

Great Lakes Bulletin

AUGUST 18, 2023

SERVING “THE QUARTERDECK OF THE NAVY” FOR 105 YEARS

IN THIS ISSUE

NSTC Hosts 3 Cycles of NROTC NSI

DoD Tax-Free Dependent Care Spending Accounts

NSTC Hosts NROTC PXO/PCO Seminar

Results of the 2023 Tenant Satisfaction Survey Released

MWR & FFSC

Franchetti Steps in as CNO Following Adm. Gilday's Retirement

Executive Order Changes How Sexual Assaults are Handled



NSTC Hosts Three Cycles of NROTC New Student Indoctrination

Story by Scott Thornbloom, Naval Service Training Command



Naval Service Training Command (NSTC) welcomed more than 1,200 future Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) midshipmen from across the United States to New Student Indoctrination (NSI) this summer at Recruit Training Command (RTC), June 16 – Aug. 07.

The future college freshmen participated in three cycles of training that prepare them to head to their NROTC units once that school year begins.

NSI is designed to provide consistent basic militarization and uniform training not available at host universities. The three-week training in each cycle is held at the same facilities that train today's U. S. Navy enlisted recruits. Each cycle consisted of more than 450 midshipman candidates, current midshipmen, newly commissioned ensigns and staff officers from various NROTC units along with U.S. Marine Corps Drill Instructors from various NROTC units.

RTC also provided current Recruit Division Commanders (RDCs) whose job is to turn civilians into enlisted Sailors at the Navy's only boot camp.

“These women and men here have been at the center of a transformation that has taken place over several days,” said Capt. Craig T. Mattingly, NSTC commander while speaking to the new midshipmen, family members and friends at each graduation ceremony. “They have endured rigorous physical and mental training, pushing their individual limits. Each learned the importance of teamwork, of discipline and of dedication. They have commenced the Navy journey and are now part of the time-honored tradition of service to our nation.”

The NSI indoctrination program uses the facilities at RTC to provide the new midshipmen with a common military training orientation. NSI provides basic training in five warfighting fundamentals –



Command and Staff

Commanding Officer

Capt. Jason Williamson

Public Affairs Officer

John Sheppard

Editor

MC1 Brigitte Johnston

Contact us!

Phone

847-688-2430 ext. 359

Email

nsgl-pao@us.navy.mil

Website

Facebook

Twitter

Instagram

DISCLAIMER:

The Department of the Navy does not endorse and is not associated with non-federal entities in this publication.

CNIC

★ FLEET ★ FIGHTER ★ FAMILY



firefighting, damage control, seamanship, watchstanding, small arms handling and marksmanship – to create basically trained and smartly disciplined future Navy and Marine Corps officers.

NSI began in 2018 with a pilot program that initially trained 70 midshipmen candidates. Prior to NSI, NROTC was the only officer accessions program in the Department of the Navy that did not require an established, standardized, entry-level militarization and indoctrination phase to commence training. Since 2019, the standardization has been formalized, and NSI 2023 produced the highest number of midshipmen in the program's history.

“What they have learned here is just the tip of the iceberg,” said U.S. Navy Capt. Gary Cave, Cycle 2 Officer-In-Charge (OIC) and NROTC commanding officer and professor of Naval Science at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, New Mexico. “The lessons learned here will underpin the next four years of training at their NROTC units as they work towards their commissions in the Navy or Marine Corps.”

U.S. Navy Capt. John Compton, OIC of Cycle 3 and University of South Carolina (Columbia) NROTC commanding officer and professor of Naval Science, said it was great to provide the training environment for the midshipmen candidates that had journeyed to Great Lakes and RTC to attend NSI.

“Not only were we able to focus on the training of the midshipmen candidates but we were able to revise the training of the midshipmen instructors (upper class midshipmen) to make sure we were developing their leadership skills and develop their leadership “toolbox” so they can continue their paths to become Navy and Marine Corps officers as well. We have produced trained midshipman candidates that are soon to be college-student midshipmen and then finally (commissioned) officers in the Navy and Marine Corps,” Compton said.

Each cycle's OIC, assistant OIC, senior enlisted leader were responsible for overseeing the training of the midshipmen candidates and providing guidance to the midshipmen instructors, drill instructors and RDCs. Some of those midshipmen instructors (current 2nd and 1st class midshipmen, juniors and seniors) went through the program in previous years and came back to help lead instruct the new candidates.

