



TOTAL SAILOR: **FIT TO FIGHT**

BUILDING OUR
WARFIGHTERS & TEAMS
READY TO FIGHT & WIN



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*Cover photo credits: Top: Petty Officer 2nd Class Alice Husted;
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 **TOTAL
SAILOR**
FIT TO FIGHT

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CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
ADMIRAL DARYL CAUDLE

CNO FOREWORD

OUR PEOPLE ARE OUR DECISIVE ADVANTAGE

The United States Navy asks ordinary Americans to do extraordinary things. Every day, our Sailors operate in demanding and unforgiving environments. They stand the watch through the night, operate complex combat systems, make difficult decisions under pressure, and execute missions around the world to defend our Nation and project sea power.

The **global demands on our Fleet are increasing**. We need Sailors who can operate through uncertainty, out-think our adversaries, adapt faster than the fight changes, and deliver decisive effects across every domain. We need Sailors who are ready not only for the challenges we face today, but for the fight that may come tomorrow.

Those demands begin long before combat. Our Sailors manage operational stress, extended time away from their families, an increasingly complex information environment, and the everyday challenges of life and service. Every Sailor brings different strengths and areas for growth. Our responsibility as leaders is to deliberately develop them—building on their strengths, addressing their weaknesses, and forging teams ready to overcome any challenge.

Let me be clear: **our people are our decisive advantage**.

Technology matters. Ships matter. Aircraft matter. Weapons matter. But none of them fight themselves. Sailors bring those systems to life. They make the decisions, solve the problems, employ the weapons, and fight together as a team. Ultimately, our readiness begins and ends with them.

That is why **Total Sailor: Fit to Fight** exists.

This is not another program or checklist. It is our framework for deliberately developing Sailors who are ready to perform when our Nation needs them most.

A Total Sailor is grounded in our Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment and deliberately developed—strong in **Mind, Body, and Spirit**. Mind is how we think, learn, decide, and perform under pressure. Body is the physical foundation that allows us to sustain performance. Spirit is our character, values, purpose, relationships, faith or belief, and commitment to something greater than ourselves.

But this is not only about the individual.

Great People become Great Leaders. Great Leaders build Great Teams. Great Teams win.

Leaders must know their people, develop their people, and hold the standard. Sailors must know their shipmates, understand the mission, continually improve themselves, and recognize that their actions matter. Readiness is built every day, one Sailor and one team at a time.

That is Sailors First. That is how we build our warfighting advantage and remain ready to fight and win whenever our Nation calls.

Built in the Foundry – Tempered in the Fleet – Forged to Fight.

MCPON – CALL TO ACTION

Total Sailor: Fit to Fight (TSFTF) sharpens our focus on building Great People, elevating leader standards, and forging highly connected, cohesive teams. This is how we maintain constant readiness to deter aggression and, if deterrence fails, to win decisively in combat.

As Navy leaders committed to the TSFTF framework, we are accountable to our people to set the standard, own the mission, and **build competence, toughness, and resiliency**. Only then can we ensure our readiness remains unmatched by any maritime force.

Readiness rests on three pillars: Competence, Character, and Confidence. Together, they form the foundation of every Sailor's ability to fight and win our nation's wars. The enduring strength of these pillars is sustained through our dedication to technical mastery, professional growth, and family readiness.

Technical mastery comes from training and certifying to the highest standards, using the latest technology, and forging Sailors who are competent, confident, and combat-ready - because mastery wins wars.

To achieve true mastery, we must be relentless in developing our Sailors throughout their entire careers. Our strength cannot be outsourced - we must build our warriors from within. Every Sailor deserves a defined path of learning, growth, and advancement, so each of us can rise to your full potential. Together, we will keep our Navy ready to prevail today, tomorrow, and far into the future.

We cannot strengthen mission readiness without recognizing the vital role of our families. They are the support team that enables us to focus fully on the mission. Navy leadership is committed to ensuring our families have the resources they need to thrive while we are away from home.

Our duty is to each other, to our Navy, and to our Nation. TSFTF is not a checklist or a binder on a shelf. It is our identity and a daily practice: how we train, how we lead, and how we fight. A culture of mere compliance falls short. It requires Competence, Character, and Confidence, and a culture forged by esprit de corps, so that Sailors and leaders form connected, cohesive teams - always ready to stand together and, when called upon, fight and win our nation's wars.

By fully embracing these pillars, we execute a Warrior Mindset: Prepare, Commit, Execute, Reflect.

This is our call to action: Be Total Sailors. Be Fit to Fight. Be ready to lead. Be committed to each other, our families, and our mission.



MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER
OF THE NAVY
MCPON JOHN PERRYMAN



INTRODUCTION



Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Stuart Posada

WHY TOTAL SAILOR: FIT TO FIGHT MATTERS

The Navy's mission is simple: **fight and win at sea.**

Achieving that mission requires more than advanced technology, superior platforms, or operational concepts.

It requires battle-ready Sailors.

We ask Sailors to operate in the most demanding environments on earth - to deploy forward, separate from their families, operate in contested spaces, and make critical decisions under pressure and uncertainty.

Strategic competition requires Sailors who can adapt faster than our adversaries. Distributed operations require teams that can operate with greater independence and confidence. The information environment demands the ability to process more data, manage complexity, and make decisions at speed.

At the same time, Sailors navigate the realities of service: time away from family, operational stress, personal challenges and the physical and mental demands required to remain ready.

According to a 2024 article from the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Division, injuries, mental health conditions, and musculoskeletal disease accounted for more medical encounters and lost duty time than any other category of condition. A smaller pool of Sailors, carrying a heavier operational load, is precisely why the deliberate development of every individual Sailor is a warfighting necessity rather than an aspiration.

Every Sailor enters the Navy with different strengths and different areas for growth.

The demands of naval service can either strengthen a Sailor's ability to perform - or, if left unmanaged, degrade readiness, weaken teams, and diminish combat effectiveness.

A ready Navy requires ready Sailors. That is why Total Sailor: Fit to Fight (TSFTF) exists.

TSFTF is our commitment to deliberately develop strong warfighters - Sailors prepared in Mind, Body, and Spirit to meet the demands of service, strengthen our teams, and contribute to a force that is ready to fight and win today. This framework answers two fundamental questions:

**What is the
definition of a
Total Sailor?**

**How do we
build a
Total Sailor?**

PART I

THE TOTAL SAILOR DEFINED

THE CHALLENGE FACING TODAY'S SAILOR

The Navy has always demanded extraordinary performance from ordinary Americans.

What has changed is the complexity, speed, and uncertainty of the environment in which our Sailors must perform.

Today's Sailor must be ready to:

- ▶ Operate in a contested environment
- ▶ Make decisions under pressure
- ▶ Adapt to rapidly changing conditions
- ▶ Work across joint and allied teams
- ▶ Maintain readiness during prolonged stress
- ▶ Balance mission requirements with personal responsibilities



Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Daniel Ruiz

The Navy does not need perfect people. The Navy needs prepared people.

Every Sailor brings strengths. Every Sailor has areas to improve. Developing a Total Sailor means intentionally strengthening the characteristics that allow individuals and teams to perform at their best.

The goal is not simply to reduce risk. The goal is to increase capability.

A Sailor who is physically ready, mentally prepared, grounded in purpose, and connected to their team is more capable of solving problems, adapting under pressure, and accomplishing the mission.

That is warfighting readiness.

WHAT IS A TOTAL SAILOR?

A Total Sailor is a warfighter prepared to perform, adapt, and lead.

