

## Good morning/afternoon.

January felt longer than its thirty-one days. We navigated organizational change, internal turbulence, disasters, and weather—often simultaneously.

Thank you for your dedication, flexibility, and effort. What we must remind ourselves of, repeatedly, is this: we have very little control over events. What we *do* control is our response.

Outrage is cheap. Orientation is priceless. Orientation is a lasting direction of thought, inclination, and interest. It is shaped by a lifetime of exposure, experience, and perspective. It determines how you see the world, and therefore how you act within it.

With that in mind, I want to ask a simple question:

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase “*good enough for government work*”?

Is it the jaded, ironic usage?  
 Low quality? Lazy?  
 The bare minimum?  
 Just enough to get by?

Or is it something else?

Most people do not realize that the phrase originated during the hardest early days of World War II—and that it once meant exactly the opposite.

*Good enough for government work* was the highest form of praise.

It was reserved for work that exceeded the most demanding standards imaginable. *MILSPEC* meant something. It carried weight.

The phrase emerged in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, when the USS *Yorktown* had to be returned to service immediately. After being badly damaged in the Battle of the Coral Sea, the carrier was given three days to complete what should have taken three months.

Shipbuilders, welders, laborers, engineers, riveters, cooks—**everyone**—worked with **singular purpose**.

That effort returned the *Yorktown* to the fight in time for the Battle of Midway, the turning point of the naval war in the Pacific.

It remains one of the clearest demonstrations of what focus, effort, purpose, and teamwork can achieve when failure is not an option.

So, as you move through your days, never accept the idea that what you do has no value or doesn't matter. Do not buy into the lazy canard that federal civil servants are nefarious actors or simply collecting a paycheck. We know that is not true.

Part of that knowledge is agency.

“When we give someone our time, we actually give a portion of our life that we will never take back.”

— **Alexander the Great**

If we only measure what matters, consider this: almost **everything you do is measured**. Your decisions. Your judgment. Your discipline. Your care. Your attention. What you choose to do well—even when no one is watching.

Details matter.

Quality matters.

Accountability is the cornerstone of our line(s) of business.

Speed can be sleek. Speed can be cheap.

### **Accuracy is everything.**

We operate in a space where speed must coexist with sound judgment and timely decision-making. That balance is not accidental. We do it well.

A life of public service carries both burden and reward. Do not forget that. And do not allow yourself to become comfortable. Comfort kills. It dulls judgment, normalizes shortcuts, and erodes the edge required to operate well under pressure.

Entire organizations fail this way—choosing *“this is how we have always done it”* instead of asking *“is there a better way?”*

We will continue to be expected to do great things and serve our nation with integrity and purpose—as long as we do not care who gets the credit.

**Continue to do hard things. Welcome discomfort—not because it is noble, but because complacency is operationally dangerous. Growth does not come from ease. It comes from sustained effort under conditions that test judgment and resolve. No matter how slow or tedious the work may feel, you will always outperform the version of yourself that chose to do nothing.**

More challenges lie ahead. We do not know what the future will bring. There will be tests.

**Our investment in one another will pay dividends when it matters most.**

Thank you for your service to one another, to this agency, and to our nation.

“You can rest assured that if you devote your time and attention to the highest advantage of others, the universe will support you—always, and only, in the nick of time.”

— **Buckminster Fuller**

With respect and gratitude,

Dan