U.S. Navy Celebrates July 4 and Milestone of Recruiting 45,000 Sailors



The amphibious transport dock ship USS Arlington transits the Hudson River during its arrival in New York for the International Naval Review 250, June 30, 2026. International Naval Review 250 honors the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard’s enduring role on, under and above the seas. (U.S. Navy photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Cody Beam)

The U.S. Navy has contracted 45,000 future Sailors, achieving its Fiscal Year 2026 recruiting objective and ensuring the Navy remains on track to meet its annual shipping requirement.

This milestone reflects the sustained efforts of recruiters, support personnel, and leaders across Recruiting Nation to identify, inspire, and prepare the next generation of Sailors who will strengthen the Fleet and defend the nation.

“Today’s Navy is stronger because tens of thousands of Americans chose to answer the call to serve,” said Rear Adm. Jim Waters, Commander, Navy Recruiting Command. “Reaching this milestone is not simply about achieving a recruiting objective – it’s about delivering the talented Sailors our Fleet needs to maintain readiness in an increasingly complex security environment.”

Over the past three years, Navy Recruiting Command has transformed its recruiting enterprise by modernizing processes, accelerating applicant timelines, leveraging data-informed decision making, and equipping recruiters with new tools to better connect with prospective Sailors. Those efforts have resulted in sustained recruiting success, while reinforcing the Navy’s high standards for service.

“Our recruiters never lost sight of what matters most – people,” Waters added. “Every contract represents someone who chose to serve something greater than themselves. Behind every accession is a recruiter who set the foundation for success and a future Sailor preparing to stand the watch, support the Fleet, and contribute to our nation’s security.”

While reaching 45,000 contracts marks a significant milestone, Navy Recruiting Command continues processing applicants and filling future training seats to support fleet manning requirements and strengthen the Delayed Entry Program for FY27.

“Our work doesn’t stop because we’ve reached a number,” added Waters. “Every day, recruiters across the country continue building the force that will operate our ships, fly our aircraft, defend our networks, and preserve our maritime advantage for years to come.”

As the Navy continues building the force required to meet evolving global challenges, recruiting remains foundational to maintaining a ready, capable, and lethal maritime force.

The achievement of this year’s recruiting milestone reflects not only the dedication of Navy recruiters nationwide, but also the continuing willingness of Americans to answer the call to serve.