



NAVY LEAGUE *of the United States*

Navy League Leg. Affairs Weekly Round-Up – May 11

Navy League Convention: Book your **hotel** room for Convention [now](#)! It is important that you book your room before May 15th. The convention takes place during a very busy time in Portland and the room block will sell out. The room rate is \$189 per night.

Grass Roots Training Available on Demand: If you've wanted to participate in our Grass Roots program but haven't been able to make a training session, help is here! Simply email rsimon@navyleague.org with your region and which training (P1: Navy, P2: Coast Guard, P3: U.S.-flag Merchant Marine, P4: Marine Corps) you would like to receive, and we'll send you a link to the recording. In-person visits from constituents is the MOST effective way to influence a Member of Congress, so our men and women in the sea service are counting on you to be their advocate!

Navy League Pizza Brief: This week, your membership dollars and donations supported a pizza brief for House & Senate staffers: "Exercise Rim of the Pacific, A preview of the world's largest maritime exercise." Navy speakers provided insight into the 26th iteration of RIMPAC, the premier month-long multinational maritime exercise that takes place in and around the Hawaiian Islands in July. RIMPAC is a unique training opportunity that helps over 30 navies foster and sustain the cooperative relationships that are critical to ensuring the safety and security of sea lanes for continued global economic growth for all. Approximately 35 staffers attended today's event.

2019 NDAA Markup

The House Armed Services Committee undertook a full markup of the Fiscal Year 2019 National Defense Authorization Act Wednesday that went past midnight Thursday morning. The committee had a robust discussion, and most of the contentious amendments will be tackled on the full floor of the House. Some interesting debates that we're sure to hear more on later focused firmly on the tension between getting needed ships quickly and wanting to ensure second- and third-tier suppliers are also American companies, just like the shipyards. The debate was thoughtful, and it's clear everyone is seeking to do right by the warfighter. The Senate begins their mark up at the end of the month.

Mattis and Dunford on the Hill

On Wednesday morning Secretary of Defense James Mattis and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joseph Dunford testified before the Senate Appropriations Defense Subcommittee on the Defense Department budget. Secretary Mattis told the committee the recently passed omnibus spending bill allows the Department to implement the National Defense Strategy, and the 2019 request funds three goals: a more lethal force, strengthened alliances, reforms the department for performance and affordability. "History proves that we are stronger when we stand united with others," he said. Sitting next to the Department comptroller, Secretary Mattis also promised that the history first audit in the department's history would be completed by end of year.

In wide ranging questions the witnesses covered topics from Iran and North Korea to competition with Russia and China. He assured Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) that the Arctic was on the radar, and he is working to strengthen alliances with democratic Arctic Council members in response to Russia's militarization. The Pentagon has a joint program office with the Coast Guard to supply the first heavy polar icebreaker, and he promised to work with her on a plan to get to six ships. General Dunford told Senator John Hoeven (R-ND) that the department is making prudent steps to grow ISR forces but not doing all they could do if they had unlimited resources. They are making use of unmanned assets for the Arctic but much of the Pentagon's resources are balanced towards North Korea. Defending the Administration's withdrawal from the nuclear deal with Iran, he told the subcommittee that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was inadequate to dealing with Iran's malign activities across the region. He assured senators that he and General Dunford's views were listened to by the President, and reinforced their belief that, diplomacy should always be used before military action. He told Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) regarding her legislation that building defense projects in America was a worthy goal, but implementation may include sourcing from allies.

In his opening remarks, General Dunford assured that the United States still has competitive advantage, which had been eroded, but that slide has slowed. He expressed his full support of the audit of the Defense Department to maintain the trust of Congress and the public and reiterated that DOD needs stable and predictable funding to continue building. The Secretary agreed that after Continuing Resolutions in nine out of ten years, the Department needs several years of stability and regular order, and to spend money wisely, "not on things we don't need...It's sobering as we look at the sacrifice of money that could be used elsewhere in our society," said Mattis.

CSIS highlights the Arctic with USCG Commandant Zukunft

In an event titled "[The Arctic of the Future: Strategic Pursuit or Great Power Miscalculation?](#)" the Center for Strategic and International Studies spent a half day examining the strategic and economic future of the Arctic region, featuring Admiral Paul Zukunft, Commandant of the Coast Guard as the keynote speaker. He thanked the CSIS Arctic program for helping to bring the attention of Washington and the nation to the Arctic, which led to the joint USGC-Navy Icebreaker program that now has funding requested for one and a half heavy icebreakers, said Zukunft.

