

CNO Franchetti Conducts Outreach Visit to Chicago



Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti meets with Navy Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) students at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, May 9. Franchetti is a 1985 graduate of Northwestern University, where she received her commission through the NROTC program. *U.S. Navy | Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class William Spears*

CHICAGO – Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Lisa Franchetti traveled to Chicago to meet with high school Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (NJROTC) students from the Rickover Naval Academy, William Howard Taft High School and Corliss High School, NROTC college students in the Chicago Consortium, and community leaders, May 8-9.

The visit provided the CNO the opportunity to discuss her personal journey in the Navy and share leadership lessons, as well as to open students' minds to what service in the Navy

looks like.

“When I was in your shoes, I could never have imagined that I would be standing here today as the chief of naval operations. Life is not necessarily what we predict, and being open to possibilities that come along the way is really important,” Franchetti shared with an auditorium of nearly 500 NJROTC cadets. Paraphrasing Chester Nimitz, she added, “‘learn all you can, do your best, and don’t worry about the things you can’t control,’ because you never know what opportunities are going to come your way, and if you always take advantage of them, when doors start to open, you’ll be ready to walk through.”

Franchetti also spoke with Rickover Naval Academy faculty and members from the Chicago Board of Education and community leaders to educate them about the mission of the Navy and the value of service to the Navy and the nation.

“Every day about 110 U.S. Navy ships and 70,000 Sailors and Marines are underway – defending our nation, enabling the free flow of commerce and protecting sea lanes of communication,” Franchetti said. “It’s not just our ships, we operate from the seabed to space in cyberspace, and in the information environment.”

She added, “You may not think about it all the time, but freedom of the seas is really important. Ninety percent of our trade goes across the oceans. So when you order something online and it gets to your doorstep, it’s because we have a Navy out there ... and it’s those Sailors and Marines that are protecting our way of life, and I couldn’t be more proud of our Navy team.”

CNO concluded her outreach visit at her alma mater of Northwestern University, where she attended a cook-out with Chicago Consortium NROTC students and members of the crew team.

Franchetti told them how a chance encounter with a group of NROTC students at a cookout during her freshman year changed the course of her life. She said she stopped by to say hi and see what they were doing. They said they were NROTC students and she could compete for a scholarship and get \$100 a month and free textbooks. She talked to their lieutenant, who told her more about the mission and opportunities in the Navy and decided to sign up on the spot.

“I joined the Navy for free college, but I stayed for our mission,” Franchetti said. “I love being part of the Navy team. I love serving with amazing Sailors, amazing people all over the world, and getting to be that beacon of hope and democracy all around the world— and it has been an amazing journey.”

While visiting Northwestern University, CNO was one of seven alumni who were inducted into the 2024 Medill School of Journalism Hall of Achievement.

This was Franchetti’s first trip to the Chicago region as CNO.