A Total Sailor is anchored in Honor, Courage, and Commitment. They understand that wearing the uniform carries a responsibility to themselves, their teammates, and the mission. They continuously develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities because readiness is not a destination - they pursue excellence on a daily basis.

A Total Sailor is strong in Mind, Body, and Spirit. These three elements form the foundation of a Sailor who can operate in uncertainty, overcome challenges, and perform when the nation calls.



Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Alice Husted



STRONG IN MIND

A strong mind enables Sailors to think clearly, learn continuously, make sound decisions under pressure, adapt to changing conditions, and recover from setbacks.

The demands of Naval service require more than technical expertise. Sailors must be able to process information, solve complex problems, and make decisions when the situation is uncertain and the consequences are significant.

A strong mind is the ability to manage stress, maintain focus, and continue performing despite adversity. A strong mind is not the absence of stress. It is the ability to recognize stress, respond to it effectively, and keep it from compromising judgment or performance. Stress is an inherent part of military service.

Developing a strong mind requires discipline, reflection, learning, and the willingness to improve. Sailors with strong minds are better prepared to face challenges, support their teammates, and execute the mission.



STRONG IN BODY

A strong body enables Sailors to maintain physical readiness, recover from demanding operations, sustain performance over time, and remain ready for the fight.

Physical readiness is not simply a personal goal or an administrative requirement. It is a warfighting requirement. The Navy relies on Sailors who can operate in demanding environments, endure hardship, and maintain effectiveness throughout prolonged operations.

Maintaining the body requires discipline in fitness, nutrition, recovery, and overall health. Just as Sailors maintain the ships and systems they operate, they must maintain themselves as critical components of the Navy's warfighting capability.

Physical readiness is warfighting readiness.



STRONG IN SPIRIT

A strong spirit enables Sailors to deal with the challenging operations and missions encountered in the Navy. This strong spirit is built through values, relationships, purpose, and a commitment to something greater than themselves. A strong spirit is grounded in purpose, values, relationships, character, faith or belief, and commitment to something greater than oneself.

Naval service requires sacrifice. Sailors operate far from home, endure hardship, and accept responsibilities that few Americans ever experience. A strong spirit provides the foundation to persevere through those challenges and continue serving with honor. It shapes how Sailors make decisions, treat others, and respond when conditions are difficult.

A strong spirit allows Sailors to endure hardship, remain grounded in their purpose, and continue moving forward together.

PROFESSIONALLY COMPETENT

A Total Sailor knows their craft.

Competence is built through training, education, experience, and a commitment to continuous improvement and learning. Sailors must master their profession while remaining adaptable in an environment where technology, tactics, and missions continue to evolve.

Professional competence builds confidence. Confidence builds trust. Trust builds teams.

The Navy requires Sailors who are not only technically capable but who understand their role in the larger mission and are prepared to contribute when it matters most.

CONNECTED TO THE TEAM

No Sailor fights alone.

Every mission depends on Sailors who trust one another, understand their role, and recognize that their individual actions contribute to something larger than themselves.

Connected Sailors know they belong. They understand the importance of their contribution and recognize their responsibility to support the people around them.

Connection creates commitment. Committed teammates build stronger teams. Stronger teams are more prepared to fight and win.

COMMITTED TO THE MISSION

The ultimate purpose of developing the Total Sailor is readiness.

EVERY SAILOR MUST UNDERSTAND:

**MY ACTIONS
MATTER**

**MY TEAM
MATTERS**

**THE MISSION
MATTERS**

Every Sailor must understand that individual actions affect readiness, teammates strengthen resilience, and the mission depends on disciplined execution. When Sailors own their performance, support their teammates, and stay focused on the mission, the entire Navy becomes stronger.

Readiness is built one Sailor, one team, and one decision at a time. Every Sailor contributes to the strength of the Navy through the standards they uphold, the work they perform, and the example they set.

A Total Sailor understands that service is bigger than themselves.



Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Declan Barnes

GREAT PEOPLE. GREAT LEADERS. GREAT TEAMS.

The Navy's competitive advantage begins with people.

Technology, platforms, and systems provide capability - but people create combat power. The Sailors who operate our ships, aircraft, submarines, and systems are the decisive advantage that allows the Navy to fight and win.

Great People become Great Leaders. Great Leaders build Great Teams. Great Teams win. Building Great People requires deliberate development of the whole Sailor – Mind, Body, and Spirit. It requires leaders who invest in their people, reinforce standards, and create opportunities to grow.

Building Great Leaders requires character, competence, accountability, and ownership. Leaders must know their Sailors, develop their talent, and prepare the next generation to lead.

Building Great Teams requires trust, connection, cohesion, and a shared commitment to the mission. Teams that trust each other communicate better, adapt faster, and perform when conditions are most challenging.

This is the foundation of Total Sailor: Fit to Fight.

This is how we build the warfighters our Navy needs.

PART II

BUILDING THE TOTAL SAILOR

DEVELOPING WARFIGHTERS THROUGH MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT

Building a Total Sailor requires deliberate and sustained development. It does not happen by chance and it does not happen in isolated moments. Readiness is built over time: through daily habits, disciplined leadership, realistic training, and a constant commitment to improvement at every level of command.

The Navy develops Total Sailors to be Fit to Fight by strengthening three essential elements: **Mind, Body, and Spirit**. These are not separate tracks of development, but rather interconnected dimensions of a single warfighter. Together, they form the foundation of a Sailor who can think clearly, perform under pressure, adapt to changing conditions, and lead others in the most demanding environments.



BUILDING THE MIND

A STRONG MIND BUILDS RELIABLE WARFIGHTERS

Modern combat demands more than technical proficiency. It requires Sailors who can process complex information quickly, make sound decisions under pressure, and adjust to rapidly changing conditions without losing effectiveness. The operational environment is uncertain by design. A strong mind allows Sailors to operate effectively within that uncertainty.

Mental readiness is not the absence of stress. Stress is a constant in naval service and a defining feature of the operational environment. Mental readiness is the ability to function through that stress, recover from setbacks, and sustain high performance even when conditions are difficult, ambiguous, or exhausting.

A resilient Sailor is reliable under pressure: thinking clearly as situations tighten, adapting rapidly to changing plans, and continuously learning from experience. By proactively identifying risks and emerging challenges, they act early, seek or offer assistance when needed, and critically strengthen their team when it matters most.

DEVELOPING THE MIND

COGNITIVE FITNESS

Cognitive fitness is the ability to think, learn, plan, adapt, and act with purpose. In a complex battlespace, outcomes are often determined not by the quality of the plan, but by the quality of decisions made when the plan no longer applies.

Great Sailors do not simply memorize procedures or follow checklists in isolation; they deeply understand the mission, commander's intent, and how their actions connect to the broader fight. This comprehensive understanding empowers them to apply sound judgment when dynamic conditions outpace standing instructions.

Cognitive fitness is what enables initiative under pressure. It is what allows Sailors to maintain clarity when information is incomplete, time is compressed, and stakes are high.

The link between clear thinking and basic human maintenance is measurable. In a controlled study of military personnel, sustained wakefulness slowed simple reaction time and degraded shooting accuracy and other military-related tasks, with performance failing to fully recover even after a period of recovery sleep. Decisions made when the plan no longer applies depend on a brain that is rested, trained, and fueled. Cognitive fitness is built long before the moment of decision, through daily habits that leaders can either protect or inhibit.

PSYCHOLOGICAL FITNESS

Psychological fitness is the ability to manage stress, recover from adversity, and maintain performance across sustained periods of demand. Every Sailor will experience stress. That is not an exception to readiness - it is part of it.

