



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-1000

August 9, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Department of the Navy One Year in Review

Today marks one year since I took the oath to serve as your Secretary of the Navy. It is an immense honor to serve our Navy and Marine Corps family again, this time as your Secretary. Thank you for the honor of serving alongside you, for the courage you have shown during challenging times, and for the commitment that you have made to each other and to our Nation.

During the last year, I have had the privilege of meeting many of you where you are, from the deckplates, to the tarmacs and runways, offices, and out in the fields and ranges. In our time together, you have shared your concerns and priorities, and have given me the opportunities to earn your trust. I have had the chance to listen, learn, and act. Together with the Chief of Naval Operations and Commandant of the Marine Corps, we are your advocates and defenders. We are engaged to knock down targets, lift up requirements, and give you what you need so that we can do what the Nation asks of you.

As Secretary, I have identified three enduring priorities: strengthen maritime dominance, empower our people, and strengthen our partnerships. The foundation to it all is you – our people – and I would like to tell you about some of the work the Navy-Marine Corps team is doing to serve our Sailors, Marines and Civilians.

Over the course of the past year, you have shared with us your challenges, and we have prioritized ways to improve resources in areas of critical importance to our personnel and their families:

- Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault. We do not tolerate sexual harassment and sexual assault. These are crimes that are at odds with our core values. I have directed the Department to expedite changes to leadership development, education, and training so our leaders are equipped to foster healthy climates that yield high-performing teams. We have implemented impactful policy changes, including the creation of an Office of the Special Trial Counsel in the Navy and Marine Corps, improved sexual harassment investigations, and created the “Safe-To-Report” and “No Wrong Door” policies to ensure that victims and survivors are empowered and that they receive the right care. At every opportunity, we continue to strengthen our prevention, response, and accountability efforts.
- Mental Health. Asking for help is a sign of strength. Our Navy-Marine Corps team has been working to create, and will continue to advocate for resources and systems that will give you options to get the care that you need in an accessible way through expanded online counseling services and more mental health resources. We have enhanced training, education, and awareness efforts for Sailors and Marines to build critical resilience skills, support and create pathways to proactively seek help, and

have visibility to critical resources - such as counseling and other support to mitigate stress and improve command climate. We are enhancing the programs and services offered by our Fleet and Family Support Centers, Marine Corps Community Services, and Civilian Employee Assistance Programs that are critical to preventing suicides and improving force resiliency.

- **Education.** Education is a critical tool of the warfighter. We have emphasized the need to prepare our force for the fight ahead by modernizing our naval education institutions and establishing the United States Naval Community College (USNCC). The USNCC provides our personnel with additional opportunities to obtain naval-relevant education that will enable them to be successful both in and out of uniform. Overall, we will continue to develop as an adaptive learning organization that prepares our Total Force to prevail over current and expected threats.
- **Housing.** I have heard from you directly and have directed the DON senior leadership to look at ways to build, maintain, and sustain quality, affordable, accessible, and safe housing. We are addressing the challenges of affordability and availability of housing for our Service Members through temporary Basic Allowance for Housing increases and the Temporary Lodging Expense extension.
- **Keeping Costs Down.** We know that prices for everyday goods have increased, from gas to groceries. The value of shopping at Commissaries provides an average savings of 23.7%, and Exchanges will match lower priced products from store competitors. This is why we are conscious of keeping shelves stocked in our Commissaries and Exchanges worldwide. Our budget request also includes a 4.6% pay increase to help meet the needs of our Sailors, Marines, and families.

For a large part of our Total Force, military service is a family affair. Your families are part of our Navy-Marine Corps family, and we are working hard to make sure they are getting what they need, too:

- **Child Care.** We have heard from you and your families about the many challenges with access to child care. We are working within the Department of the Navy and with our Sister Services to address hiring and retention of the Child Development Program staff. Staffing is critical to our ability to maximize on-base child care. For off-base child care, we continue to collaborate with our colleagues in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to expand the Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood (MCCYN) and MCCYN-PLUS programs that align military child care standards to offer more available quality child care options for our families. Earlier this year, we were excited to increase secondary caregiver leave from 14 days to 21 days.
- **Spouse Employment.** This past October, we joined industry partners and celebrated the 10-year anniversary of the Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP), which has continued to increase access to portable spouse employment opportunities. MSEP is a valuable resource, and just one example of the ways we are working on to further support employment opportunities.

- Exceptional Family Member Program. The military lifestyle is not easy and families who find themselves with a special medical or educational diagnosis experience additional challenges. In order to do all that we can to ease processes and access to information, the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) is making great progress towards enterprise-wide standardization. EFMP is focused on improving support for military families through the development of policies and enhanced communication. Your installation's EFMP team is a great resource and support for your family.

While the Department has made great progress in advancing quality of life initiatives, our work is not done. I encourage you to continue feeding your questions, comments, concerns, and observations through your chain of command. Leaders are expected to take action where they can, and communicate early and often when there are barriers to improvement, and we will do the same.

I am proud of the hard work and sacrifice that each and every one of you continue to make to defend this great Nation. We will continue to work together to keep our Navy and Marine Corps the greatest fighting force.



Carlos Del Toro

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