“I attended this program two years ago and was thrilled to have the opportunity to volunteer and come back again as an instructor,” said Midshipman 2nd Class Allison Adams, 21, an incoming junior at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Fla. “I think we have trained the midshipmen candidates well in the sense that they have developed basic military bearing and the very basic military knowledge they'll need to succeed at their units.”

Midshipman 2nd Class Patrick Merkel, from Pewaukee, Wisconsin and an incoming junior at the University of Notre Dame said it has been super helpful to learn how my leadership style works in conjunction with the other midshipmen instructors.

“It's been a ‘Master Class’ learning from the other midshipmen how to be a leader. I think it will be very valuable to be able to take this into the fleet in a couple of years and already have a head start on the other ensigns around me” Merkel said. The NSI training for each of the three cycles was approximately 18 days to incorporate additional training including Warrior Toughness that imbues the warrior mindset in future Navy and Marine Corps officers. They also got to participate in swim qualifications, physical fitness assessments and man-over-board drills.

“It was tiring and challenging but good,” said Midshipman 4th Class Bradley Klemz, 18, an Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota- native bound for the University of Notre Dame. “I made a lot of good friends who helped me in my success here and I look forward to joining my unit.”

Midshipman 4th Class Amelia Feist, 18, from Parker, Colo., is very excited to begin her college and NROTC life at the University of South Carolina.

“This was definitely one of the hardest things I've ever done. I don't think it was easy at any point. My stress levels were tested. Physically and mentally my

strength was tested but being here (at graduation) I know it was all worth it and I know I am now confident to not only become a midshipman but to join the Navy.”

NROTC is overseen by Commander, Naval Service Training Command (NSTC), Capt. Craig T. Mattingly and his staff. NSTC oversees 98 percent of initial officer and enlisted accessions training for the Navy, including NROTC units at more than 160 colleges and universities; Officer Training Command (OTC) at Naval Station Newport, Rhode Island; Recruit Training Command (RTC) at Naval Station Great Lakes, as well as Navy

Junior ROTC (NJROTC) and Navy National Defense Cadet Corps (NNDCC).

NROTC was established to develop midshipmen mentally, morally and physically. The program also imbues in them the highest ideals of duty, loyalty and Navy core values in order to commission college graduates as Naval officers who possess a basic professional background, are motivated toward careers in the Naval service and have a potential for future development in mind and character so as to assume the highest responsibilities of command, citizenship and government.

DOD Makes Tax-Free Dependent Care Spending Accounts Available to Service Members

Story by C. Todd Lopez, DOD News

Childcare is just one of the costly realities of raising a family. But the Defense Department has made a new tool available to help eligible military families meet that challenge.

The Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account, or DCFSA, is a financial benefit that will be made available to eligible service members beginning in 2024. It will enable them to have money from their paychecks diverted to an account that can be used to pay for dependent care services such as preschool, summer day camp, before- or after-school programs, and child or adult daycare.

Active-component service members along with Active Guard Reserve members on Title 10 orders are eligible to participate.

Eligible service members can contribute as much as \$5,000 a year from their paychecks, via allotment, to the account. That money comes out pretax, which means that a military family that typically reports \$30,000 a year in taxable income, for instance, would instead be able to report \$25,000 in taxable income if they took full advantage of the benefit. That means they will pay less in taxes each year, yielding greater take-home pay.

The DOD is on track to implement DCFSA for eligible service members beginning January 1, 2024. Those who would like to participate can sign up during the annual Federal Benefits Open Season, which runs from mid-November to mid-December.

Jennifer Walker, the executive director for the Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account initiative, said as many as 400,000 service members have eligible dependents and will be eligible to take advantage of the benefits provided by the DCFSA program. “That includes families who have children who are under the age of 13 or who have a spouse or other tax dependent, regardless of age, who is mentally or physically incapable of self-care,” she said.

The program is part of a larger DOD effort to take better care of military service members and their families. In March, the department released the “Strengthening Our Support to Service Members and Their Families” memorandum, which, among other important initiatives, discussed making DCFSAs available to service members.

That memorandum was signed by Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III, who said taking care of service members and their families through efforts such as DCFSA is a top priority for the department.