The goal is not to eliminate stress from the system. The goal is to build the capacity to operate within it. Psychological fitness enables Sailors to withstand pressure without breaking performance, to recover after setbacks without losing momentum, and to remain steady when circumstances are difficult.

It is also what allows leaders and teams to recognize when strain is accumulating and take action early - before stress becomes a crisis.

SOCIAL FITNESS

No Sailor operates alone. Strong performance comes from strong teams, and strong teams are built on trust, connection, and communication.

Social fitness is the strength of those connections. It is the degree to which Sailors feel supported, valued, and responsible for one another. It shows up in how teams communicate under pressure, how they share information, and how they respond when one of their own is struggling.

Strong social fitness includes healthy relationships, clear communication, mutual trust, and a willingness to step in and support others without being asked. A connected Sailor is not only more resilient; they make the entire team more resilient.



Photo by PAO DESRON Seven

WARRIOR TOUGHNESS

Warrior Toughness develops the mindset and behaviors required to perform under pressure. It reinforces the idea that readiness is built through repetition, reflection, and disciplined execution in both training and operations.

At its core, Warrior Toughness is about four actions: Commit, Prepare, Execute, and Reflect.

Commitment gives purpose and direction. Preparation builds confidence and reduces uncertainty. Execution tests readiness in real conditions. Reflection turns experience into improvement. Together, they create a continuous cycle of growth.

Rather than a stand-alone program, Warrior Toughness is a fundamental mindset that must be embedded in daily operations, reinforced by leaders, and practiced by every Sailor at every level.

Developed from elite performance psychology and mindfulness practices within the Naval Special Warfare community, the Naval Education and Training Command's Warrior Toughness program delivers a Mind-Body-Spirit construct and a Commit-Prepare-Execute-Reflect mindset to every Sailor, beginning in boot camp. The value of the "Reflect" step is reinforced by the broader performance psychology literature.

GRIT

Psychologist Angela Duckworth explores the relationship between talent, effort, and achievement in her book *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*. Duckworth defines grit as the combination of passion and perseverance toward long-term goals and argues that sustained effort is a critical part of turning potential into performance. She illustrates this through a simple framework: $\text{Talent} \times \text{Effort} = \text{Skill}$, and $\text{Skill} \times \text{Effort} = \text{Achievement}$.

Talent provides a starting point, but talent alone does not produce results. Through practice, repetition, feedback, and experience, Sailors turn their natural abilities into capabilities they can rely on. Talent multiplied by effort produces skill.

But developing skill is only part of the equation. Skill multiplied by continued effort produces achievement. Sailors must apply what they have learned, continue improving, and persist when the work becomes difficult. This is why effort appears twice: it is required both to develop capability and to put that capability to work.

The lesson is simple: talent may shape where a Sailor starts, but sustained effort shapes how far they can go. Grit helps Sailors continue developing, overcome setbacks, and perform when the mission demands it.



LEADER ACTIONS: BUILDING STRONG MINDS

Leaders are central to building mental readiness. Strong minds are developed in environments where learning is expected, improvement is supported, and performance is openly discussed.

Leaders build strong minds by creating space for learning, normalizing honest conversations about readiness and performance, and encouraging reflection after training, exercises, and operations. They recognize stress early, before it becomes a breaking point, and they ensure Sailors have access to the support and resources they need to stay in the fight.

Ultimately, leadership is not only about understanding the mission. It is about understanding the people who execute it and ensuring they are mentally prepared to do so.

BUILDING THE BODY

PHYSICAL READINESS IS WARFIGHTING READINESS

A Navy that fights and wins must be physically capable of sustaining operations in demanding environments. Physical readiness is not optional, and it is not a personal preference. It is a professional requirement tied directly to mission execution.

A Sailor's body is part of the weapon system. Like any system, it requires maintenance, discipline, and consistent attention to remain effective. A strong body allows Sailors to sustain performance during extended operations, recover from physical and cognitive strain, maintain endurance in demanding environments, and remain ready to deploy when called.

DEVELOPING THE BODY

PHYSICAL FITNESS

Physical fitness is the foundation of operational readiness. It is what allows Sailors to perform their duties effectively, support their teammates, and endure the physical demands of naval service.

Fitness is direct preparation for the realities of the operating environment, ensuring that Sailors can perform under physically demanding conditions without degradation in capability.

In their 2023 systematic review, "Physical Exercise and Cognitive Functioning: A Systematic Review," Macrì and colleagues found that regular aerobic and resistance exercise measurably improves attention, memory, and executive function across age groups. The authors conclude that these benefits are driven by exercise-induced neuroplasticity in the brain regions responsible for these cognitive functions. These are the same mental faculties Sailors rely on to make sound decisions under pressure. Building the body and building the mind, therefore, are not competing investments; each reinforces the other.

NUTRITION

Performance is directly tied to fuel. What Sailors eat affects energy, recovery, focus, and long-term health. Nutrition is a readiness input, not an administrative afterthought. Better choices build stronger, more resilient Sailors; stronger Sailors build more capable teams.

Fueling properly requires disciplined lifestyle choices. During sustained operations, Sailors can run energy deficits of thousands of calories per day, and inadequate intake degrades both physical output and decision quality. The Navy's Warfighter Nutrition resources translate this into practical guidance, prioritizing protein and complex carbohydrates, hydrating deliberately, and timing meals around watch rotations and operational tempo, so that command galleys and individual choices both work in favor of performance.



Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Evan Mueller

SLEEP AND RECOVERY

Sustained performance requires recovery. Sleep is not downtime that competes with readiness; it is a core component of it. We must move beyond a culture that treats exhaustion as a badge of honor. Fatigue degrades judgment, slows reaction time, and increases risk. Sailors must manage sleep and recovery deliberately, and leaders must account for recovery in operational planning, scheduling, and watchbills.

In the study “The Effects of Acute Sleep Deprivation on Military Performance,” Tufano and colleagues found that a single night of sleep loss slowed reaction time and degraded marksmanship and equipment-handling performance. The study also found that a single recovery period was insufficient to restore participants to baseline performance. Because fatigue impairs judgment at levels comparable to alcohol impairment, leaders who plan for crew rest and build recovery into watchbills are managing a readiness variable every bit as real as fuel or ordnance.

MEDICAL AND DENTAL READINESS

A deployable Sailor is a ready Sailor. Medical and dental readiness are not simply administrative requirements, but operational necessities for peak performance.

Preventive care and sustained medical readiness ensure that Sailors can execute their missions anywhere, at any time, without avoidable limitation.

Preventable physical breakdown remains one of the largest drains on military medical readiness. Injuries and musculoskeletal disease accounted for more medical encounters and lost duty time than any other category of condition across the force. Because much of this loss can be reduced through physical conditioning, and early intervention. Injury prevention is a direct contributor to the number of deployable Sailors a command can put to sea.



LEADER ACTIONS: BUILDING STRONG BODIES

Leaders build physical readiness by protecting time for fitness, reinforcing healthy habits, and removing unnecessary barriers to medical and preventive care. Physical readiness is a mission requirement, not an individual responsibility relegated to a Sailor’s limited free time.

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We apply deliberate maintenance and disciplined attention to the ships, aircraft, and systems we depend on in combat. We should bring that same discipline to developing and sustaining the Sailors who operate them. Leaders create conditions that allow their people to build strength, recover properly, receive care, and remain ready to fight.

BUILDING THE SPIRIT

PURPOSE CREATES PERSEVERANCE

Naval service requires sacrifice. Sailors are asked to operate in demanding environments, spend extended time away from family, and accept responsibility in conditions that few will ever experience. A strong spirit is what sustains them through those demands.

