

2009 Navy Birthday Message from  
Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus

Two hundred thirty four years ago, on 13 October 1775, the Continental Congress approved a resolution commissioning two ships, each with a crew of eighty and an armament of ten guns. The ships were charged with intercepting munitions and supplies at sea bound for British troops occupying America. From this modest beginning, the Navy has grown to today's modern fleet of 285 ships and 646,000 active, reserve, and civilian members. Through all 234 years, the Navy has fought our wars and carried the fight to the enemy overseas.

From the raid on Nassau in 1776 to the Gulf of Aden and the mountains of Afghanistan today, the Navy has always been our nation's away team, defending her interests abroad. You and your predecessors have served selflessly, without regard to personal sacrifice – enduring months or even years away from home and loved ones.

Our heroes epitomize that legacy of service. Jones, Preble, Macdonough, Farragut, Nimitz, Halsey, Lassen, and so many more unnamed - now joined by new heroes like Michael Murphy and Michael Monsoor, who paid the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our nation. Today we honor their service, as we honor our enduring legacy.

The mission of the Navy continues, adapting to the shifting requirements of a complex world. Sailors are training and deployed worldwide; in Iraq and Afghanistan fighting the wars, in the Caribbean conducting medical missions with partner nations and non-governmental organizations, in the Pacific delivering humanitarian assistance, in Africa building security capacity with new partners, in the Gulf of Aden combating piracy, and in South America interdicting the flow of narcotics.

You, our Sailors, continue to be the bedrock of our success. You are the cops on the beat; on the water, in the air, under the sea, ashore and overseas. Your selfless devotion to service honors our proud Navy tradition and is an example to the rest of the nation. Godspeed to you, your families, our Navy, and our nation.