“In recent years, our military community has weathered a number of challenges, but our people have risen to every mission and done it all with extraordinary resilience,” Austin wrote in the March 2023 memorandum.

“But it is the department’s ongoing moral duty to spare our outstanding people stress and struggle on the home front where we can and to show our service members and civilian employees how much they mean to us with tangible support that makes a genuine difference in their lives,” he wrote “The department has, therefore, relentlessly focused on improving quality of life, and I am very proud of what we’ve achieved so far.”

The DCFSA, like other pretax flexible savings accounts, is a “use or lose” benefit.

According to the DOD’s Office of Financial Readiness, the DCFSA plan year mirrors the tax year, Jan. 1 through Dec. 31. After the plan year ends on Dec. 31, enrollees in a DCFSA have until March 15 of the following year to incur eligible expenses. Claims for expenses incurred must be submitted by April 30, the deadline for submitting claims from the previous plan year. Any funds remaining in the account after April 30 of the following year are forfeited.

Military personnel interested in taking advantage of the DCFSA are advised to first talk with a personal financial counselor or tax professional before signing up to participate in the program.



Results of Navy 2023 Tenant Satisfaction Survey Released

Story by John Belanger, Commander, Navy Installations Command

Each year, Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) conducts a Tenant Satisfaction Survey (TSS) through a third-party contract in order to provide military households with a voluntary and confidential opportunity to share open and honest feedback on their housing experience. This year's privatized housing survey was conducted between March 20 and May 5 of 2023 and results showed a slight increase in overall satisfaction with Navy housing.

Current residents of government owned/leased (GOL), family housing (FH), unaccompanied housing (UH) and Public Private Venture (PPV) FH, UH completed their surveys virtually and were able to provide feedback on their overall experience, satisfaction with their accommodations and property management service.

The results were as follows:

- GOL FH overall satisfaction index increased by 0.5 from FY22 to 76.3.
- GOL UH overall satisfaction increased by 0.9 from FY 22 to 80.5.
- PPV FH overall satisfaction decreased by 0.1 from FY 22 to 76.1.
- PPV UH overall satisfaction increased by 4.8 from FY 22 to 85.0.

The Navy is the only service to survey its unaccompanied housing residents.

“Our mission is to provide safe, quality housing and related services in support of the Navy’s mission and readiness,” said Mr. Stephen Drumm, Director of Navy Housing for CNIC. “All tenants of Navy housing have a voice and it is important that the Navy hears from as many residents as possible. The feedback received during the TSS is used to make improvements that benefit the entire Navy community.”

About the Survey

The annual TSS is funded by the Department of the Navy (DON) and this year’s survey was conducted by CEL &

Associates, Inc. (CEL). The survey focused on three satisfaction indexes – overall satisfaction, property satisfaction and service satisfaction. These indices provide CNIC with a snapshot of residents’ opinions regarding the condition of the homes and neighborhoods, and the quality of the services provided.

The housing survey is conducted annually across 69 installations consisting of 81,309 residences, which included family and unaccompanied housing that is government-owned/leased as well as public private venture housing.

Survey Results for Family Housing

The TSS indicates positive feedback in safety, security, and the overall courtesy and respect with which tenants are treated, specifically in the areas of responsiveness, professionalism, and quality of maintenance personnel and leasing/housing office.

Of the 35,172 surveys distributed to PPV residents 33% responded (up 28.9% from 25.6% the prior year), generating the following average scores, based on a 100-point scale:

- Overall Satisfaction Index: 76.1 (0.1 point decrease from FY22)
- Property Satisfaction Index: 72.3 (0.5 point decrease from FY22)
- Service Satisfaction Index: 78.6 (0.4 point increase from FY22)

Across the 47 installations surveyed, 77% (36) rated in the Outstanding, Very Good, Good, or Average ranges (100.0 thru 70.0) in the Overall Score; 17% (8) rated Below Average (69.9 thru 65.0); and 4% (2) rated Poor or Very Poor (64.9 thru 55). (One installation had no surveys returned.)

GOL Family Housing

Of the 5,616 surveys distributed to GOL family housing residents 26.8% responded (no increase/decrease from prior year) generating the following average scores, based on a 100-point scale:

- Overall Satisfaction Index: 76.3 (.5 point increase from

FY22)

- Property Index: 76.5 (no increase/decrease from FY22)
- Service Index: 76.4 (.5 point increase from FY22)

Across the 14 installations surveyed, 86% (12) rated in the Outstanding, Very Good, Good, or Average ranges (100.0 thru 70.0) in the Overall Score; 14% (2) rated Below Average (69.9 thru 65.0); and 0% (0) rated Poor or Very Poor (64.9 thru 55).