Spirit is grounded in purpose, character, and connection. This inner strength from a higher purpose enables Sailors to answer:

Why do I serve?	What standards guide me?	Who am I responsible for?
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DEVELOPING THE SPIRIT

CHARACTER

Character is defined by what we do when no one is watching. It is reflected in your daily choices, your consistent behavior, and the willingness to do what is right even when it is incredibly difficult. Character is demonstrated daily through integrity, accountability, respect, responsibility, and moral courage.

Character is the foundation of trust, and trust is essential to every effective naval team.

VALUES

The Navy Core Values and Sailor’s Creed are not ceremonial language. They are personal standards that shape behavior and decision-making.

They define what is expected. They guide how Sailors act under pressure. They also connect generations of Sailors who served before with those who will serve in the future. They underwrite our enduring traditions and legacy of excellence.

PURPOSE AND RESILIENCE

Sailors who understand their purpose and why their service matters gain the perspective necessary to build resilience, endure hardship and persist through difficulty. This resilience, in turn, sustains readiness over time and empowers Sailors to consistently perform at a high level.

**LEADER ACTIONS:**
BUILDING STRONG SPIRITS

Leaders build strong spirits by connecting Sailors to the mission, reinforcing the importance of their contribution, modeling the standards they expect, and creating environments grounded in dignity and respect.

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Leaders should look for ways to protect time for faith-based practices.

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Every Sailor must clearly understand that their work, their team, and their service matter.



Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Brandon Williams-Church



Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Brandon Williams-Church

CHARACTER AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

PROFESSIONAL SAILORS LIVE THE STANDARD

The Navy's strength is built on trust which is earned every day through consistent actions and demonstrated character.

Professional conduct is synonymous with readiness, reflecting the daily application of Honor, Courage, and Commitment in how Sailors treat one another, execute their duties, and represent the Navy.

RESPECT FOR OTHERS

Treating others with dignity and respect is both a moral expectation and an operational necessity, as teams built on respect communicate better, perform better, and respond more effectively under pressure. While behaviors that undermine trust weaken readiness, those that reinforce trust decisively strengthen the team.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is the discipline of taking and enforcing ownership of actions, correcting mistakes, and holding ourselves and others to the standard. Focused on continuous improvement, transparency, and intellectual honesty rather than punishment, teams that practice accountability learn faster, adapt faster, and perform better under pressure.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Professional Sailors live and demonstrate high standards on and off duty. They treat others with dignity and respect, take responsibility for their actions, make sound decisions, and protect the trust that holds a team together. Destructive behaviors like sexual assault, harassment, domestic abuse, substance misuse, irresponsible financial behavior, and other harmful conduct undermine that trust and weaken readiness.

The Navy has programs and resources to prevent and address destructive behaviors, but they share a common foundation: character, respect, accountability, trust, and leadership.

Building those qualities into Sailors and teams reduces harmful behavior while strengthening readiness. The standard is not simply avoiding harmful behavior. The standard is developing Sailors of character who strengthen the people and teams around them by practicing the "Golden Rule."

PART III

BUILDING GREAT LEADERS

LEADERS BUILD THE TEAMS THAT WIN

Great Sailors do not become Great Teams by accident. High-performing teams are built deliberately, over time, by leaders who understand their people, develop their potential, and consistently uphold the standard.

Leadership is the critical bridge between individual readiness and collective combat power. It is where potential becomes performance and individual competence becomes team effectiveness. A great leader does more than accomplish the mission in front of them. A great leader develops people who can accomplish the mission again and again.

The Navy needs leaders who consistently demonstrate character, competence, and commitment. These are not abstract traits or administrative buzzwords. They are daily behaviors that determine whether a team is simply going through the motions of executing tasks, or if they are truly ready to fight and win.

Leadership is not defined by rank or position. It is defined by responsibility and action.

For every Navy leader, that responsibility begins with three things:

Know Your Sailors. Develop Your Sailors. Hold the Standard.



LEADERSHIP MATTERS

LEADERS CREATE CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

The most important responsibility of any Navy leader is developing their people. While advanced platforms and weapon systems are essential to naval power, they are ultimately inert without the Sailors who operate them, make critical decisions, solve complex problems, and deliver victory in combat.

The quality of our teams is a direct reflection of our leadership. Strong leaders create environments where Sailors understand the mission, know the standard, trust their teammates, take ownership of their responsibilities, and continuously improve their performance.

Leadership is not passive. It is the deliberate and sustained act of building warfighters.



Photo by Chief Petty Officer Anna Van Nuys

THE LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

Every leader carries responsibility in three fundamental areas.

1 KNOW YOUR SAILORS

Leaders cannot develop Sailors they do not know. Understanding your Sailors is not administrative - it is foundational to leadership. Great leaders know their Sailors' strengths, their goals, their challenges, their motivations, and their potential.

They should be confident in three things: that their leader supports them, values them, and is invested in their success.

Knowing your Sailors is not about collecting information. It is about building trust. It is about ensuring every Sailor understands that they are supported, valued, and invested in.

2 DEVELOP YOUR SAILORS

The Navy does not need leaders who just identify talent. We need leaders who develop competence. Development is a mindset and is intentional.

Developing Sailors requires coaching, mentorship, honest feedback, meaningful opportunities, and the right level of challenge. It means placing Sailors in situations where they are stretched, supported, and expected to grow, and effort is rewarded.

The best leaders do not just manage the present force. They build the next generation of leaders who will carry the Navy forward.

3 HOLD THE STANDARD

Caring about Sailors and holding them to high standards are not competing priorities. They are inseparable. In fact, the highest form of leadership is the ability to demand excellence while also investing in the development of the people being held to that standard.

Standards build trust by removing ambiguity. Accountability creates confidence because it reinforces consistency. Consistency builds credibility because Sailors know what to expect from their leadership, regardless of circumstances.



Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Brandon Williams

CHARACTER AND COMPETENCE: GREAT LEADERS REQUIRE BOTH

The Navy requires leaders who can accomplish the mission and develop the people who do this mission. That requires two foundational qualities: **character and competence**.



SUPERIOR CHARACTER

Character is not declared - it is demonstrated through standards and actions, especially when no one is watching and when the situation is difficult. Great Leaders live the Core Values every day. They take responsibility for outcomes, both good and bad. They do what is right, not what is easy. They place the mission and their people at the center of their decisions.

They treat others with dignity and respect, regardless of rank or circumstance, and hold themselves to the same standards they expect from others.

Character builds trust through openness and effective communication. Without trust, no team can operate at its full potential.

OUTSTANDING COMPETENCE

Competence is the ability to deliver results in complex and demanding environments. Great Leaders understand their profession deeply. They solve hard problems, manage risk effectively, make timely and informed decisions, and continuously learn from experience.

They are not static in their knowledge or approach. They improve systems, refine processes, and adapt based on feedback and outcomes.

Competence is the result of technical mastery. Competence creates confidence. Sailors follow leaders they trust - but they sustain that trust in leaders who consistently demonstrate exceptional competence.

COACHING AND MENTORSHIP

LEADERS BUILD LEADERS

Every Sailor is developing. Leaders shape that development by coaching deliberately, setting clear expectations, and creating opportunities to grow.

Coaching is not criticism; it is an investment in another Sailor's growth and performance through targeted assessment and by motivating deep practice.

Great coaches ask questions that promote critical thinking. They listen to understand, provide clear and timely feedback, challenge assumptions when necessary, recognize improvement, and expect ownership of both success and failure.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Career development is more than advancement. It is helping Sailors understand where they are, where they want to go, what skills they need to get there, and how leadership will support their growth along the way.

