Esper Taps Braithwaite to Become Next Navy Secretary



Kenneth J. Braithwaite, U.S. ambassador to Norway, aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Bainbridge last June. He will be the nominee to replace Richard V. Spencer as Navy secretary. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Theron J. Godbold

ARLINGTON, Va. — Defense Secretary Mark Esper recommended that retired Rear Adm. Kenneth J. Braithwaite II, who serves as U.S. ambassador to Norway, become the next Navy secretary and successor to Richard V. Spencer, who resigned Nov. 24. President Trump signaled in a tweet he intends to nominate Braithwaite.

Braithwaite is a former P-3 naval aviator who became a Navy public affairs officer.

In his final assignment as the Navy's vice chief of information, Braithwaite served as the principal Navy Reserve liaison and adviser to the chief of information, having responsibility for formulating strategic communications counsel to Department of the Navy leadership, according to his official biography. He also served as the head of the Navy Reserve public affairs program and as an adjunct adviser to commander, Navy Reserve Force.

A 1984 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Braithwaite was designated a naval aviator in April 1986. His first operational assignment was to Patrol Squadron 17, NAS Barbers Point, Hawaii. He flew anti-submarine missions, tracking adversary submarines throughout the western Pacific and Indian oceans, according to his official biography.

In April 1988, he was redesignated as a public affairs

officer with a first tour aboard the aircraft carrier USS America. He had additional duty as the PAO to commander, Carrier Group 2, and the commander of Striking Force 6th Fleet. He made both a NATO force deployment to the North Atlantic operating above the Arctic Circle and a Mediterranean/Indian Ocean cruise, where the battle group responded to tensions in the Persian Gulf. In 1990, he was assigned to the staff of commander, Naval Base Philadelphia, as chief of public affairs.

Braithwaite left active duty in 1993 and resumed service in the Navy Reserve, where he served with numerous commands from Boston to Norfolk, Virginia. Also during this time, he earned a master's degree in government administration with honors from the University of Pennsylvania.

In October 2001, Braithwaite assumed command of NR Fleet Combat Camera Atlantic at Naval Air Station Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, according to his bio. During this tour the command was tasked with providing support to the Joint Task Force Commander, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. In March 2003, he deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom with a portion of his command in support of naval operations to capture the port of Umm Qasr. Following this tour, he was commanding officer of Navy Office of Information New York 102.

Braithwaite served as commander, Joint Public Affairs Support Element-Reserve, from October 2004 to October 2007. In this role, he commanded a 50-person joint public affairs expeditionary unit that was forward deployed to support joint combatant commanders in time of conflict.

While in command and following the devastating earthquake in Pakistan in 2005, Braithwaite was deployed there as part of a joint task force for disaster assistance, serving as strategic communications director and working for the JTF commander and the U.S. ambassador in Islamabad, according to his official biography.