[Defense One reports](#) that Admiral Zukunft told the audience the Coast Guard is looking to expand its communications capabilities beyond over-the-horizon in the Arctic region and is working with a startup to launch microsatellites for a proof of concept. He also urged the ratifications of the Law of the Sea Treaty by the United States, again noting that North Korea and Libya are the only other countries that haven't signed it. Without the US as a party, we can't be a leader when it comes to Arctic issues including assigning sovereignty to the Extended Continental Shelf. In his wide-ranging remarks, as our own [Seapower Magazine reported](#), Adm. Zukunft said that repealing the Jones Act "could have severe repercussions." The first thing to go would be inland and coastwide trade by US ships, and second would be domestic shipyards without the Act, he said. In one of his last addresses before handing over the reins to Admiral Karl Schultz, he urged the assembled experts to keep carrying the baton for Arctic issues expressed gratitude for the chance to serve. Without wading into the politically charged topic of assigning responsibility he said "Inuit elders have a name for [melting glaciers, sea ice and coastal erosion]. [They call it: 'climate change'](#)" and "I have to deal with the consequences."

Seapower chairman at Hudson

At an event at the Hudson Institute Congressman Rob Wittman, Chairman of the Seapower & Projection Forces Subcommittee, gave his thoughts on an increasingly contested naval environment, with a focus on the South China Sea, threats to the American shipbuilding base, and the future 355-ship Navy. You can watch the event [here](#), and [read coverage from our own Seapower Magazine](#).

AEI looks at the Navy fleet

The American Enterprise Institute held an event to highlight a report released by in-house scholars examining the Navy fleet. [Seapower Magazine reported](#) “In short, the 355-ship Navy will take decades and billions of dollars not only to build but also to maintain,” the study said. “Neither the Obama administration nor the Trump administration has proposed defense budgets commensurate with reaching or sustaining this significantly expanded fleet.”



180509-N-OW019-0172 TAMPA, Fla. (May 9, 2018) Rear Adm. Gary Mayes, commander of Navy Region Southwest, conducts a reenlistment ceremony for three Sailors at Tropicana Field before a Tampa Bay Rays baseball game during Navy Week Tampa. Tampa is one of select cities to host a 2018 Navy Week, which is a week dedicated to raising U.S. Navy awareness through local outreach, community service and exhibitions. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Logan C. Kellums/Released)

Other stories of interest:

[Why We're Launching a Review of Naval Education – Defense One/May 9](#)

BY THOMAS B. MODLY U.S. NAVY UNDERSECRETARY

The United States has no preordained right to victory, as Defense Secretary James Mattis reminds us in the 2018 National Defense Strategy. In an age of renewed, yet different great-power competition, we must be prepared for the challenges we see coming — but more importantly, for those we don't.

[New Fleet Forces boss: Readiness is our business – Navy Times/May 6](#)

NORFOLK, Va. — A crowd of nearly 500 military and civilian guests on the hanger bay of the aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush May 4, watched as newly minted four-star Adm. Chris Grady relieved Adm. Phil Davidson as the leader of the Norfolk-based Fleet Forces Command.

[CNO Announces Return of the U.S. 2nd Fleet – Seapower Magazine/May 4](#)

ARLINGTON, Va. — The chief of naval operations (CNO) has announced the establishment of the U.S. 2nd Fleet, to be headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia, marking the return of a command that figured prominently during the Cold War.

[Mattis Is Pushing The Navy To A Brand New Fleet Strategy – Task and Purpose/May 9](#)

Secretary of Defense James Mattis recently hinted at major changes to how aircraft carrier battle groups are deployed, saying that the current eight-month deployment cycle is “no way to run a Navy.”

[Trump Wants to Fix Pinch Point for Great Lakes Shipping – Maritime Exec/May 4](#)

Officials in Michigan are pleased that U.S. President Donald Trump is in favor of improvements to the Soo Locks, which connect Lake Superior with Lake Huron. The route is critical for transporting iron ore from northern Michigan to the steel mills on the lower lakes.

[As fatal aviation crashes reach 6-year high, Pentagon says ‘this is not a crisis’ – Military Times](#)

Fatal military aviation accidents have reached a six-year high, in both the number of accidents and the number of pilots and crews killed, a Military Times investigation has found.=

So far, 12 fatal accidents — 11 crashes and one ground incident — in fiscal year 2018, which began Oct. 1, have claimed the lives of 35 military pilots and crew. It's the highest number of crashes in years, and the total number of deaths so far this year ties 2016's deadly year, when 35 aviators were also killed.

[U.S. Navy jets begin sorties against IS in Syria from Mediterranean – Reuters/May 7](#)

ABOARD USS HARRY S. TRUMAN (Reuters) - A U.S. naval strike force led by aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman began sorties on May 3 against Islamic State in Syria, continuing missions by a U.S.-led coalition against the militants.

[Navy says 93 women are now serving aboard Pacific Fleet submarines – Stars and Stripes/May 7](#)

HONOLULU (Tribune News Service) — Eight years after the Navy announced a policy change allowing women to serve on submarines, there are 93 women aboard Pacific Fleet vessels, including nine officers on two Virginia-class submarines at Pearl Harbor, the undersea service said.

