



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON DC 20350

May 15, 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

SUBJECT: Setting a New Course for Navy Quality of Service

The people of our United States Navy remain our most precious resource, and building a culture of warfighting excellence remains a top priority. After reviewing the investigations resultant from the suicide deaths aboard USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73) and Mid-Atlantic Regional Maintenance Center (MARMC), we must be resolute in our commitment to care for our people.

Together, we must ensure that every Service Member and civilian in our Navy trusts that we prioritize their and their families' well-being not just through words but through identifiable actions.

To do so, we will set a new course for Navy Quality of Service (QoS). QoS is the combination of Quality of Life, which is the experience of a Sailor and their family *outside* the workplace, and Quality of Work, which is the Sailor's experience *in* the workplace. Our Navy's fully ready combat force deserves QoS that meets or exceeds established standards.

Preventing a Similar Event

Three areas common to both the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON and MARMC investigations deserve our fullest attention going forward:

- **Leadership**. Implementing the investigations' recommendations will only get us so far. We must get ahead of this problem by bringing the Navy's Get Real, Get Better mindset and leadership behaviors to life – where we are transparent about how we are actually performing, and we are bold in solving problems or elevating barriers to our leader's attention where they exist.
- **Standards**. In both cases there was organizational drift – a slow erosion over time – conditions that were clearly not right became acceptable. As a Navy, we establish clear standards for our systems and machines, expressed through warfighting requirements. We do not yet have clear, enforceable standards for QoS. As a result, we consistently find examples where we do not meet our standards. This erodes trust, both inside and outside of our Navy.
- **Health**. Said simply, mental health is health. Providing resources and care to Sailors in a time of crisis is important, but can be too late. Navy's approach starts at initial training, where our people are equipped to build strength and resilience. It continues in how the Navy provides for basic needs such as pay, food, housing, work spaces, and resources to support families. Integral to this whole effort are unit climates built on trust and respect, where connectedness and inclusion are high.

Initial Steps

Navy QoS will not be corrected with the stroke of a pen. Instead, it will require sustained effort that began with the Navy's Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 President's Budget 2024 budget submission. To accelerate this effort, we will realign FY 2023 resources, and partner with Congress and the Office of the Secretary of Defense to request additional resources and authorities. These additional resources will be used to accelerate improvements for Sailors at Newport News Shipyard, refurbish and modernize facilities, as well as provide the tools and training necessary to build stronger people and healthy unit climates.

Commanders' Intent

To provide clear targets for Navy QoS, the following Commanders' Intent is provided:

- Every Sailor deserves a deliberate strategy for strengthening their mental and physical health: The toughness and resilience of their mind, body, and spirit. This approach for individual readiness starts upon joining the Navy, is reinforced at every unit, and is paired with a similar strategy for reinforcing healthy unit climates. Navy will clarify its suicide prevention procedures to best care for those affected and ensure that one death by suicide does not spread at the unit or local level.
- Every Sailor deserves the opportunity to go to sea. Few to none join the Navy to go to a ship in a shipyard. We will establish policy so that no Sailor will spend the majority of their first-term enlistment assigned to a ship in a shipyard.
- Every Sailor deserves the opportunity to live off the ship while in an industrial environment (includes public/private shipyards and major availabilities on naval bases). We will ensure E1-E3 have adequate unaccompanied or leased housing, and expand the Basic Allowance for Housing to include E4 with less than 4 years of service when quarters are not available.
- Every Sailor, especially those assigned to a ship or submarine in the shipyard, deserves access to convenient, affordable, and nutritious food. To do so, we will prioritize putting Basic Allowance for Subsistence in the pockets of every Sailor assigned to the shipyards and explore additional options to make it easier for our people to be well fed during their duty day. Micro Markets will be established at our remaining two public shipyards by the end of Calendar Year 2023.
- Every Sailor deserves convenient access to free, high speed WiFi in unaccompanied housing and Morale Welfare and Recreation centers. Reliable high-speed internet connectivity ensures Sailors can communicate with friends and family, pursue distance learning, and engage in stress-relieving recreational activities including gaming options. In addition to providing WiFi where our people live, we will explore options to provide better internet access where they work, to include WiFi on piers in-port.