When done well, Career Development Boards are not administrative requirements. They are leadership moments. They say to every Sailor what a manning document never can: your future matters.

SPONSORSHIP AND ONBOARDING

The first experience a Sailor has at a command shapes their perception of the entire organization. A strong onboarding and sponsorship process is foundational to trust and integration.

Effective sponsorship reduces uncertainty, accelerates connection, builds confidence, and creates a sense of belonging from day one. A Sailor who feels connected early becomes more engaged, more committed, and more effective as part of the team.



Photo by Seaman Apprentice Oliver McCain Vieira

ACCOUNTABILITY BUILDS TRUST

THE STANDARD IS THE FOUNDATION

Great Teams do not avoid difficult conversations. They engage in them early, directly, and constructively. Accountability is how leaders protect both the team and the mission.

It requires addressing problems before they grow, correcting behavior when standards are not met, recognizing excellence when it occurs, and consistently reinforcing expectations to achieve the standard.

Accountability is not about punishment. It is about improving disciplined approaches, protecting readiness, and ensuring the team remains capable of executing its mission through critical self assessment.



Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Brandon Williams

CREATING A CULTURE OF OWNERSHIP

Ownership is the expectation that every Sailor understands their responsibility to themselves, their teammates, and the mission.

“

I am responsible for my
performance.

I am responsible for my
teammates.

I am responsible for the
mission.

”

Leaders build ownership by setting clear expectations, empowering decision-making at the appropriate level, allowing responsible initiative, recognizing both individual and team contributions and enforcing accountability to high standards.

LEADER QUICK CHECK



Leaders should regularly ask themselves:

Do I know my Sailors? Do I empower them to succeed?

Do I understand what motivates them?

Do I know where they need development?

Do I provide honest and timely feedback?

Do I hold the standard consistently?

Am I actively building the next generation of leaders?

KNOW YOUR SAILOR. DEVELOP YOUR SAILOR. HOLD THE STANDARD

Apply absolute intellectual honesty here and look at this through a pure operational lens: the Navy's future combat power is not some theoretical concept on a PowerPoint slide. It is a tangible reality being developed right now in today's commands, under today's leaders, and in every single decision they make on the deckplates. There is no time to wait for a future conflict to start acting. Every choice our leaders make right now dictates whether we will dominate the spectrum of conflict or fall short.

PART IV

BUILDING GREAT TEAMS

CONNECTED. COHESIVE. READY TO FIGHT.

The Navy does not fight as individuals. We fight as teams.

A ship's ability to operate in combat is determined by the collective performance of the crew. Each Sailor must do their job, trust their shipmates, and understand how their actions contribute to the mission. Combat effectiveness is built on interdependence. Every role matters because every role is connected within a warfighting system.

A Great Team is more than a group of people working in the same space or wearing the same uniform. A Great Team is a group of professionals who trust one another, hold each other accountable, communicate clearly, learn continuously, and execute together under pressure when conditions are at their most demanding.

Great teams are built intentionally. They do not emerge by coincidence. They are developed through leadership, reinforced by standards, shaped by shared purpose, strengthened through connection, and become lethal through practice.

The ultimate measure of Total Sailor: Fit to Fight is not only the strength of the individual, it is the strength of the team.



GREAT TEAMS WIN

TEAM PERFORMANCE IS WARFIGHTING PERFORMANCE

Combat does not reward isolated excellence. It rewards teams that can adapt faster than the adversary, solve harder problems under pressure, and maintain effectiveness in environments defined by uncertainty, disruption, and friction.

The Navy's advantage is not just individual talent - it is the ability of Sailors to rely on one another repeatedly with confidence and precision. That reliance is what allows the force to move, decide, and execute faster than an adversary can respond.

A Great Team operates with a shared understanding: the mission does not belong to one person or one watch team - it belongs to all of us. Every Sailor contributes to its success. Every Sailor matters to the outcome, and every Sailor has a responsibility not only to perform, but to strengthen the team around them by knowing their role and mastering their contribution.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GREAT TEAMS

CONNECTED

Connected teams are grounded in belonging and purpose. Sailors perform at a higher level when they understand not only what they are doing, but why they are doing it, and how their role contributes to something larger than themselves - the mission.

Connection means every Sailor understands their role, their purpose, their value, and their direct connection to the mission and the team. The sense of connection is not a by-stander action, it requires participation.

Connection drives commitment. When Sailors feel connected, they take ownership more naturally, they support their teammates more consistently, and they remain engaged even when conditions become difficult or uncertain.

COHESIVE

Cohesive teams operate as one unit in pursuit of a shared objective. Cohesion does not require uniform thinking or the absence of disagreement. Strong teams bring different perspectives, experiences, and ideas to the fight while remaining aligned on the mission with unity of purpose.

Cohesive teams trust one another. Sailors know their teammates are trained, prepared, and accountable. They communicate openly, raise concerns early, admit mistakes, and rely on one another when conditions become difficult.

That trust creates speed. Teams spend less time questioning whether others will do their part and more time focused on execution.

Cohesive teams also learn. They conduct honest debriefs, identify lessons, share knowledge, and turn experience into improvement. Mistakes are addressed, standards are upheld, and lessons are carried into the next evolution.

Under pressure, cohesive teams do not fragment. They synchronize, adapt, and execute.

READY TO FIGHT

Readiness is the ability of a team to perform when the mission demands it. Ready teams understand the mission, know their roles, trust one another, and execute with confidence even when conditions are uncertain, disrupted, or rapidly changing, or dangerous.

They do not depend on perfect information or perfect conditions. They communicate clearly, make decisions at the appropriate level, adapt when the plan changes, and continue operating through friction. They learn from every evolution and carry those lessons forward into the next one.

A team that is ready to fight can absorb pressure without losing effectiveness. It can move with speed, act with purpose, and rely on every Sailor to do their part.

That is the standard: a team prepared to fight together, adapt together, and win together.

FAMILIES ARE PART OF THE TEAM

STRONG FAMILIES ENABLE STRONG SAILORS

The Navy does not just recruit Sailors - it supports families. Families are an essential part of the total force because they enable Sailors to focus on the mission with stability, confidence, and resilience.

A Sailor who knows their family is supported is a Sailor who can fully commit to the mission. Family readiness is not separate from warfighting readiness - it directly enables it. For example, military families who experience financial stress are more likely to question if continued service is worth the sacrifice. Because a Sailor distracted by instability at home cannot fully commit at sea, family readiness programs, Command Ombudsmen, and financial counseling are not welfare functions - they are force multipliers designed to support families.



Photo by Seaman Apprentice Zachary Del Rio



Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Brandon Williams-Church

BUILDING FAMILY READINESS

Strong families are informed, connected, and prepared. They understand Navy life, know where to access resources, build support networks, and remain connected to the command and community.

Family readiness reduces uncertainty at home so Sailors can maintain focus at sea, on deployment, and across the force.

Family readiness sustains the force and strengthens a Sailor's ability to remain focused on the mission, which contributes to the Total Sailors overall effectiveness.

For more information concerning how families are part of the team and how they are supported refer to Total Families: Fit to Thrive.

COMMAND CLIMATE: THE RESULT OF GREAT LEADERSHIP

CLIMATE REFLECTS THE TEAM YOU BUILD

Command climate is the visible result of how a team operates day after day. It reflects whether Sailors trust one another, understand the mission, uphold standards, communicate openly, and feel connected to the team.

A strong command climate is not the objective. It is evidence that leadership, standards, trust, and connection are producing a team of professionals who treat each other with dignity and respect in order to be ready to fight.

