

Navy Installs 34th Chief of Naval Operations



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Navy Adm. Daryl Caudle assumed the duties as the 34th chief of naval operations during an assumption of office ceremony, attended by over 300 Defense Department senior leaders, distinguished guests and families at the Washington Navy Yard today, in Washington.

The CNO is a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and serves as an advisor to the president, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council and the defense secretary and is responsible for the command, utilization of resources and operating efficiency of worldwide naval forces and shore activities.

“As I step into the role as your 34th chief of naval

operations, I do so with great pride, immense gratitude and an absolute focus on the mission ahead," Caudle said in a video to the fleet, released shortly before the ceremony.

During the ceremony, he further discussed his priorities, including sailors, operational readiness and fleet modernization.

"The sailor will be front and center in my vision throughout my tenure as CNO – hands down, no exception," Caudle said. "To ensure that they are ready to fight and win decisively – today, tomorrow and well into the future – we will view everything we do through an operational lens focused on three priorities: the foundry, the fleet and the way we fight."

Secretary of the Navy John Phelan acted as the presiding officer and keynote speaker of the ceremony, highlighting the importance of the Navy and the prioritization of future shipbuilding development.

"Admiral Caudle, 'the honey badger,' is the right man for the job," Phelan said. "He has a reputation for challenging the status quo, demanding results and refusing to accept excuses. I look forward to seeing that relentless pursuit of excellence and persistence pervade the halls of the Pentagon."

During his remarks, Caudle emphasized his gratitude to his family, especially his wife, Donna Caudle, for their steadfast support throughout his 40-year career.

"Your influence is woven into the very fabric of my being, into every decision I've ever made," Caudle said. "From the moment we met, you've been the bedrock of my life. You're the anchor that has kept me grounded, especially in the sometimes-turbulent seas of this profession."

Caudle's previous assignments include commander of U.S. Fleet

Forces Command, commander of Submarine Forces and commander of Submarine Force Atlantic.

Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jim Kilby relinquished the office of the CNO after serving as the acting CNO from February to August 2025.

Caudle and Phelan commended Kilby for his leadership, which ensured the uninterrupted performance of the Navy's mission and continued to foster positive relationships with U.S. allies and partners.