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the bill that cut the deficit from $290 billion a year all the way down to $160 billion in just 3 years. In fact, our budget would be balanced today but for the debt run up in the 12 years before I became President.

Well, now we all have to go the rest of the way to balance that budget. But how we do it will say a lot about the values we have as a people and how we understand what's in our interest as we move to the next century. I have a good plan to balance the budget. But it will also give every American the opportunity to build a good life for himself or herself and to build better futures for their families.

Our plan will give our children the best possible education. It will keep our streets safer. It will take care of our elderly. It will maintain the purity and clarity of our environment. And it will maintain the strength of our Armed Forces.

Our plan also will keep faith with the men and women who have put their lives on the line to protect the freedoms that we now hold dear. For over 50 years, all Americans who joined our military have known that they are making a bargain with America and that in return for their service to our country our country will stand by them. The young men and women who serve today in our military give us some of the best years of their lives. And one of the things we tell them is that the longer they serve our country, the more our country will owe them when their service is done.

Amazingly, there are those today who believe that in order to balance the budget it's all right to break our commitment to a group of more than 800,000 men and women who've already served for at least 15 years. Now when these people joined the armed services, they were told that their retirement pay would be based on whatever salary they were earning the day they retired. But now in the name of balancing the budget, some propose that we scale back their retirement pay in a way that will mean cuts for retired military personnel of as much as $200 a month.

But I disagree. I believe that after asking so much of these men and women, our country should keep its commitment to them and find a better path to balance the budget. I have a plan to balance the budget that doesn't break our commitment to those who serve us in uniform. I think that kind of broken commitment is unconscionable. And as long as I'm President, we're not going to break our word to the members of our Armed Forces or our veterans.

For the last 50 years, our Nation has kept commitments to veterans who fought and won World War II, those whom we honor here in Hawaii and all across America this weekend, and to the veterans who followed them. That's a big reason that we now have the finest military in the world, outstanding and brave men and women who understand the duty they owe to one another, their communities, to our country, and to the world. I think we have an obligation to them. You know, they give up a lot to serve us, a lot in time and money. But one of the things they get in return is a commitment on retirement, a reward for the work—the important work they do.

So on this Labor Day weekend when we honor the work of all Americans, let us, all of us, recommit ourselves to the legacy of World War II, to the men and women in uniform today, and to our obligations to them.

Hillary and I wish all of you a wonderful Labor Day weekend. Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:25 p.m. on September 1 at Wheeler Army Airfield in Honolulu, HI, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 2.

## Remarks at a Wreath-Laying Ceremony Aboard the U.S.S. *Carl Vinson* in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

*September 2, 1995*

Thank you very much. Thank you, Admiral Fluckey, for your kind words and far more for your astonishing service to our country. Secretary Dalton, Secretary Perry, Secretary Brown, Admiral Boorda, Admiral Macke, Admiral Zlatoper, Admiral Moorer, Admiral Moore, Cap-

tain Baucom, to all the distinguished veterans who are here from the United States Navy, the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard, and the merchant marine; to the crew of the U.S.S. *Carl Vinson*: It's good to be back. I was on board in San Francisco in August of 1993, and now I have two of these caps which I can proudly wear around the United States.

Fifty years ago today, on the other side of this Pacific Ocean, the war ended. It was a war that erupted in smoke and horror aboard the battleship *Arizona* and concluded with peace and honor aboard the battleship *Missouri*. Today we gather to offer a commemoration and to renew a commitment. We commemorate the men and women of the Navy, the Marine Corps, and their sister services who gave everything they had to the cause of freedom. And we commit ourselves to their legacy by meeting the great demands of this age with the same determination and fortitude.

More than 2,000 years ago, Pericles gave a funeral oration in which he said it was the actions of his fallen soldiers and not his own words that would stand as their memorial. Today we say the same about our own beloved war dead, and you, their brothers and sisters still living who served alongside them. Your deeds in the Pacific will forever remain the greatest tribute to the American naval services.

Millions of sailors, aviators, submariners, and marines joined in the effort against Japan. They steered and stoked and flew and fought aboard thousands of ships and planes and boats. They were transported ashore by the Coast Guard, sustained by the merchant marine, supported by the WAVE's, and healed by the Medical Corps. You who served lived in a world of gray steel and saltwater, coarse sand and endless skies, violent rain and hard wind, white coral and precious red blood. Long days and endless nights passed between hard battles. But the frontline was usually no further away than the bow of your ship.

The Pacific journey started where we stand today in Pearl Harbor, our darkest dawn. Here in the span of an hour, as they put out fires and struggled to save their ship, farm boys became sailors and teenagers grew into men. They fought in a war unlike any previous war, waged in places most Americans had never heard of, in disease-filled jungles and on an ocean we once thought too huge to fight across.

It was a war of battles dominated by aircraft carriers, first at Coral Sea, then at Midway when a superior Japanese force was undone by American code-breaking and the courage of our pilots who dove into impossible odds to sink the enemy carriers.

