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SUBJ/65TH ANNIVERSARY BATTLE OF MIDWAY COMMEMORATION//

GENTEXT/REMARKS/1. FROM 4-8 JUNE 2007, AMERICA WILL OBSERVE THE 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY, A CRITICAL TURNING POINT IN THE WAR IN THE PACIFIC. AS AMERICANS AND AS SAILORS, IT IS A BIG PART OF WHO WE ARE, A SHINING MOMENT IN OUR HISTORY, AND ONE OF THE MOST PIVOTAL BATTLES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. HISTORIAN JOHN KEEGAN RIGHTLY CALLED IT ONE OF THE GREATEST REVERSALS IN STRATEGIC FORTUNE THE NAVAL WORLD HAS EVER SEEN.

2. I ENCOURAGE ALL COMMANDS THROUGHOUT OUR NAVY TO COMMEMORATE THIS GREAT VICTORY, TO RECOGNIZE NOT ONLY WHAT IT SAYS ABOUT THE HITTING POWER OF OUR NAVY, BUT ALSO WHAT IT SAYS ABOUT THE SAILORS WHO FOUGHT AND DIED TO WIN AT MIDWAY. THE BATTLE WAS MUCH MORE THAN JUST A CLASH OF TITANS, IT WAS AND SHOULD ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED AS A TRIBUTE TO THE COURAGE, SKILL, AND YES, EVEN THE LUCK OF OUR WORLD WAR II PREDECESSORS. IN REMEMBERING THE FIGHT, WE MUST ALSO REMEMBER THEM.

3. WE WOULD ALSO DO WELL TO REMEMBER THE UNCERTAINTY OF THOSE TIMES. NO ONE IN 1942 KNEW WHERE THINGS WERE HEADED. THE MARCH ACROSS THE PACIFIC HAD NOT BEGUN. AT THE TIME, NO ONE KNEW THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WHAT HAPPENED AROUND THAT TINY ATOLL. EVEN ADMIRAL NIMITZ DID NOT IMMEDIATELY GRASP THE IMPACT. WITH MIDWAY, THINGS WERE JUST GETTING STARTED, HE RECALLED. AFTER MIDWAY, THERE WAS NO FEELING THAT WE HAD WON THE WAR. WE STILL HAD A TENACIOUS ENEMY TO DEAL WITH AND A DIFFICULT JOB TO DO.

4. TODAY, WE TOO FACE A TOUGH, DETERMINED, AND, IN MANY WAYS, MORE BARBARIC AND UNPRINCIPLED ENEMY. AND WE, TOO, CANNOT YET SEE THE END OF THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM. WE HAVE DEMANDING, DIFFICULT WORK TO DO, BUT WE CAN -- AND WE SHOULD -- LOOK BACK ON THE SAILORS OF MIDWAY AND TAKE HEART. WE MUST TELL OURSELVES THAT THE SHIPMATES WE HAVE AND THE ONES WE HAVE LOST IN THIS WAR ARE JUST AS STRONG AND JUST AS BRAVE AS THOSE WHO WON WORLD WAR II. WE MUST HONOR THEM ALL, PAST AND PRESENT, FOR THEIR COURAGE.

5. I INVITE COMMANDS TO VISIT THE SPECIAL MIDWAY MATERIAL POSTED ON THE NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER S WEBSITE AT WWW.HISTORY.NAVY.MIL/MIDWAY.HTM. THERE YOU WILL FIND A CONCISE OVERVIEW OF THE BATTLE, ORAL HISTORIES, RELEVANT SPEECHES, AND EVEN A SAMPLE MIDWAY NIGHT AGENDA. MR. JON YOUNGDAHL OF NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY WASHINGTON ALSO MAINTAINS A DATABASE OF VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY. COMMANDS WISHING TO INCLUDE MIDWAY SURVIVORS IN THEIR CEREMONIES CAN CONTACT HIM AT COMMERCIAL (202) 433-2607/DSN 288-2607 OR VIA EMAIL: JON.YOUNGDAHL@NAVY.MIL.

6. THE NAVY S OFFICIAL WEBSITE LIKEWISE HOSTS A TERRIFIC MIDWAY COMMEMORATION PAGE ENTITLED THE COURSE TO MIDWAY, AVAILABLE AT WWW.NAVY.MIL/MIDWAY. THERE YOU CAN FOLLOW THE DRAMATIC PACE OF EVENTS IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC AS THEY PROPELLED BOTH SIDES TO MIDWAY. YOU CAN ALSO VIEW BATTLE MAPS, WATCH INTERVIEWS WITH VETERANS, AND EVEN READ THE FIGHTING HISTORIES OF THE SHIPS INVOLVED.

7. TAKE TIME OUT TO REMEMBER THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY AND THE BRAVE SAILORS WHO WON IT. IT IS MORE THAN JUST A GREAT SEA STORY. IT STANDS AS TESTAMENT TO THE CHARACTER OF OUR SAILORS AND WHAT THEY MEAN TO THIS MARITIME NATION OF OURS.

8. RELEASED BY ADM MIKE MULLEN, CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS.//