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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT MEMORIAL DAY
COMMEMORATION CEREMONY AT THE INTREPID SEA, AIR, & SPACE MUSEUM**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you so much, Bruce. And I want to – I want to talk about Bruce’s work and the extraordinary work being done here at the Intrepid. But first, I too want to thank all the veterans who are here with us, all the active duty military personnel, all members of law enforcement, and all first responders. We thank all of you for answering the call. Let’s give them another round of applause.

[Applause]

This museum does so much good because it keeps us focused on the history that defines us. It helps us to better understand the service of those who defended us. It helps us put things in perspective. There’s nothing like having such a monument to their service here, right in the center of our city – the greatest city in the world. And I want thank Bruce Mosler, who has been an extraordinary co-chair of this museum. And I thank him, not just because he – along with the Fisher family – have done such an extraordinary job of first, saving this ship and then making it a part of the fabric of our city and our nation for so many. But they’ve continued to deepen their commitment to bringing the children of this city to the Intrepid to learn this history. They’ve reached out and made the Intrepid a place where young people can learn the skills they need for tomorrow. They made it a place where those who are blind, who are deaf, who are disabled, have an opportunity to learn in an environment that supports them and encourages them. The Intrepid is not just a part of our past. The Intrepid is alive today as an extraordinary part of today’s New York and the future of our city.

I want to thank Bruce, and I want to thank Susan Marenoff-Zausner – the president of the museum. Let’s give them a round of applause for all they do.

[Applause]

I also want to say, we in the city government –we try and live up to the ideal that Bruce laid out of being there for our veterans. And I want to thank my partner in that work for her commitment every day – the speaker of the New York City Council, Melissa Mark-Viverito. Thank you so much.

[Applause]

But I especially want to thank General Kelly. I want to thank him for his leadership. But I want to thank him for what he said to us today, because I think it’s impossible to hear those reflections and not be moved and not be helped to think on a deeper level about what all of this means. General, as a parent, I just want to tell you how much I feel for your loss. I think every parent here today felt an immediate solidarity with you and we honor you. I also want to say, thank you for putting into perspective the sweep of history where so many good young men and women, like your son, believe there was something bigger they were called to. And as you indicated, time and again, that changed the history of the world. It was not an idle or solitary act. It was an act that changed our trajectory and made us better. It is tragic it came at the cost of their sacrifice. But it made us better

because of all the evil that you indicated was defeated. So I thank you, General, for – through the pain I know you carry every day – finding the inspiration to be the leader you are. Let's thank General Kelly.

[Applause]

We pay our respect to those we have lost. We start by paying our respect to those who served on this ship and were lost in service to their country – just as we honor all those today who served and, thank God, are still with us. But we know they carry the memories of their comrades in arms every single day. This place reminds us of that level of devotion, and there's something powerful about this ship because of its story – a story that epitomizes the persistence of those that we honor today.

This ship was begun just – its construction was begun just days before Pearl Harbor, as the march of history was becoming increasingly clear, and the United States prepared for that conflict. It was supposed to take three years to build. It was built in half that time. Why? Because people believed, they worked together, they knew how urgent it was to have the Intrepid as part of our defense. And the Intrepid was one of those ships that helped to turn the tide of the war, triumphing in battles across the Pacific, and – perhaps its finest hour – triumphing over Japan's most powerful battleship, the Yamato.

So – so much legend, but the story that runs through the legend is clear. Forged in adversity and uplifted over and over by a sense of mission, and teamwork, and a belief that no matter how big the challenge that this ship, like this nation, would overcome. Remember, we know the name of some of the generals and admirals. We know the sites of some of the battles. We don't know the names of all the individual men and women, and all of their stories of valor. But we know each of them had a powerful story. We know each of them knew exactly the challenge they faced. And somewhere inside themselves, one after another, they found the strength. They found the strength to do things even they didn't know they were capable of – just like this ship surpassed all expectations.

It is a proud tradition in this nation, as General Kelly indicated. A tradition actually forged at the grassroots with farmers and blacksmiths who took up arms against a colonial power that oppressed them. Remember, this military we depend on today was forged out of a group of individuals who decided that they had to defend their fellow Americans and build a different nation. Imagine how audacious that was. Imagine how unlikely – what courage it took. And that has been passed on from generation to generation through our armed services. So we honor the men and women who sacrificed all. But we know their sacrifice is felt so deeply every day – every single day by mothers, fathers, and aunts and uncles, and sons and daughters, wives and husbands. We know it lives in their hearts constantly.

This is true in our family. My wife and I – blessed to have had members of that greatest generation. And I agree today's generation is living up to that proud tradition and creating their own extraordinary history, but there is a reverence we hold for the who fought in World War II. My wife's father fought in Europe, and France, and Italy with the army. Her mother served at the Springfield, Massachusetts Armory. My mother served at the Office of War Information. And my father served in the Pacific with the Seventh Division of the Army. And my father fought in many battles, the last of which was the Battle of Okinawa – one of the bloodiest and most difficult of all time.

He was badly wounded at the end of that battle – lost half of one of his legs – and carried all of his sacrifice with him. And never a day passes, in our family, where we don't think of that sacrifice, both the nobility of it, and the pain and the challenges that came thereafter. And you have to remember, the wars don't end for those families. They continue in a different way in their households because we all have to support those who came back with challenges. We know they answered the call. They understood they were walking into danger, and when they come back as my father did, with both the physical scars and the mental health challenges it doesn't come as any surprise to us that people who went through so much, who saw so much pain and horror would face challenges thereafter for years and years. And so the families participate in that transition back. Family support those men and women every step of the way. And whether you lost your loved one in battle or years thereafter you think – every day runs through your consciousness all the time – what they did – the heroism of

it, and the pain of it as a reminder of how much we owe all those who come back. In this city, we know that we have to honor our veterans every day, not just with ceremonies but with the kind of actions that change their lives. That's why this year – this year in New York City we will answer the president's call to action, and we will end veteran homelessness in New York City this year.

[Applause]

And we will work with private sector employers, non-profit employers and public sector employers a like to promote the most obvious truth that our men and women who served in the armed services come to the workplace with discipline and a sense of mission, and purpose, and strength; and that we need to redouble our efforts to see our veterans hired. And when a veteran is not able to work themselves, to see their house spouse hired, which is another way of supporting that veteran. Finally, I mentioned the challenge of mental Health. General Sutton our Commissioner for Veteran Affairs, psychiatrist, before she left the army the highest ranking psychiatrist in the United States army. She is leading the charge with organizations all over this city that want to address the mental health needs of our veterans. And my wife is leading the charge to create a stronger mental health capacity throughout our city because we owe our veterans the respect of saying whatever your challenge is, it is all of our challenge now. We won't look away from it. We certainly won't stigmatize it. We own the problems of those who served us shoulder-to-shoulder with them. I'll conclude with a quote from one of the great heroes of World War II, Admiral Chester Nimitz, the commander of the forces in the Pacific. He said of those who we lost – he said, "They fought together as brothers in arms. They died together, and now they sleep side-by-side. To them we have a solemn obligation; the obligation to ensure that their sacrifice will help make this a better and a safer world in which to live. We thank them all. We honor them all. We dedicate ourselves to remembering all they did, and supporting all those who came after. Thank you. God Bless

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