It was a war where, for the very first time, sailors, soldiers, aviators, and leathernecks all worked together. At Guadalcanal, the Navy, the Marines, and the Army began to turn the tide in freedom's favor. Before they were done, sunken ships had transformed the sea floor into a steel carpet. The surrounding waters actually were renamed "Iron Bottom Sound." In the Gilberts, the Marshalls, the Marianas, the Carolines, amphibious forces shot to shore with a prayer and the cover of their comrades in the air and at sea.

It was a war that required unparalleled courage: at Leyte, where PT boats took on cruisers, where battleships damaged at Pearl Harbor returned to break the back of the Japanese fleet; at Iwo Jima, where more than 6,800 marines gave their lives to have our flag snap in the wind atop Mount Suribachi; and finally, on Okinawa, the war's final and bloodiest struggle.

In the Pacific, no two battles were the same, but each was fought for freedom. In the Pacific, our leaders were colorful and could not have been less alike, but they all shared a certain American greatness: Nimitz and Halsey, Spruance and Holland Smith, and Admiral Arleigh Burke, who honored me with his presence at dinner in Washington just a few weeks ago. And of course, behind them all was President Roosevelt, who had been Assistant Secretary of the Navy in World War I and who remained the guardian and inspiration to the Navy from his first day to his last as President.

In the Pacific, each ship was an outpost of liberty. In the Pacific, every American demonstrated that, as Admiral Nimitz said, they had uncommon valor as a common virtue.

In the Pacific, we won a war we had to win, but at a terrible cost of tens of thousands of lives never lived fully out. That sacrifice touches all of us today. But those of you here, more than anyone, who lost a shipmate or a friend, someone with whom you refueled a plane or scraped a railing or reloaded an overheated 40-millimeter gun, you endured. And the basic American values of courage, optimism, responsibility, and freedom all triumphed. And all of us are in your debt.

I would like to ask all the veterans of the Pacific war who are here to stand or, if you cannot stand, to wave your hand and be recognized. Please stand up. [*Applause*]

We also owe you a very great deal because of what you did with your remarkable victory. You did not leave your ideals at the war's edge; you brought them home. You carried them to college on the GI bill and into work. And together, you created the most prosperous nation on Earth. You extended our vision across the globe to rebuild our allies and our former adversaries, to win the cold war, to advance the cause of peace and freedom.

So to all of you who brought us from the *Arizona* to the *Missouri*, all of us who followed will always remember your commitment, your deeds, and your sacrifice. They are as constant as the tides and as vast as this great Pacific Ocean.

May God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. on the flight deck. In his remarks, he referred to Rear Adm. Eugene Fluckey, USN (Ret.), Congressional Medal of Honor recipient; Adm. Jeremy M. Boorda, USN, Chief of Naval Operations; Adm. Ronald J. Zlatoper, USN, Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet; Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, USN (Ret.), former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Rear Adm. Edward Moore, Jr., USN, Commander, Cruiser Destroyer Group Three; and Capt. Larry C. Baucom, USN, Commanding Officer, U.S.S. *Carl Vinson*.

## Remarks at a Stamp Unveiling Ceremony Aboard the U.S.S. *Carl Vinson* in Pearl Harbor

*September 2, 1995*

Postmaster General Runyon, let me begin by thanking you for the outstanding job you have done in promoting this project. I have enjoyed very much participating with you in it. Secretary Dalton, Secretary Brown, and distinguished military leaders who are here, Mrs. Howard and Mr. Carter, who assisted us in the unveiling, I am delighted to unveil this fifth and final set of stamps honoring the men and women who brought our Nation victory in World War II.

Again, let me congratulate the Postal Service on producing these stamps. They will for a long time remind all of our people of the spirit that animated our triumph and the common cause that united us 50 years ago. They also remind us that in World War II, as never before in our history up to that time, the many who make up our Nation came together as one. Old divisions melted away as our people turned to the job of liberating the world and then to the task of creating a better future at home.

We are fortunate to have with us today in this unveiling two individuals whose service exemplifies the best of this changed America that emerged from World War II and the best of our changed military.

Herbert Carter was a member of the famed Tuskegee Airmen. He flew 77 combat missions over North Africa and Italy. He has a chest full of medals and a record of real bravery and achievement. His accomplishments and those of thousands of other African-Americans who served our Nation so valiantly helped to open the way to the day when all Americans will be judged by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin.

Rita Howard joined the Navy Nurse Corps in 1941. At war's end, she was serving on board of the hospital ship U.S.S. *Refuge,* mending the wounds and lifting the spirits of newly freed POW's. Because of her and hundreds of thousands of women like her who wore the uniform and millions more who helped build democracy's arsenal, the role of women in our Nation was changed forever. And, I might add, the role of women in our military has been changed forever. Their achievements cleared the way for women to reach their full potential whether in boardrooms or on board bombers.

The generation that fought World War II came home and built America into the richest, freest nation in history. They returned to their towns and cities and built careers and communities. Some, like Herbert Carter and Rita How-