TEAM QUICK CHECK

Leaders should regularly assess their teams by asking:



Do my Sailors trust each other?

Do they understand the mission?

Do they know their role within it?

Do they feel connected to the team?

Do they hold each other accountable

Would they rely on one another in combat?

The answers to those questions determine, more than anything else, whether a command is truly ready to fight and win.

PART V

THE TOTAL SAILOR JOURNEY

FROM RECRUIT TO LEADER

A Total Sailor is not created in a single moment. It is built over time, through experience, repetition, deep practice, and deliberate development. Every Sailor enters the Navy with different backgrounds, strengths, and opportunities for growth. The responsibility of the Navy is to provide the training, leadership, and support that allows each Sailor to reach their full potential. The responsibility of the Sailor is to bring discipline, effort, and commitment to that process.

The Total Sailor journey is a shared commitment between the Navy and the individual Sailor. The Navy provides the environment, resources, standards, and leadership. The Sailor brings grit, effort, accountability, and a willingness to grow. Together, that partnership between the Navy and Sailor builds the force our Nation depends on.



FROM RECRUIT TO LEADER

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

The Total Sailor journey begins before a Sailor ever steps on a bus to Recruit Training. It begins with the decision to serve and the Navy's commitment to bring in Americans willing to take on the responsibility of something larger than themselves.

From the very beginning, Sailors are introduced to the core elements of naval service: the Navy's mission, the importance of teamwork, the meaning of service, the standards of the profession, and the responsibility that comes with wearing the uniform. These lessons are not theoretical - they are foundational. They shape identity and culture.

At the center of that foundation are the Navy's Core Values: Honor. Courage. Commitment. These are not words to be memorized and set aside. They form the standard that defines who we are and the code we live by every day.

RECRUIT TRAINING

Recruit Training is the first major transformation point in a Sailor's development. It takes individuals from different backgrounds and begins the process of turning them into a Sailor.

In this environment, Sailors learn discipline, accountability, resilience, teamwork, and the standards that define naval service. More importantly, they begin to internalize a fundamental truth of the profession: success in the Navy is never purely individual. It is always about the team and the mission.

Recruit Training is where the mindset begins to shift - from self to team, from individual performance to shared responsibility. It is where the individual begins to understand what it means to belong to something larger than themselves.

TRAINING AND QUALIFICATION

After Recruit Training, development does not slow down - it accelerates. Every Sailor continues to grow through formal education, technical training, on-the-job experience, and operational exposure.

Technical competence is essential. Professional growth is vital. Continuous learning is a must. A Total Sailor is never finished learning, because the environment they operate in is never static.

The Navy requires Sailors who can master their current responsibilities while adapting to new systems, new missions, and new challenges. That ability to learn and evolve is what sustains readiness over time. This requires a disciplined approach to critical self-assessment.



Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Peter McHaddad

FIRST COMMAND

A Sailor's first operational command is a defining moment in their career development. This is where theory becomes practice and training becomes execution on the deckplates.

This is where Sailors learn what it means to contribute to a team, take ownership of their role, uphold the highest naval standard, support their shipmates, and execute the mission in real-world conditions. It is often the first time they fully understand the weight of their responsibility and the importance of their contribution.

Strong commands do more than execute missions; they deliberately develop Sailors. In doing so, they shape the future combat power of the force through formal watchstanding, deep practice, and a strong culture of self-assessment.

FLEET SERVICE

The Fleet is where Sailors are tested. It is where training meets reality and where individuals become professionals.

In the Fleet, Sailors operate in complex, dynamic environments. They face uncertainty, pressure, and adversity. They also gain experience, confidence, and perspective. It is in the Fleet that they discover what they are truly capable of - both as individuals and as members of a combat team.

This is where competence is proven, trust is built, and professional identity is fully formed and held accountable by teammates.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Every Sailor is a leader, regardless of rank or position. Leadership is not defined solely by authority - it is demonstrated through responsibility, initiative, character, competence, and service to others.

As Sailors advance in their careers, their responsibilities expand. Their focus shifts from personal performance to team performance. The question evolves from "How do I do my job well?" to "How do I help others do theirs well?" to "How do we win as a fighting unit of force?"

CHIEF AND COMMAND LEADERSHIP

Senior enlisted leaders and command leadership carry a distinct and enduring responsibility: building the next generation of Sailors and leaders.

They uphold standards when challenged. They develop people as they grow into their profession. They strengthen teams when pressure increases. They create conditions that allow Sailors to succeed and grow.

The greatest measure of a senior leader is not what they accomplish individually. It is what they enable others to accomplish - and whether those they lead are better prepared because of their influence, coaching, and mentorship.



A LIFETIME OF SERVICE

THE COMMITMENT CONTINUES

The Total Sailor journey does not end with qualification, promotion, or a command tour. It is a continuous process of development that extends throughout a career and beyond.

Every Sailor retains responsibility for improving themselves, supporting their teammates, upholding standards, and developing others. Growth does not stop at achievement - it continues through experience and leadership opportunities.

A Sailor's impact is never limited to their individual service. It extends through the people they influence and the teams they help build.

LEAVING A LEGACY

The Navy is built on generations of Sailors who came before. Each generation inherits a force shaped by those who served and carries the responsibility to strengthen it for those who will follow.

A Sailor's legacy is not defined solely by awards, assignments, or titles. It is defined by the people they developed, the teams they strengthened, the standards they upheld, and the mission they enabled.

That is what endures.

CALL TO ACTION

EVERY SAILOR HAS A ROLE

Total Sailor begins with a simple truth - readiness starts with people.

Every Sailor has a responsibility to know themselves, improve themselves, support their teammates, uphold the standard, and prepare for the demands of the mission ahead.

Readiness is not an administrative task done by Sailors. It is built within them and between them through daily habits, training, standards, and leadership.

EVERY LEADER HAS A RESPONSIBILITY

Every leader must continually ask:

Do I know my Sailors?

Am I developing my people?

Am I building trust?

Am I strengthening the team?

Am I preparing the Navy's future leaders?

These are not rhetorical questions. They are leadership requirements.



Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Theoplis Stewart II

THE STANDARD

The Navy's advantage will always come from Sailors who are ready to fight and win. Strong individuals create strong teams. Strong teams generate combat power. Moreover, that combat power preserves peace, deters aggression, and ensures victory when the Nation calls.

The mission and the Nation depend on Total Sailors who are Fit to Fight.

TOTAL SAILOR



**BUILD
YOURSELF**



**BUILD YOUR
TEAMMATES**



**BUILD
YOUR TEAM**

.....

BECAUSE GREAT PEOPLE CREATE GREAT LEADERS,
GREAT LEADERS CREATE GREAT TEAMS.

GREAT TEAMS WIN.

BUILT IN THE FOUNDRY | TEMPERED IN THE FLEET | FORGED TO FIGHT

PART VI

THE COMMANDER'S PLAYBOOK

TOOLS TO BUILD GREAT PEOPLE AND GREAT TEAMS

Commanders are responsible for the readiness of their teams. That responsibility is continuous. Readiness begins with knowing your people. Leaders cannot develop what they do not understand and they cannot correct what they do not see.

The Commander's Playbook provides practical tools to help leaders understand their Sailors, identify strengths and challenges, build trust, remove barriers to performance, develop future leaders, and strengthen the team.

These tools are not the objective. They are the means to build Great People, Great Leaders, and Great Teams that win.



KNOW YOUR PEOPLE

LEADERSHIP BEGINS WITH UNDERSTANDING

The most important question a leader can ask is simple: Do I know my Sailors?

