of the show, the athletes. Ladies and Gentlemen, can I get a round of applause for our athletes? (Applause)

I also want to thank Fleet Master Chief Minyard for his contributions. He saw the trials at Port Hueneme, California, last year and had the vision to bring the trials here. This week has been possible because of him. Thank you Fleet Minyard. (Applause)

It is an honor for me to be the host for the 2012 Wounded Warrior Pacific Trials. One of my top priorities as the Commander of the Pacific Fleet is to value our people and their families. This event does that. I am personally committed to this program, just as I know each of you are.

The month of November is a special month for us in the military. November is Warrior Care Month for one, but we also celebrate Veterans Day. My Veterans Day started at Punchbowl, the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. There I had the privilege of listening to former Senator Max Cleland as he gave the keynote speech.

Senator Cleland is an amputee. In Vietnam, at the age of only 25 years old, he suffered injuries that required the amputation of both legs and his right forearm. But this didn't stop him from becoming a U.S. Senator. To Senator Max Cleland, there were no limits to what he could do, regardless of his challenges. He is an inspiration to many and his speech was the beginning of an inspirational week for me.

Since his speech on Veterans Day, Sunday, I've attended several of the Pacific Trial events -- as many as I could. I attended the opening ceremony and luau later that same night. I was able to attend the basketball game just a few nights ago. I watched the athletes play with passion and intensity. They even invited me to play with them, but I was having so much fun watching them, I decided to stay on the sidelines and watch.

I heard that the bike races were intense this year. Besides the fierce competition you had to deal with the heat, then it rained, and then there were several spectacular crashes because of the water on the course. Despite these challenges you kept racing. Even the winner of the event had a crash, but was able to pull out the victory. Congratulations to each and every competitor, each of you are winners.

While only 35 of the 48 athletes here tonight will go on to continue their competition this year, each of you has so much to be proud of. The 2012 Wounded Warrior Pacific Trials are an opportunity to celebrate athletic achievement. The program was built to inspire the Wounded Warriors to achieve, and they certainly have. More than that, you have inspired me and I know that you have inspired everyone who came out to watch these events this week. Thank you. As I mentioned earlier, November is Warrior Care Month, but I want to encourage everyone here to think of every month as Warrior Care Month.

Watching these athletes this week, I was reminded of a quote from President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a president who also had to overcome his own physical challenges. He said, "Men are not prisoners of fate, but only prisoners of their own minds."

I know that none of the athletes here tonight are prisoners of fate or of their own minds. They are free to follow their dreams and inspire us to follow ours.

Another quote I remembered was by Christopher Reeve, the actor who played the part of Superman, the man of steel, who showed us how vulnerable each of us can be to injury. He said, "A hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles."

When these events are over, I ask that each of you remember the heroic men and women you see here today, especially as they continue on in their competition or start training for next year's trials. Remember the obstacles they are overcoming. They understand there is no limit to what they can do; it is a lesson each of us should take aboard. Perhaps one of them may be a future senator like Max Cleland or a president like Franklin Roosevelt, or perhaps something even more grand than that. Remember, there truly are no limits to what you can achieve.

Thank you all for being here tonight. I thank each of the athletes for being here, for your dedication and commitment. I hope that you continue to work hard at achieving your dreams. You are an inspiration to all of us, you are an important part of our great Hawaii Ohana.

A hui hou -- Good-bye, until we meet again.