Survey Results for Unaccompanied Housing

The TSS indicates positive feedback in areas such as the overall level and quality of the leasing or housing office, the courtesy, respect and professionalism provided, safety and security.

PPV Unaccompanied Housing

Of the 5,935 surveys distributed to PPV unaccompanied housing residents, 23% responded (94.9% increase from 11.8% in FY22) generating the following average scores, based on a 100-point scale:

- Overall Satisfaction Index: 85.0 (4.8 point increase from FY22)
- Property Satisfaction Index: 82.1 (3.1 point increase from FY22)
- Service Satisfaction Index: 86.2 (6.4 point increase from FY22)
- Across the two installations surveyed, 100% (2) rated in the Outstanding, Very Good, Good, or Average ranges (100.0 thru 70.0) in the Overall Score.

GOL Unaccompanied Housing

Of the 34,586 surveys distributed to GOL unaccompanied housing residents, 26 percent responded (2.2 percent increase from FY22) generating the following average scores, based on a 100-point scale:

- Overall Satisfaction Index: 80.5 (.9 point increase from FY22)
- Property Index: 79.2 (.4 point increase from FY22)
- Service Index: 81.6 (1.5 point increase from FY22)

Across the 65 installations surveyed, 86.2% (56) rated in the Outstanding, Very Good, Good, or Average ranges (100.0 thru 70.0) in the Overall Score; 9.2% (6) rated Below Average (69.9 thru 65.0); and 4.6% (3) rated Poor or Very Poor (64.9 thru 55).

A detailed summary of the FY23/Report Year 2022 TSS results can be found here: https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/housing/HQ_Housing_Programs/surveys.html

Recent Efforts, Ongoing Improvements

Navy unaccompanied housing recently introduced a program to improve UH maintenance and continues to test and explore other solutions to improve the quality of Navy barracks. Last year, all 10 Navy regions have introduced maintenance QR code reporting to unaccompanied housing facilities allowing for much more efficient reporting than the previous system. When Sailors notice a maintenance issue, they can scan a unique QR code posted within the building inside their living spaces and common areas, fill out a brief online form, and submit the report to building management.

Other initiatives currently underway for unaccompanied housing include the development of an interface between enterprise Military Housing, the property management system for housing, and MAXIMO, the maintenance management system for the Public Works Department. This automated exchange will improve the tracking of maintenance requests from request through completion.

“Navy Housing truly values the opinions of Sailors and their families about their housing. The TSS is a great way to collectively express what is great about Navy Housing and what can be improved,” said Jon Skelton, CNIC Housing Operations and Policy branch manager. “I cannot thank the participants enough for the excellent response rates this year. It truly shows how important housing is to our service members when so many take time to provide this level of feedback.”

For more information about Navy Housing, go to www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/housing.html or visit your Navy Housing Service Center.



Your recreational hub aboard
Naval Station Great Lakes!

Check out the latest events and
activities from our MWR at

www.facebook.com/NavyLifeGL/

and on their website at

www.navylifegl.com

For tickets and travel,
call 847-688-5417



Life changes?

Family or financial planning?

Reach out to your team at
FFSC for classes, resources,
counseling, and more!