Knowing your people means more than recognizing names or job titles. It means understanding their strengths, goals, challenges, motivations, and potential. It means recognizing that every Sailor brings a different experience, perspective, and set of circumstances that shape how they approach the mission.

Every Sailor has a story. Those experiences influence how they lead, follow, respond to pressure, and contribute to the team.

Great Leaders take the time to understand the person behind the uniform - not as an administrative task, but as a but as a fundamental leadership responsibility.

BUILDING CONNECTION THROUGH ENGAGEMENT

Connection does not come from policy or process. It comes from leadership presence and enforcing professional behavior.

Leaders build connection by being present with their Sailors, listening to understand rather than to respond, asking meaningful questions, following through on commitments, and demonstrating genuine investment in their people.

These actions may seem small in isolation, but over time, they build trust. Trust changes behavior. A Sailor who trusts their leader communicates earlier, seeks help sooner, accepts feedback more openly, and performs with greater confidence.

Connection is not a program. It is the product of consistent leadership in which Sailors believe in the team and the mission with commitment and a strong desire to win.



Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Joseph Rolfe

CAREER DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

Career Development Boards (CDB) are one of the clearest opportunities to translate leadership intent into action. When executed well, they are not an administrative program - they are leadership engagements.

They provide a structured opportunity to understand Sailor goals, discuss professional development, identify barriers to success, provide guidance, and reinforce trust.

A strong CDB communicates something simple but powerful: your Navy cares about your future, not just your current assignment.

HUMAN FACTORS: GETTING LEFT OF CRISIS

LEADERS SOLVE PROBLEMS BEFORE THEY BECOME READINESS ISSUES

Great Leaders do not wait for problems to become failures. They anticipate them. They look ahead, identify friction early, and act to strengthen the team before those challenges become crises.

Human Factors tools help leaders understand the conditions that affect both individual Sailors and the team's overall health.

HUMAN FACTORS BOARDS

SUPPORTING THE INDIVIDUAL SAILOR

Human Factors Boards are designed to help leaders identify when a Sailor is facing challenges that may affect readiness or performance. They are not punitive tools. They are proactive leadership mechanisms.

They allow leaders to better understand what is happening, connect Sailors with appropriate resources, remove performance barriers, provide targeted support, and ultimately strengthen both the individual and the team.

The intent is straightforward: help Sailors succeed by proactively overcoming stressors and remaining ready for the mission.

HUMAN FACTORS COUNCILS

ASSESSING THE TEAM

Human Factors Councils operate at the team level. They help leaders assess the command's overall health, cohesion, and readiness.

They help answer essential questions: Are Sailors connected? Are standards clear and understood? Is trust strong across the team? Where is friction emerging? What actions can leadership take to improve conditions before performance is affected?

This is the logic of getting "left of crisis" - shifting a command from reactive problem-solving to identifying leading indicators and acting on them before they become operational problems. The measure of these tools is not how thoroughly they document a problem after the fact, but how early they predict it and how quickly leadership responds.

Strong leaders do not wait for leading indicators of failure. They proactively shape the conditions for success.



Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Ross Taylor

LEADER RESPONSIBILITY

Human Factors processes only work when leaders take ownership of them. Their value is not in documentation or compliance. Their value is in insight and preemptive action

The purpose is not to produce paperwork. It is to produce understanding, identify problems early, strengthen people, and improve the team.

MEASURING WHAT MATTERS

METRICS SUPPORT LEADERSHIP - THEY DO NOT REPLACE IT

The Navy measures many aspects of readiness and performance, but not everything that matters can be captured in a metric. Leaders must use data as a tool, not as a substitute for judgment.

The purpose of measurement is improvement. Data should inform leadership decisions, not replace them.

TOOLS FOR UNDERSTANDING THE TEAM

COMMAND CLIMATE ASSESSMENT

Command Climate Assessments provide structured feedback on how Sailors experience their command. When used properly, they help leaders identify strengths, surface challenges, understand perceptions, and refine leadership practices.

The assessment itself is not the solution. Effective, focused, and timely leadership action with accountability is the solution.

SURVEYS AND FEEDBACK

Effective leaders actively seek feedback rather than waiting for it to arrive in formal assessments. They ask what the team is doing well, where it is struggling, what barriers are affecting performance, and how leadership can improve.

Feedback is not criticism. It is input for learning. Learning organizations improve because they act on what they learn with enduring solutions.

READINESS INDICATORS

Leaders must evaluate team health using a combination of indicators rather than a single measure. These may include mission performance, training readiness, adherence to professional standards, retention trends, engagement, communication, and trust. No single metric defines readiness. Leaders must interpret the full picture and act on what it shows.

THE LEADER'S STANDARD

Every leader should consistently reflect on a few essential questions:

Do I know my people, and do they know I care about their success?

Am I actively developing Sailors for greater responsibility?

Am I building trust through clarity, consistency, and action?

Am I strengthening the team through my decisions and behavior?

THE COMMANDER'S RESPONSIBILITY

Commanders do not generate readiness through programs alone. They generate readiness through active leadership and genuine care of their people.

The tools in this document exist to help leaders see more clearly, act earlier, and develop their people more deliberately. Because the Navy's greatest advantage is not found in any platform, system, or capability. It is found in the Sailors who operate them - and the leaders who develop those Sailors into teams that win.

COMMANDER QUICK CHECK



BUILD THE SAILOR:

Mind | Body | Spirit

If one of my Sailors were struggling today, would I know, and would they tell me?

Are my people afforded the time to work on their physical fitness - do I use fitness activities to build my team?

Does my command provide a variety of resources Sailors can use to pursue their faith or values?

BUILD THE LEADER:

Know them | Develop them | Hold the standard

Do my leaders know their Sailors?

How do I develop superior character in my leaders?

How do my leaders demonstrate unmatched competence?

BUILD THE TEAM:

Trust | Connection | Cohesion | Accountability | Purpose

Do I communicate frequently with my Sailors and recognize their achievements?

Do I have a strong relationship with my Command Ombudsman?

Are my new Sailors contacted early and often by their sponsor?

KNOW YOUR COMMAND:

Human Factors | CDBs | Climate | Readiness Indicators | Feedback

How would I describe my command culture in three words?

What are my DEOCS reported levels of trust, connection, and cohesion?

Do I use my Command Climate Assessment as a tool to improve?

MY SAILORS. MY TEAM. MY RESPONSIBILITY.

PROGRAMS & RESOURCES



Leaders do not have to do this work alone. The Navy provides programs, tools, and resources to help leaders know their Sailors, develop their people, strengthen their teams, and address challenges before they affect readiness. The resources below are not a checklist or a substitute for engaged leadership. They are tools leaders can use to better understand their people, connect Sailors and families with support, and build teams that are ready to fight.

WARRIOR TOUGHNESS

The Navy's premier program designed to integrate stress management and human performance optimization techniques across the force. This initiative aims to empower Sailors to manage harmful stress effectively and perform under pressure, both in the most demanding combat scenarios and in everyday life. Access to products such as playbooks, Plan of the Day Notes and facilitator guides available online for command to embed into watch turnover, briefs, and quarters.



POC:

warriortoughness@us.navy.mil



[Warrior Toughness](#)

COMMAND SPONSOR AND INDOCTRINATION PROGRAMS

Minimize the anxiety associated with transferring to a new unit by leveraging trusted sponsors, the Ombudsman and Family Readiness Group, and by turning Command Indoctrination into a team-building event.



POC:

navy.sponsorprogram@navy.mil

OPNAVINST 1740.3E

Command Sponsor and Indoctrination Program



[Sponsorship](#)

COMMAND OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

Both ashore and afloat, the Ombudsman Program ensures families have the information necessary to meet the challenges of military life, to include emergencies and command tasking. In addition, the ombudsman program helps commanding officers better understand the welfare of the command's families.



