

C-Note #9

A MESSAGE TO THE FLEET FROM THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS



HISTORY, TRADITION, AND LEGACY - *OUR NATION'S 250TH BIRTHDAY*

As our nation approaches its 250th birthday, we have an opportunity not only to reflect, but also to act. For more than two and a half centuries, American Sailors have stood the watch, defended our independence, safeguarded our prosperity, and projected American power across every ocean. The history of the United States Navy is inseparable from the history of the United States itself. The security of our nation has always depended on a Navy that is ready to fight and win, and that readiness is shaped by the lessons of those who came before us.

\\ Our History is More Than Heritage

It is a warfighting advantage. The experiences of those who came before us – earned through sacrifice, innovation, and combat - provide the foundation for how we think, operate, and prevail today. As the maritime environment becomes more contested and complex, these lessons are not abstract. They are practical. They are enduring. And they remain essential to how we deter conflict and, when required, win decisively at sea.

\\ Initiative, Resilience, and Courage Under Fire

From the earliest days of our nation, American Sailors have demonstrated initiative, resilience, and courage under fire. During the War of 1812, Sailors aboard USS CONSTITUTION and USS UNITED STATES delivered stunning victories on the high seas that electrified the nation. Later in that war, aboard the ships USS NIAGARA and USS LAWRENCE, Commodore Perry delivered a decisive victory on Lake Erie, turning the strategic tide of the war. From this battle emerged a lasting truth captured in the words: "Don't give up the ship." That ethos must continually define our force.

\\ Revolutionary Changes in Warfare

During the Civil War, the Navy confronted revolutionary changes in warfare. The appearance of the ironclad CSS VIRGINIA was answered by our own USS MONITOR - exemplifying the lesson, when the character of warfare changes, the Navy must change with it. At Mobile Bay, Admiral Farragut's fleet pressed the attack through mined waters under the immortal command, "Damn the torpedoes. Full speed ahead." His actions underscore a timeless requirement for naval leaders, disciplined risk acceptance and decisive action in the face of uncertainty.

\\ American Resolve and Global Reach

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, American naval thought and strategy matured alongside the Nation's global rise. Visionaries such as Alfred Thayer Mahan and President Theodore Roosevelt recognized that national strength depended on command of the sea. The modernization of the Fleet and the deployment of the Great White Fleet demonstrated American resolve and global reach. At Manila Bay, under the command of Commodore George Dewey, disciplined execution and devastating gunfire secured a decisive victory that announced the United States as a Pacific power. These fundamentals of naval warfare remain enduring.

\\ Forged in the Fight

In World War II, the U.S. Navy fought and won a two-ocean war against determined adversaries. In the Atlantic, Sailors waged a brutal battle against German U-boats to secure the sea lanes vital for the liberation of Europe. In the Pacific, from Coral Sea to the turning point at Midway, our integrated intelligence, aviation, surface, and submarine forces changed the outcome of the war in the Pacific. Culminating at Leyte Gulf, the largest naval battle in history, American Sailors broke the Imperial Japanese Navy's combat power and ensured victory. This legacy of global, integrated warfighting remains the foundation of our combat readiness today.

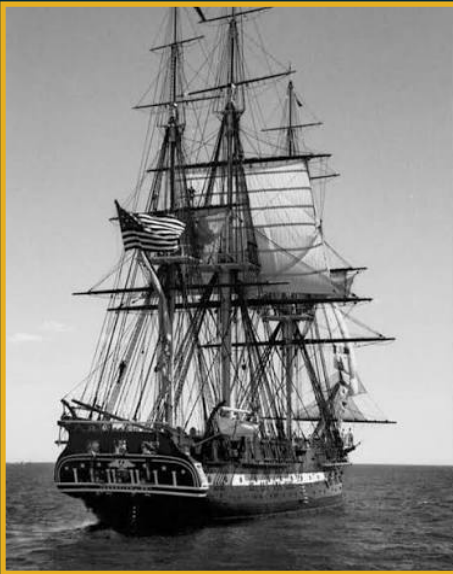
\\ Forward-deployed Force

Since 1945, the United States Navy has remained the Nation's forward-deployed force, answering the call across every region of the globe. From NATO operations in the Atlantic, combat in Korea and Vietnam, and sustained operations in the Middle East and beyond, Sailors have provided continuous presence, crisis response, and combat power in defense of national interests and allied security. Today, that history is being written in real-time. Our Sailors deployed throughout the world stand as a powerful deterrent on the global stage. Confronting unprecedented threat profiles with disciplined, real-time precision, our crews are delivering outstanding effects under fire. This unmatched combat edge is proof that our heritage is a living weapon and when put to the test, the American Sailor remains our ultimate warfighting advantage.

HISTORY IS THE FOUNDATION

History is not just a legacy we inherit, it is the foundation of our modern naval power, forged by the sea across two and a half centuries. As we continue building a World Class Fleet, modernizing the Foundry that sustains us, and refining the way we Fight, we must leverage these hard-won lessons of the past. The Sailors before us delivered victory when it mattered most, and today, that same responsibility now rests with us.

This is who we are. This is why we fight. This is how we win.



BUILT IN THE FOUNDRY - TEMPERED IN THE FLEET - FORGED TO FIGHT.



Daryl L. Caudle
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34th Chief of Naval Operations

