

This past Saturday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, our nation observed the 85th annual Navy Day. This is an important time to acknowledge the hard work done by the members of the U.S. Navy, as well as the inspiring actions taken by those who serve at the naval bases in our area - Patuxent River Naval Air Systems Command, Indian Head Surface Warfare Center, and the Special Communications Requirements Facility at St. Inigoes. I would like to take the observation of 'Navy Day' to salute their efforts and to acknowledge the vital roles and important military capabilities performed at these three facilities.

The establishment of Navy Day dates to October 27, 1922, when the Navy League of the United States proposed such an observance to recognize Theodore Roosevelt's birthday. Always an advocate for a strong Navy as well as serving as an Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Roosevelt had long supported recognizing Navy Day. The date also had special significance in the Navy's history because October 27<sup>th</sup> was the anniversary of a 1775 report issued by a special committee of the Continental Congress. The report, which favored the purchase of two merchant marine ships, made essential the establishment of the American Navy.

We celebrate Navy Day in commemoration of past and present servicemen and women of the Navy as they have fought the enemies of freedom, and prevailed. Their courage and resolve is imperative to our security and way of life. Navy Day gives us the opportunity to

appreciate their achievements and to be inspired by their bravery. They succeed because they are dedicated to the values of this country and to its national security in the face of global terrorism.

The three naval facilities in Southern Maryland are shining examples of why our nation's Navy is the most revered in the world. Work at the Special Communications Requirements Facility at St. Inigoes is redefining mobile communications technology and providing a critical service to federal agencies that face the challenges of interoperability. Patuxent River Naval Air Systems Command continues to hold a strong reputation as one of the premier Naval aviation research, development, evaluation and testing facilities in the nation. And Indian Head Surface Warfare Center, also recognized as a premier naval facility, houses some of the most advanced development and testing of energetics technology in the world.

These bases effectively make use of defense money, maximize the technological capabilities for national

preparedness, and are vital institutions in our country's system of defense. They are among the most well-regarded naval installations in the country, and I am proud they are housed in our region

The vital role Southern Maryland naval facilities play - both as security assets and as significant contributors to our region's economy - is the reason that I continue to place the future of the Navy, and a naval presence in Maryland, as one of my highest priorities.

I have worked extremely hard over the years to ensure that Southern Maryland's military installations will continue to keep the region's economy strong and improve and strengthen our national security.

I am pleased that in the last round of BRAC, the Pentagon recognized what valuable assets we have in Southern Maryland. Their recommendation to maintain Southern Maryland's installations is an unequivocal expression of just how critical a role they play in helping our nation meet the threats and challenges of

a new century.

As a community, we owe special thanks to the members of the naval family that sacrifice their own safety to protect our nation. These men and women, who work hard in their offices in Maryland, across the country and overseas deserve to know that our thankful nation supports their service and sacrifice. They exemplify the determination, fortitude, and character that make America great. I encourage you to show our community's unconditional support to these naval bases to strengthen their role in our state and in our nation.