Governor Baker, Congressman Lynch, Mayor Walsh, Chairman Dunford, Admiral Moran, thank you for inviting me to join you today.

To the family of Thomas Hudner, thank you for honoring us with your presence.

Two months ago it was my honor to speak to the Medal of Honor society at their annual convention. A greater collection of heroes and patriots could never be found. But what made the gathering particularly special was that it took place on the campus of the United States Naval Academy, just steps from where the next generation of patriots were studying for their midterm exams.

It reminded me of the unbroken chain that Thomas Hudner embodied throughout his life – from the moment his service began at the Academy, to the day he earned the Medal of Honor by crash landing his Corsair at Chosin Reservoir to aide his friend and fellow aviator Jesse Brown, to the lifetime of looking out for his shipmates and countrymen that followed.

And his spirit will live on, in the proud service of every man and woman aboard the destroyer we commission today.

The USS Thomas Hudner is proof of what the teamwork of all of our people – civilian, contractor and military – can accomplish together, from the start of the acquisition process, to the delivery at Bath Iron Works, to the start of the first watch today.

And I want to extend a special word of thanks to the plank owner officers and crew of the USS Thomas Hudner and their family.

I know the extreme demands that service at sea can place on both the sailor and the family, and I stand with our nation in gratitude to you all. Understand that as you take to the sea, know that every man and woman in the Department of the Navy sails with you, as does a very grateful nation.

And now it is my pleasure to introduce a distinguished leader and dedicated public servant who just got commissioned for another command tour of his own, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Charlie Baker.