

2013 VETERANS DAY SPEECH

MCPOCG Michael P. Leavitt

Good afternoon Acting Secretary Beers, Admiral Papp, Vice Admiral Currier, distinguished guests, veterans, ladies and gentlemen.

I would like to thank everybody for being here today on Coast Guard Hill as we honor all of our veterans...past and present.

The 600 acres around us holds more than 300,000 stories of courage, commitment and sacrifice. There are so many other cemeteries around our country and around the world where our fallen Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen and Coast Guardsmen now quietly rest.

In one of those cemeteries, Senior Chief Terrell Horne quietly rests... who in the course of saving his shipmates, tragically lost his life. He left behind a legacy that will never be forgotten, a legacy of courage, sacrifice and character. His death serves as a stark reminder of the risks we face when carrying out the missions of the United States Coast Guard. It is also a reminder of the selfless service and commitment that so many of our Coast Guardsmen possess.

Our Coast Guard history is stamped with heroes like Senior Chief Horne.

It is our duty to make sure legacies like Senior Chief Horne's are never forgotten...that our Coast Guardsmen's sacrifices and their families' sacrifices are always remembered. How we honor their legacy truly defines our history, heritage and traditions... and it defines the culture of our service.

Also today, we honor the brave men and women of our Armed Forces who continue to serve here and around the world...many of which are standing the watch in harm's way in order to protect the freedoms of our great nation.

We honor the commitment and sacrifice of those veterans and their families...veterans who don't really ask for much, but give everything in return. So if you see a veteran today or any day, shake their hand and give them the thanks they deserve.

Once again, thank you all for being here.

Semper Paratus.

Now it is my distinct honor to introduce our 13th Gold Ancient Mariner and our 24th Commandant, Admiral Bob Papp.