**Fleet and Family Support
Center Great Lakes**

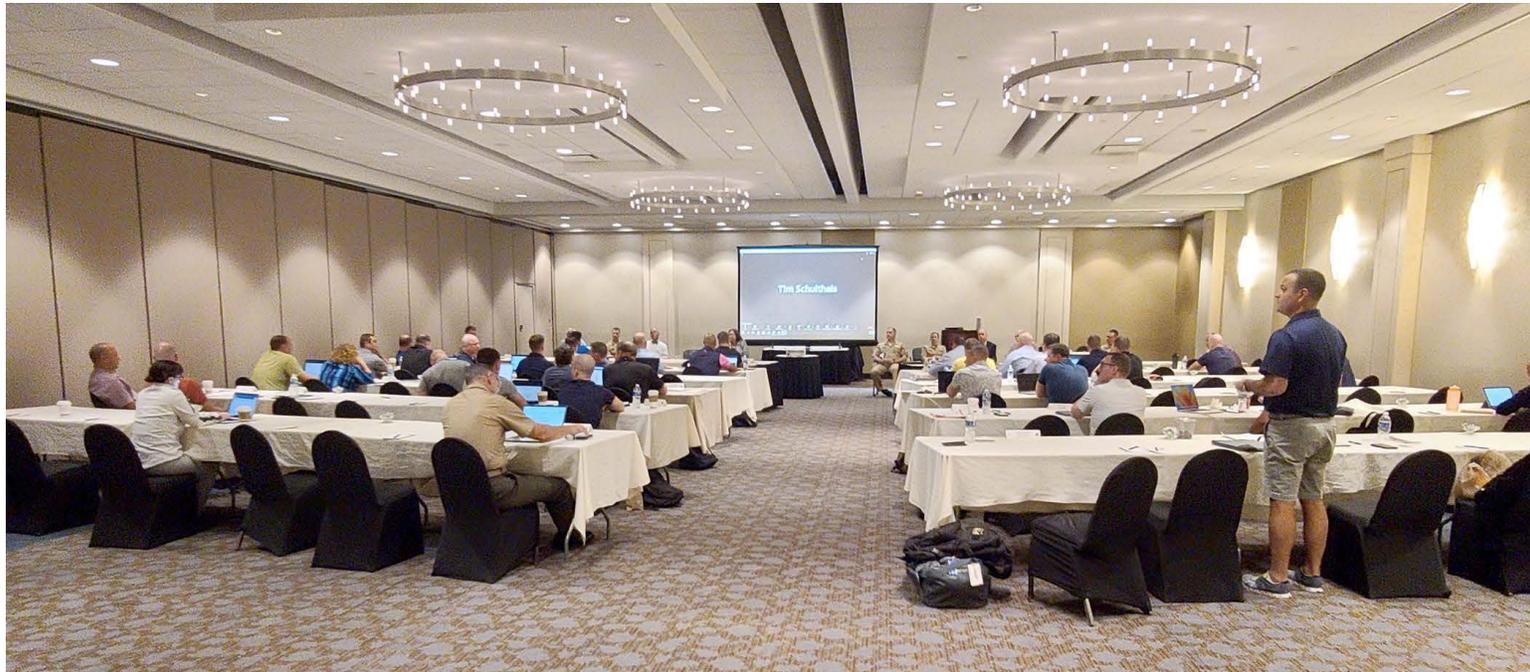
525 Farragut Ave, Bldg. 26

847-688-3603 ex. 100

[Click here for the FFSC website](#)

NSTC Hosts NROTC PCO/PXO Seminar

Story by Scott Thornbloom, Naval Service Training Command



Naval Service Training Command (NSTC) recently hosted a week of classes and instruction for new Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) Professors of Naval Science, new commanding officers, executive officers, staff enlisted members and administrators at the O'Hare Crowne Plaza Hotel July 31-August 08.

More than 50 NROTC active-duty officer instructors attended the annual training held for the new members of the program.

The annual week is a chance to welcome new professors and instructors and introduce them to NSTC and staff personnel. During the training they were presented with tools they can use at their units at colleges and universities around the country.

"The purpose of this seminar is to best prepare our incoming commanding officers, executive officers and officers in charge as they arrive at their NROTC units and the departments of Naval Science to succeed in developing the students, midshipmen, officer candidates and Marines under their charge into warfighters and officers," said Capt. Chris Adams, the head of NSTC's NROTC directorate.

Captain Adams and his NSTC staff members covered a wide variety of subjects the new COs and XOs can use and apply at their new commands. They went over the NROTC program and how it is incorporated on a college campus. They discussed curriculum and training and where and how midshipmen can receive further midshipmen training on Navy ships, on Navy bases and with Marine Corps units. They also discussed the NROTC Prep Program where a possible midshipman can attend before arriving at their units. Capt. Adams and his staff went over nuclear accessions, medical programs, legal issues and many other teaching strategies.

"This is a wonderful primer to the program I'm going to teach as well as an introduction to the staff and other PNS officers," said

Capt. Abigail Hutchins, the incoming commanding officer at the University of Minnesota NROTC unit.

Capt. Scott Brunson, incoming commanding officer at the University of Idaho, called the seminar fantastic.