- Every Sailor unable to perform normally assigned duties deserves full, direct support. This includes those in a limited duty or disability evaluation system status. Personnel will be assigned in the right numbers, to the right commands, with access to the right resources to restore their individual performance to the highest levels and keep them connected.

Every Sailor deserves leadership they can trust and a leader who invests in their health, well-being, and overall success.

Navy Actions

To support the achievement of this intent, the following actions will be taken immediately:

- Investigation recommendations will be provided to the Learning to Action Board (L2AB) for subsequent distribution to supported Commanders. The L2AB is led by a two-star Flag Officer and reports directly to the Under Secretary of the Navy (UNSECNAV) and the Vice Chief of Naval Operations (VCNO). L2AB provides detailed and sustained oversight of how the Navy implements Navy-wide recommendations, assigns ownership of the required actions to accountable commanders, and conducts assessments as to whether the recommendations, as implemented, provide the intended effect.
- The VCNO will oversee a cross functional team comprised of relevant stakeholders to prioritize and coordinate Navy QoS. This cross-functional team will establish standards and measures for QoS, bring them to life at Newport News Shipyard, and then scale them throughout our Fleet.
- Navy will establish a single, accountable, senior civilian for the development of a long-term QoS plan for Newport News Shipbuilding. We have been at Newport News Shipyard for over 50 years, and we need a strategy for at least the next 50 years. The Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition (ASN (RDA)) will be the supported lead for this effort, partnering with Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV) N4 to ensure that QoS standards are established at Newport News Shipyard.
- Ships and submarines will be properly manned for shipyard availabilities. Each lead Type Commander will establish Navy-wide minimum manning standards for each class of ship/submarine in a shipyard availability, approved by Fleet Commanders. Conducting availabilities without achieving manning standards will require Fleet Commander approval, with awareness provided to us both. In addition, OPNAV N1 will conduct a study to determine the manpower requirements by phase of an aircraft carrier Refueling and Complex Overhaul.
- QoS standards will be met, in shipyards prior to an availability starting, and on a ship/submarine prior to the move aboard. This is the responsibility of Type Commanders in order to capture lessons learned and monitor status over time, with

barriers raised to Fleet Commanders for action. ASN (RDA) will audit private shipyards to ensure standards for contractor supplied housing are met, or waivers are formally requested.

- Known discrepancies will be reevaluated as part of the FY 2025 budget submission. Over the past year, the L2AB, Naval Inspector General, and Naval Safety Command have elevated barriers to Navy performance, especially in the area of QoS. These areas will be reviewed for action, via policy or funding.

Accountability

The conditions experienced by those assigned to the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON and MARMC are not the result of any act or inaction by any single leader. Collectively, Navy senior leadership, officer and civilian, let our standards slip – and in doing so we let our people down. To ensure accountability for bringing QoS standards to life:

- In 45 days, the L2AB will report to the UNSECNAV and VCNO on how investigation recommendations have been distributed for action, with initial supported/supporting relationships and timelines clearly defined.
- In 45 days, the VCNO will report directly to us to ensure essential QoS elements are prioritized in the Navy's Program Objective Memorandum for FY 2025.
- In 90 days, the VCNO will report directly to us and provide their initial strategy for executing their QoS role, to include:
 - A breakdown of how standards and measures for Navy QoS will be developed, with supporting commanders assigned for each area;
 - Priorities for QoS development (to include USS GEORGE WASHINGTON's recommendations);
 - Timeline for execution.

This memorandum sets a new course for Navy QoS. Our success will be dependent on every leader, at every level, asking one question every day: Are we asking our people to overcome something they shouldn't have to overcome?

Where the answer is yes, we must move, with speed and sustained conviction, to get better – backing up our words with identifiable actions – and elevating barriers to senior leaders for resolution. Our people deserve the very best.


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