**Doria Speech [EZ Speech No. 16404]**

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Remarks by Lieutenant Michael Doria on the occasion of his retirement from the U.S. Coast Guard.

thank you, mark, for that wonderful introduction.

ladies and gentlemen . . . fellow service members, classmates, friends, and my wonderful family . . . :

i’m so enormously honored and grateful that you were all able to join me at my retirement ceremony — and I’m particularly grateful to those of you who had to travel a bit to be here. It means a ton to me that you made the effort! i’d also like to give a very special shout-out to a very special guest who’s joined us this [mornng/afternoon/evening], sergeant jimmy ochan, a wounded gyrene who [nature of wound/disability]. we’re all honored by your presence, jimmy, and are grateful for all the sacrifices you made for your country.

so the true and actual fact is that — after 17 years of service — i’m retiring from the coast guard. this shallow-water sailor’s finished his last deployment. but while I’m leaving the coast guard, the coast guard will never leave me. it’s been a central part of my life and my identity for nearly two decades. It’s provided me with opportunities I know i never would have had as a civilian. It allowed me to persue and practice my profes-sional career even while sending me to parts of the world that I *know* I’d never have visited had I not become a coastie. it’s been a helluva ride, believe me, and i wouldn’t trade a minute of it.

but now, as i reflect back on my coast guard career, the overwhelming emotion i feel is one of enormous gratitude. None of us gets through this life alone or without help — sometimes from folks we don’t even know are helping us. Well, I’m, fortunate enough to

know a whole lot of the people who’ve helped me through my life, and if you all wouldn’t mind, i’d like to spend the few minutes i have up here to pay tribute to them. my problem is that — even if all I said was “hi” and “thank you” to each and every one of the important people in my life — I’d have you sitting on your butts for more than an hour while I rattled off my special honor roll. so i hope those of you whom i don’t mention by name, even though you certain deserve a shout out, will forgive me.

i must begin, as my life began, with my mother, ann marie, always there, always supportive, always loving. i only hope i’ve made you proud, mom, because you’ve given me everything.

my brothers, chuck and david are here, too, along with sister christine, whose love and support and kindness through the years have sustained and nurtured me wonderfully.

my uncle joey and aunt daurine — we think of them as joe peci and marisa tomei from *my cousin vinnie* — have been in my corner from day one, and couldn’t have been more supportive or encouraging. I’m privledged to have been raised in the greatest families any man can have.

captain jeff salvon-harman was one of my biggest supporters and most important mentors in the coast guard. i’m so grateful, captain, for all you did to help me implement a number of important research and care programs for the guard.

commander eric berstein, who’s officiating today, is the kind of officer with whom you’d go into battle at any time, in any circumstances, and know that your ‘six’ will be covered at all times and that you’ll never be left behind. i salute and thank you, bernie, for all you’ve taught me and for all the confidence you showed in me through the years.

you’ve already met lieutenant-commander mark stuart — my great friend, supervisor, and shipmate whose leadership and constant encouragment made me believe that i truly could make a difference in this world. thanks for everything, mark; it’s an honor to know you and a pleasure to work with you.

there are so many other people — military members, vets, civilians — who’ve been instrumental in my life and have enriched it beyond measure. so with repeated apologies for those deserving souls whom i didn’t have time to mention, i thank you and i salute you. [give a goast guard salute to the audience]

thank you.

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