"My level of knowledge (in the NROTC program) was low. I learned a lot and it was great to network with the other incoming officers and NSTC staff members," said Brunson.

Incoming U. S. Navy executive officer at the Illinois Institute of Technology, and Chicago NROTC Consortium, Cmdr. Kevin Francis Riley, called the seminar enjoyable.

"There was a lot of good information. There was a lot of information provided that is going to be important later as I come across the topics discussed," Riley said.

"The exposure is great. The ability to reference the slides provided is great and the XO Net email blog is fantastic. I am not looking forward to problems, but I feel comfortable that when they arise, I'll have some tools that I can use."

NROTC is overseen by Commander, Naval Service Training Command (NSTC), Capt. Craig T. Mattingly and his staff. NSTC oversees 98 percent of initial officer and enlisted accessions training for the Navy, including NROTC units at more than 160 colleges and universities; Officer Training Command (OTC) at Naval Station Newport, Rhode Island; Recruit Training Command (RTC) at Naval Station Great Lakes, as well as Navy Junior ROTC (NJROTC) and Navy National Defense Cadet Corps (NNDCC).

NROTC was established to develop midshipmen mentally, morally and physically.

The program also imbues in them the highest ideals of duty, loyalty and Navy core values in order to commission college graduates as Naval officers who possess a basic professional background, are motivated toward careers in the Naval service and have a potential for future development in mind and character so as to assume the highest responsibilities of command, citizenship and government.

Franchetti Takes the Helm After Gilday's Relinquishment of Office

Adm. Mike Gilday relinquished the office of the Chief of Naval Operations after successfully concluding his four-year tenure as the Navy's top military leader in a ceremony at the United States Naval Academy, Aug. 14.

Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti, who has been nominated by President Biden to be the next CNO, will perform the duties of the CNO until someone is formally appointed to that role in accordance with law.

Gilday became the 32nd CNO in August 2019. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the CNO acts as an advisor to the President of the United States, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. Under direction of the Secretary of the Navy, the CNO is responsible for the command, utilization of resources, and operating efficiency of naval forces and shore activities.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin spoke at the ceremony highlighting the importance of the Navy, and the increasingly critical role the service plays in strategic competition.

"To tackle the national security challenges of the 21st century, we need our Navy more than ever," said Austin. "We rely on our Navy to project American power, to protect American interests; we rely on our Navy to bolster our unmatched network of allies and partners, from the South China Sea to the Caribbean; and we rely on our Navy to deter conflict and keep the peace."

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro acted as the presiding officer and keynote speaker of the ceremony. Similar to Austin, Del Toro emphasized Gilday's "transformational leadership" and prioritization of readiness during an era of strategic competition. "Admiral Gilday boldly charged forward, leading and inspiring Sailors at every level, from the tactical, to the operational, to the strategic... he's also championed our strategic relationships with allies and partners," said Del Toro. "He served as our 32nd Chief of Naval Operations during a pivotal – and perhaps sometimes even a bit chaotic – time for our fleet, for our Nation, and for our friends around the world – many of whom are represented here today."

For his part, Gilday reflected on the adaptation and change the Navy has undergone in adjusting to a new and challenging security environment, while also calling for the Department to "act with urgency and purpose" in order to maintain maritime superiority. He expressed confidence and optimism in the Navy's direction, while praising Sailors and families around the Fleet for their resilience and service.

"We have the best Navy in the world," said Gilday. "Every day, our people are standing the watch, operating globally and at the tip of the spear, strengthening our alliances and partnerships."

As he departed he left the Fleet with a message of service, to be leaders and serve with a purpose.

"Embody humility; selflessness; complete transparency; acknowledge the value of every Sailor and civilian; and always do the right thing, especially when it is difficult," said Gilday. "Have total ownership of your job and duty... because when you are called upon to sail into harm's way, your mission is to fight and win for our nation."

Gilday described Adm. Franchetti as exceptionally well-qualified to perform the duties of CNO during this uncertain and



unprecedented leadership transition.

"I am proud that she will be my CNO," said Gilday. "She is a Fleet Sailor, an operator, a warfighter. She has already made the Navy better as our Vice Chief of Naval Operations, the Navy is in good hands with her at the helm."

During the ceremony, Franchetti and Del Toro both thanked Gilday, his wife Linda Gilday, as well as their entire family for their service and leadership throughout the years.

