



NAVY LEAGUE

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Inside this issue

Leg. Affairs Weekly Round-Up – December 21

- [Happy Holidays!](#)
- [Mattis Resigns](#)
- [Partial Government Shutdown Imminent](#)
- [Icebreaker Funding](#)

Other stories of interest:

- [Top Stories](#)
- [Seapower](#)
- [Surface and](#)

Leg. Affairs Weekly Round-Up – December 21

Happy Holidays!

Merry Christmas, Happy Channukah, Merry Kwanzaa and Happy New Year to all our fantastic Navy League members. We hope to make our Legislative Affairs program even better in the new year and part of that is improving the weekly newsletter. We intend to make this weekly newsletter more future focused, and thus may change the day it is sent out. Please take the survey below to give us your feedback and help take it to new heights!

[Legislative Affairs Weekly Newsletter Survey.](#)

[Top](#)

Mattis Resigns

Secretary of Defense James N. Mattis, retired Marine Corps General, resigned in protest yesterday evening after the President's abrupt Syria withdrawal announcement. The House Armed Services Committee's bipartisan leadership Republican Chairman Mac Thornberry (R-TX) and Ranking Member Adam Smith (D-WA) released a statement stating it would be a "strategic error to remove U.S. forces precipitously" and said Congress must be fully informed.

Delivering a forceful declaration of principle and policy Sec. Mattis' letter stated "Because you have the right to have a Secretary of Defense whose views are better aligned with yours on these and other subjects, I believe it is right for me to step down from my position. The end date for my tenure is February 28, 2019." His resignation was met with shock and alarm

[Submarine Warfare](#)

- [Aviation](#)
- [Homeland](#)

throughout Capitol Hill and the defense community. Mattis' resignation letter focused significantly on maintaining America's alliances in order to counter malign behavior from Russia and China.

[Read the full letter here.](#)

[Top](#)

Partial Government Shutdown Imminent

If lawmakers are unable to agree on a spending legislation to send to the president before midnight tonight, funding will lapse for the Coast Guard and the Maritime Administration until a deal is reached to reopen the agencies.

Until funding is restored 42,000 active-duty Coast Guard service men and women will work without pay, as will 340 MARAD employees. 419 MARAD staff and thousands of Coast Guard civilian employees will be furloughed, sent home without pay over the holidays until a deal is reached.

As of publishing time, Congress has not reached a deal in order to fund the remaining 30-percent of the Federal Government without appropriations for Fiscal Year 2019, which began September 1. Senators had begun leaving town after [passing a Continuing Resolution \(CR\) Wednesday evening](#) to fund the government, including the Departments of Homeland Security and Transportation, until February 8. The White House had previously signaled it accepted the bill. Yesterday however, the President told House Republican leadership he would refuse to sign the Senate bill, throwing a wrench into the process. The Senate is voting today on House passed legislation including \$5.7 billion in wall funding, however the 60-vote threshold is unlikely to be met due to Democratic opposition.

[Top](#)

Icebreaker Funding

Another casualty of the [showdown over government funding is the Coast Guard's Polar Security Cutter](#) (PSC). Discussions

over funding the first of the new polar icebreaker ship class will have to wait until 2019, even with bipartisan consensus over its necessity. Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz recently highlighted the fact that if the last remaining operational heavy icebreaker *Polar Star* were to break down there is no backup. In fact as Business Insider reported, former [Commandant Paul Zukunft turned down a National Security Council request](#) for a Freedom of Navigation operation (FONOP) because a breakdown could require the Coast Guard to call Russia for assistance. Funding the Polar Security Cutter in Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) is essential to maintaining an American presence in the Arctic because [the construction timeline aligns perilously close](#) to the *Polar Star's* decommissioning timeline.



Please feel free to forward this newsletter to your councils, as well as friends and potential Navy League members!



GREAT LAKES, Ill. (Nov. 27, 2018) A recruit marches from one training location to the next at Recruit Training Command. More than 30,000 recruits graduate annually from the Navy's

only boot camp. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Camilo Fernan/Released)

[Top](#)

Other stories of interest:

Top Stories

[5 takeaways: Top US Navy officer releases updated strategy document - Defense News/Dec 18](#)

Almost twice the length of the first edition, Adm. John Richardson's Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority version 2.0 expands on some of the concepts laid out in 2016, and functions as a to-do list for both the fleet and the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations staff.

[US Navy document paints a bleak picture of fleet's future if hit with 2020 budget cuts - Defense News/Dec 18](#)

Cuts to new ships, aircraft, maintenance and much-needed public shipyard modernization are on deck if Congress can't come to an agreement to avert across-the-board cuts to the defense budget by January of 2020, according to a document submitted to lawmakers Dec. 12.

[Top](#)

Seapower

[Chinese hackers are reportedly stealing loads of US Navy secrets, and the Navy is scrambling to stop it - Business Insider/Dec 14](#)

"Attacks on our networks are not new, but attempts to steal critical information are increasing in both severity and sophistication," Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer said in an internal memo in October, The Wall Street Journal, which reviewed the memo, reported Friday.

[Larger Europe mission for Navy is possible to counter Russian activity, Navy undersecretary says - Stars and Stripes/Dec 19](#)

Given concerns about Russia's investments in its navy and especially its enhanced undersea capabilities, a larger Europe mission for the Navy is possible, Undersecretary of the Navy Thomas Modly said in Washington after returning from a weeklong overseas tour.

[Top](#)

Surface and Submarine Warfare

[Navy Planning for Gray-Zone Conflict: Finalizing Distributed Maritime Operations for High-End Fight - USNI News/Dec 19](#)

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson released a new strategy document this week that notes a "conceptual challenge" on the lower end of the warfare spectrum. The strategy document is squarely aimed at countering Russia and China - great powers that have engaged in cyber and disinformation campaigns, unsafe intercepts of and interactions with U.S. ships and aircraft, economic aggression towards U.S. allies and partners and other types of "gray zone" activity.

[Top](#)

Aviation

[Navy Establishes First CMV-22B Squadron - USNI News/Dec 14](#)

In October, Navy officials announced they had sped up the transition to CMV-22B as the fleet's COD. The first three CMV-22B aircraft are now expected to deploy in 2021, according to the Navy. The retirement of the Navy's last C-2A Greyhounds is now scheduled to occur in 2024, about three years earlier than the previously announced 2027 retirement. Navy aircrews already started training with Marine MV-22 Osprey crews.

[Top](#)

Homeland

[Even after her midterm loss, Air Force vet McSally will serve in the Senate - Military Times/Dec 18](#)

On Tuesday, Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey announced he will appoint McSally to the seat currently held by Republican Sen. John Kyl and formerly held by Navy veteran Sen. John McCain. Kyl is set to step down from the role at the end of the year.



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[Top](#)

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