POC:

holly.d.schefcik.naf@us.navy.mil

OPNAVINST 1750.1H

Navy Family Ombudsman Program



[Ombudsman](#)

CAREER DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

Build trust with your Sailors by demonstrating a commitment to their personal and professional success. When Career Development Boards are done well, Sailors feel valued and respected by leaders who connect with them and communicate how their personal continuous improvement helps the command achieve excellence.

OPNAVINST 1040.11 (Series)

Navy Enlisted Retention and Career Development Program



[Career Development Boards](#)

HUMAN FACTORS BOARDS AND COUNCILS

A tool for the Chain of Command to focus on the personal and professional health of Sailors. Human Factors Boards help individual Sailors. They are event-driven, when it is noticed that a Sailor (officer or enlisted) is struggling with personal or professional challenges. Human Factors Councils help groups of people. They occur quarterly, or prior to high stress events (such as leaving or returning from deployment) and involve leadership pausing to discuss the personal and professional wellbeing of a group of people (ex. squad, department, division) at one time.

An OPNAV Human Factors Instruction is under development.

COMMAND RESILIENCE TEAM

CRTs are comprised of command members with various backgrounds, experiences, and skillsets and include personnel throughout the chain of command, junior-to-senior, and across departments and organizations. CRTs meet on a quarterly basis to assist commanders in developing an accurate picture of the command's climate so that effective actions can be taken. CRTs are responsible for administration of the CCA, development of Navy Comprehensive Integrated Primary Prevention (N-CIPP) Plans, and for assessing progress on implemented actions.



POC:

opnav-ippw@us.navy.mil



[Primary Prevention](#)

INTEGRATED PRIMARY PREVENTION WORKFORCE

The IPPW consists of skilled, nonclinical professionals with expertise in prevention science who are trained, equipped, and resourced to promote readiness enabling factors and reduce readiness threatening factors impacting two or more harmful behaviors. The IPPW provides support to commands by recommending comprehensive, data-driven, and research informed prevention activities to build healthy command climates.



POC:

opnav-ippw@us.navy.mil



[Primary Prevention](#)

MILITARY EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

It is Department of the Navy (DoN) policy to prohibit harassment and prohibited discrimination against persons or groups based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, or sexual orientation. This applies to, but is not limited to, recruitment, recruitment advertising, training, advancement and promotion, job assignments, collateral duties, transfers, and all other aspects of employment. The Navy is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of harassment and discrimination. Service members must be evaluated only on individual merit, fitness, capability, and performance.



POC:

mill_navy_eo_advice@us.navy.mil

OPNAVINST 5354.1J

Navy Harassment Prevention and Military Equal Opportunity Program Manual



[Equal Opportunity](#)

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROGRAM (SAPR)

The Navy's focus on prevention and response includes effective education and training, a 24/7 response capability to ensure victim support, worldwide reporting procedures, and appropriate accountability. Commanders, Commanding Officers, supervisors, and managers at all levels are responsible for the effective implementation of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) program and policy.



POC:
opnav-sapr@us.navy.mil
 OPNAVINST 1752.1E
 Navy Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program



[Sexual Assault](#)

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Every command is required to maintain a robust Suicide Prevention Program, helping to equip Sailors with the knowledge, skills, and resources to proactively navigate stress, support one another and respond appropriately in the event of a crisis.



POC:
mill-suicideprevention2@us.navy.mil
 OPNAVINST 1720.4B
 Suicide Prevention Program



[Suicide Prevention](#)

SUICIDE RELATED BEHAVIOR RESPONSE AND POSTVENTION GUIDE.

This guide is designed to provide a streamlined reference to suicide crisis response, suicide related behavior response, reintegration, and suicide postvention.



[Suicide Related Behavior
Response and
Postvention Guide](#)

NAVY ALCOHOL AND DRUG MISUSE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Supports Fleet readiness, personal health, and mission success by developing comprehensive data-driven education, proactive prevention, and deterrence to combat substance misuse and excessive alcohol use. Commands and designated Alcohol and Drug Control Officers (ADCs), Drug and Alcohol Program Advisors (DAPAs) Urinalysis Program Managers (UPCs) are equipped with policy guides, screening tools, and training resources to foster a supportive command climate that encourages early help-seeking and intervention support. Commands execute these directives through mandatory random urinalysis, command-directed or self-referrals, and specialized rehabilitation pathways led by designated ADCs, DAPAs, and UPCs.



POC:
N173Admin@us.navy.mil
 OPNAVINST 5350.4E
 Navy Alcohol and Drug Misuse Prevention and Control



[Drug Alcohol
Deterrence](#)

FAMILY CARE PLAN

Ensure Sailors establish a written Family Care Plan to care for dependents so they may deploy on short notice. Family Care Plans are required for: Sailors with primary or shared physical custody who are not married to the other parent of the child, married dual military couples where one or both have primary or shared physical custody of a minor child, Sailors who are legally responsible for an adult family member who is incapable of providing for themselves.



POC:

navy.familycareplan@navy.mil



[Family Care Plan](#)

FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAM (FAP)

Provides clinical assessment, treatment, and services for Sailors and their families involved in incidents of domestic violence/abuse and child abuse/neglect.



POC:

askmncc@navy.mil



[Family Advocacy](#)

EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAM (EFMP)

Ensures Sailors with family members are assigned only to those geographic areas where specialized medical and/or educational needs can be met.



POC:

askmncc@navy.mil



[EFMP](#)

VIRTUAL COMMANDING OFFICER'S SUGGESTION BOX

Sailors scan a QR code (or enter a web address) and their comments are anonymously sent to the Command Triad via email. Suggestion Box information is confidential to the unit and not monitored; the system deletes all submission data every 90 days. To request a CO Suggestion Box, a member of the Command Triad can scan this QR code to create a Unit Identification Code (UIC)-specific account.



POC:

navy.surveys@us.navy.mil



[Virtual CO
Suggestion Box](#)

COMMANDERS' RISK MITIGATION DASHBOARD

CRMD is a tool that provides Commanders with improved situational awareness of their unit's risk for harmful behaviors. The dashboard applies machine learning to analyze data from 31 databases to generate command-specific risk scores for suicide, illicit drug and alcohol use, sexual assault (both victim and perpetrator), and sexual harassment. Every risk score comes with recommended courses of action and direct links to supporting resources.



POC:
CRMD@navy.mil



[Commanders'
Risk Mitigation
Dashboard](#)

NOOM COMMERCIAL WELLNESS APPLICATION

For select Sailors, free access to Noom Weight, Noom Mood, and Noom Diabetes Prevention Programs—a digital health and weight-management app that combines psychology, technology, one on one coaching, and tracking tools to help Sailors reach their health and weight loss goals by building sustainable habits through science-based micro-habits. Currently available to active and reserve Sailors who did not meet Body Composition Assessment or Physical Readiness Test standards during CY25 and CY26-1 Physical Fitness Assessment Cycle or in a pregnancy nonparticipation status (pregnant or postpartum). Enrollment is 100% voluntary and participating satisfies the nutritional education requirement for the Fitness Enhancement Program (FEP). Expanded access to all Navy Sailors is under development.



POC:
noompilot@us.navy.mil



[NOOM](#)

MENTAL HEALTH PLAYBOOK

A tool to navigate the Navy's mental health resources designed to connect Sailors with appropriate mental health care, at the right level, at the right time.



[Mental Health
Playbook](#)