"Admiral Gilday and his wife Linda have dedicated so much of themselves and their time over the past four years focusing on quality of life and quality of service issues to ensure our Sailors and their families have the resources they need to be resilient during their time in service to our Navy and our nation," said Del Toro. "I especially want to highlight Linda's significant accomplishments in supporting our Navy families and spouses. You have been a shining example for our service members and families of a remarkable professional and an extraordinary public servant; we express our deepest gratitude to you for your devotion to our Navy family."

VCNO also stressed the importance of a seamless transition with Gilday's departure.

"As we look to the horizon and prepare for the challenges that lie ahead, I will act with a sense of urgency to ensure our Sailors have everything they need to maintain our warfighting edge," said Franchetti.

She added, "For the past 247 years, the U.S. Navy has stood the watch. We, along with the Marine Corps are America's Away Team, around the world and around the clock. As we look to the future, our mission continues, uninterrupted and unabated. We fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows so that others can too."

In the absence of a confirmed 33rd Chief of Naval Operations, and in accordance with 10 U.S.C. 8035, Franchetti assumes the responsibilities of the CNO as the current Vice Chief of Naval Operations.

Adm. Franchetti was nominated by President Biden to be the 33rd Chief of Naval Operations this past July. If confirmed, she would be the first woman service chief and member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Executive Order Changes How Military Handles Sexual Assaults

Story by C. Todd Lopez, DOD News

The president on Friday signed an executive order that changes how some crimes — including sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse and murder — are handled within the military justice system.

The executive order makes changes to the Manual for Courts-Martial. The changes, among other things, move responsibility for the handling of such crimes away from military commanders to independent military prosecutors, who are outside the military chain of command.

Many of the changes in the executive order are related to recommendations made by the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military, which was created in early 2021 at the direction of Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III. The commission submitted its final recommendations to the president in June 2021.

Following his personal review of the commission's recommendations, Austin said he had a "strong bias" toward accepting them and added that doing so was part of taking care of the military's most important asset: its people.

"Our most critical asset as a department is our people, and our people and readiness are inextricably linked," Austin wrote in a June 2021 memorandum. "We will remain the preeminent fighting force in the world because we strive to better take care of our people. Our values and expectation remain at the core of addressing this problem, and I have every confidence that our force will get this right."

According to a senior administration official, the executive order amends the Manual for Courts-Martial and its accompanying rules in several ways.

First, the order establishes rules to govern the new special trial counsels, who will serve as the independent military prosecutors. They will decide, in place of military commanders, whether to prosecute allegations of sexual assault, domestic violence, and certain other serious offenses.

The order also:

- Establishes that prosecutorial decisions made by the special trial counsel are binding and are fully independent from the

military chain of command.

- Clearly delineates the relationship and authorized interactions between special trial counsel and commanders to protect the independence of the special trial counsel.
- Updates the procedures necessary to protect victims and the accused before, during and after court-martial proceedings.

The administration official also said the executive order reforms the sentencing system to promote uniformity and fairness, as recommended by the commission to reduce disparities in sentencing in cases of rape and sexual assault.

"Lastly, [it creates] a uniform, 'preponderance of the evidence' standard for the imposition of non-judicial punishment, which the IRC highlighted as critical to make consistent across the military services, given that most sexual misconduct cases are handled by non-judicial punishment, rather than courts-martial," the official said.

Under the new rules, the official said, the special trial counsel has the "right of first refusal" when it comes to deciding whether to be involved in prosecuting some crimes committed by military personnel.

"This is a shift in the way the military justice system does business fundamentally," the official said. "What was really important with the specific rules that are being changed through the order ... is effectively that the special trial counsel — these independent prosecutors — have the right of first refusal when cases come up that fall under any of the crimes or covered offenses."

When a crime is reported, the official said, military police, for instance, will connect with the special trial counsel first, and the special trial counsel will assess if the case falls within its purview. If it doesn't, those crimes could be referred to commanders using the traditional military justice system, where commanders, with advice from judge advocates, will determine what to do.

According to the official, the effective date for the changes, as directed by the National Defense Authorization Act, is Dec. 27, 2023, and will apply to offenses committed after that date.

Fair winds and following seas, CMC Tony Corey!



Welcome Aboard, CMC Jon Cristafulli

