

Braithwaite Sworn in as 77th Secretary of the Navy



Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper swears in retired Navy Rear Adm. Kenneth Braithwaite to serve as the next secretary of the Navy, May 29, 2020, in the Pentagon. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE / Marvin Lynchard

ARLINGTON, Va. – Kenneth J. Braithwaite was sworn in as the 77th secretary of the Navy on May 29, the Navy said in a release.

At the May 29 ceremony at the Pentagon, officiated by Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper, Braithwaite was joined by his family, the chief of naval operations and the commandant of the Marine Corps.

The secretary is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and the University of Pennsylvania. He began his military service as a naval aviator, later transitioning to public affairs officer. His military career culminated in service as the U.S. Navy's vice chief of information. As a civilian, Braithwaite worked in both public- and private-sector leadership roles. Prior to his current position he served as the 31st U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway.



Kenneth J. Braithwaite, shown here in his position as U.S. ambassador to Norway, was sworn in May 29 as the secretary of the Navy. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Theron J. Godbold

Below is a message released on that date to the men and women of the Department of the Navy. It has been edited for grammar:

“To Sailors, Marines, and all men and women of the Department

of the Navy serving across this great world: Today marks the honor of my life, taking the oath of office to become the 77th but, more importantly, your Secretary of the Navy.

I am incredibly humbled to stand before you, the greatest Navy and Marine Corps in the world to accept this responsibility. For nearly 35 years, I, like you, have served our country, first as a U.S. naval officer deploying around the world to include sailing into harm's way, and most recently as our U.S. ambassador to Norway, a nation important to our national security. Never have I ever doubted why we serve – to protect and defend the greatest nation on earth, the United States of America.

For more than two centuries, the department has exemplified the strength and resilience of the nation we represent. Through tragedy and triumph, in both peace and in war, the source of our strength has been three simple but extremely powerful words: honor, courage and commitment.

As each of you know, they must be our guide stars as we navigate challenges around the globe. We can never forget that they are written in the blood of those who sailed before us: from John Paul Jones to Doris Miller, from Grace Hopper to Jason Dunham, all part of a formidable anchor chain of service through which each of you is an important part.

Make no mistake, we face significant challenges today. Our nation is up against perhaps the greatest test of our commitment to the ideals we hold dear than at any time in our history, surely since the end of World War II. We must recognize this challenge for all it is and all it presents, lurking in the shadows of deceit or the depths of dishonesty. However, our Navy and Marine Corps have faced tough times before. Each time we have prevailed, and we will persevere again. It is our sacred duty, and we shall do so by relying on our core values, the bedrock of our service and the key to our success: honor, courage and commitment.

The object of success for our service is simple: American sea power. America always has been and always will be a maritime nation. America and our principles of freedom rely on sea power delivered by a strong and capable Navy and Marine Corps. Each of you provides that power through your actions each day – actions that demonstrate our resolve to place service above self.

I look forward to the days ahead to do all I can on your behalf, ensuring that you have the opportunity to thrive and succeed in your service to our nation. American sea power will continue to defend our nation, and American sea power will continue to preserve peace while deterring any and all that would challenge our way of life. And when or if we find it necessary, American sea power will decisively win in battle, which is our solemn duty because there can be no alternative.

Please accept my personal appreciation, which I sincerely send to every one of you for your selfless service; your devotion to duty; and for your honor, courage and commitment. I am privileged to stand with you, the greatest Navy and Marine Corps the world has ever known in your service to the people of America. Godspeed to you and us all in this great endeavor!"