



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
Battle of Midway Commemoration
Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
Admiral Harry B. Harris, Jr.
06 June 2014
As prepared for delivery**

Thank you Jim for that introduction and for your team's hard work in organizing this special commemoration ceremony.

And ladies and gentlemen, let's give it up for the Pacific Fleet Band who has provided such inspirational music.

From where I stand, I see a lot of familiar faces in the audience. Thank you all for being here: Consul-General Dewar, Consul-General Paik, flag officers, distinguished guests, veterans, ladies and gentlemen.

And a special salute to the entire Pacific Fleet Intelligence and Information Operations team. It's great to have you here, each service represented, our Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen, and Marines from the PACOM JIOC, NCTAMS, NIOC and NSA Hawaii.

Thank you for all that you do every day. All of you are part of the proud legacy we commemorate today. This is undoubtedly a special day, 70 years ago we had the landing at Normandy and 72 years ago—Midway.

Ladies and gentlemen, good morning. It's an honor to speak to you as we remember the past and consider the future. Today's theme reminds me of a statement by General Douglas MacArthur who once said, "The military is forced to depend upon intelligent interpretation of the past for signposts charting the future..." And that's proven true time and time again.

In the decade before Pearl Harbor, our nation cast a wary eye to the west as we studied the signposts, we watched with great concern the militaristic rise of Imperial Japan. In 1940, we relocated the Pacific Fleet from California to Hawaii, a move designed to give pause to a potential adversary--last century's version of the rebalance to the Pacific.

Even so, on December 7th, 1941, the United States was strategically surprised, when carrier-based aircraft of the Imperial Japanese Navy dealt an almost crippling blow to the fleet.

And brave men and women from across our country answered the clarion call to arms, and they rose up to defend our nation, and fought to victory. But it wasn't just the warriors who took to the skies, or the warriors who sailed on or beneath the seas, but your predecessors--men like Joe Rochefort, Edwin Layton, Jasper Holmes, "Mac" Showers, and others in the intelligence and cryptologic community, who worked diligently to study and ultimately break the Imperial Japanese Navy code.

It was a seemingly impossible task, to gather the right information, to making sense of it, and getting this information to commanders so they could make the right battle plans.

The Battle of Midway was the turning point in the war and the first important step as we pushed across the Pacific, toward victory over Japan.

Over the preceding decades, since our victory in Japan, the United States has become the indispensable nation, deploying the might of our Armed Forces abroad, committed to regional stability and security, for peace and economic prosperity.

Now we often hear that those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Those who survived Pearl Harbor have warned us with their motto, “Remember Pearl Harbor, Keep America alert, Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.”

But almost 13 years ago, on that otherwise beautiful fall morning, when the sun rose above the glistening skyline of New York City, and chased away the shadows in the courtyard of our Pentagon, when our nation was attacked on Sept 11th, again we were strategically surprised, this time not by a nation-state, but by terrorists.

Again our nation’s brave sons and daughters came forth, to hunt down those responsible, to chase them to the far corners of the globe, and root them out where ever they tried to hide. I’m proud of the great effort, and tremendous success, that they have achieved, and that many of you here in this audience helped achieve.

As we reflect on 9/11, we realized that it is not enough to remain eternally vigilant to familiar threats, but that we must also strive to anticipate entirely new methodologies of attack.

Former Secretary of Defense Panetta warned, and I quote, “It is very possible our next Pearl Harbor could be a cyber-attack.” Could it be?

Today we are mindful of the lessons from the past as we look for the signposts that will chart our future. We again cast a wary eye westward as we recognize the Indo-Asia-Pacific for its tremendous potential, and we see with clear eyes the tremendous risks, and again, we are rebalancing to the Pacific.

Now I admit I was never a Boy Scout, but I know the Boy Scout Motto: Be prepared. And as the commander of the Pacific Fleet, I look into the future with that intent in mind: Be prepared.

In my home there’s a brass plaque that reminds me that while it is called the Nimitz House, it was originally built for Admiral Husband Kimmel...a not-so-subtle reminder to all commanders of the Pacific Fleet to “be prepared,” and as I look into the future I’m counting on you -- each and every one of you -- to make sure the Pacific Fleet is prepared. That means not only are we ready to fight tonight, but that we’re reading those signposts well enough to predict when and where that fights going to be, and how it will manifest itself.

So as I gaze out at you all in formation today, I look with eager anticipation at this community of experts, one the Navy now calls the Information Dominance Corps, to drive the development of systems and operational practices to ensure that our Navy retains the same decisive advantages that my long-ago predecessor, Admiral Nimitz, had at Station Hypo.

Back then we had the cutting-edge IBM punch card machines, long-range reconnaissance aircraft, and predictive operational intelligence reporting.

Today we need the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the Midway generation to master the assured communications, the battlespace awareness, and the integrated fires concepts of the Information Dominance Corps and operationalize them. If the team behind me and their leaders do that in their acquisition programs, in their watch centers, and at sea, ultimately, as a fleet commander, I get what I need and that's decision superiority.

In peacetime we can use that to our advantage, to win the fight without fighting; and in times of war, well, we can use it to get the information, the forecasts, and the assessments we need to fight -- and win decisively.

Ladies and gentlemen, I know that while it seems for many of you that time has stopped, I can assure you the second hands of your watches are still relentlessly ticking forward. This is the part of the speech where I tell you I'm wrapping it up, so you can snap out of your daydreams and catch the last few comments.

Winston Churchill once commented that, "To every man there comes a time in his lifetime ... when he is tapped on the shoulder and offered the chance to do a very special thing unique and fitting to his talents. What a tragedy if that moment finds him unprepared for the work that would be his finest hour."

When fate tapped the men of Station Hypo on the shoulder in the early months of 1942, they were found more than ready for the task, and I for one am thankful for all that they did for our nation, and for the world.

In the future, some or all of you may very well be tapped on the shoulder to play an equally important role. You may be offered the opportunity to do a very special thing unique to your talents, and I know that when that time comes, as it most assuredly will, the men and women of the Information Dominance Corps will be ready.

Until that time comes, may God bless each and every one of you who serves, our men and women who are standing on the frontlines, at the forward edge of the battle area – the FEBA of Freedom – on, over and under the seas, to the farthest reaches of the Pacific and beyond.

And may God bless this land of liberty we call America.

Thank you.