[Fitzgerald officer of the deck pleads guilty at court-martial – Stars and Stripes/May 8](#)

WASHINGTON — The junior lieutenant in charge of navigating the USS Fitzgerald when it collided with a commercial vessel pleaded guilty Tuesday to dereliction of duty and acknowledged her role in the deaths of seven sailors last year.

[3 Questions: America's Next Nuclear-Missile Submarine – Defense One/Sep 2017](#)

The United States military has four kinds of submarines. Only one is nuclear-armed.

The ballistic missile submarines currently slipping about under the ocean have about 10 years of life left. One by one, each will need to be replaced. But with what, and at what cost? That's what we're going to find out.

[Warship sailor takes part in his great-grandfather's burial at sea – Navy Times/May 7](#)

For Gunner's Mate Third Class Robert Ashman, a recent burial-at-sea ceremony aboard the destroyer Winston S. Churchill went beyond honoring sailors who came before him.

In a coincidental twist, Ashman ended up laying the ashes of his great-grandfather, Chief Signalman James Mitchell, to rest in the Mediterranean Sea, according to a Navy release.

[General Dynamic Electric Boat To Invest \\$852M to Expand Groton Shipyard – USNI News/May 7](#)

General Dynamics Electric Boat is spending about half of its previously announced \$1.7 billion multi-year capital expenditure plan on upgrading its Groton, Conn. manufacturing facility to accommodate building the new Columbia-class nuclear powered ballistic missile submarine.

[U.S. Navy's Costliest Warship Suffers New Failure at Sea – Bloomberg/May 8](#)

The Gerald R. Ford, the U.S. Navy's costliest warship, suffered a new failure at sea that forced it back to port and raised fresh questions about the new class of aircraft carriers.

[Navy Competing \\$12.6 Billion in Aircraft Maintenance Contracts – Bloomberg/May 7](#)

The U.S. Department of the Navy is moving ahead with plans for a \$12.6 billion seven-year aircraft maintenance services and contractor logistics services program that consolidates as many as 15 contracts.

[Remains of Pa. sailor killed at Pearl Harbor identified – Stars and Stripes/May 6](#)

NEWPORT TOWNSHIP, Pa. (Tribune News Service) -- The remains of a township sailor killed during the attack on Pearl Harbor have finally been identified and are coming home.

[Navy reorganization aims to modernize business operations – Government Matters/May 6](#)

An effort to restructure two major leadership offices at the top of the Department of the Navy is officially under way. Thomas Modly, Under Secretary of the U.S. Navy, told Government Matters

Sunday the initiative to bring management and information technology functions directly under his jurisdiction was designed to streamline business operations in the Department. The initiative includes disestablishing the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of the Navy for Management and replacing it with a Chief Management Officer; and consolidating the authorities of the Navy Chief Information Officer into Modly's portfolio as Under Secretary. Modly first outlined the changes in a memo to the Department in March.

[Navy establishes aerial drone squadron – Navy Times](#)

As the need and scope of the military's unmanned systems continues to grow, the Navy plans to establish a command devoted to aviation drones this fall.

Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Two Four (UX24) will come into existence at Webster Outlying Field in Maryland in October, according to an OPNAV instruction issued in April.

[Destroyer passes Navy 'acceptance trials' – Stars and Stripes/May 6](#)

The future USS Thomas Hudner -- an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer under construction at Bath Iron Works -- has finished a key round of testing prior to the ship's formal delivery to the U.S. Navy.

[F-35B Showcased at Iwakuni Air Show, Draws Record Crowd – Military.com/May 6](#)

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan -- America's most-advanced stealth fighter wowed a record 215,000 people Saturday at the base's 42nd annual Friendship Day.

[Navy LCS Gets "Soft-Kill" Countermeasure to Destroy Enemy Torpedos – Warrior Maven/May 8](#)

The Navy's Littoral Combat Ship is now armed with an emerging ship defense soft-kill countermeasure able to identify, track and destroy incoming enemy torpedo fire, Navy officials said.

[RE-ORIENTING AMERICAN SEAPOWER FOR THE CHINA CHALLENGE – War on the Rocks/May 10](#)

As a seafaring state, America demands maximal access to the world's oceans within the constraints of international law. Though seldom recognized, U.S. efforts to defend its interest in maritime freedom in the Western Pacific have been fairly successful. When the People's Republic of China unlawfully draws "fences" around the sea, U.S. warships steam through the fences. Beijing recognizes the seriousness of America's position, and thus far has generally yielded.



180510-N-UD522-0269 PACIFIC OCEAN (May 10, 2018) The aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74), right, conducts a replenishment-at-sea with the fleet replenishment oiler USNS Henry J. Kaiser (T-AO 187). John C. Stennis is underway with the ships and squadrons of Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 3 conducting a group sail training in preparation for its next scheduled deployment. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class David A. Brandenburg/Released)