While Improving Quality of Life, Navy Remains Ready to Fight



Navy Adm. James W. Kilby, vice chief of naval operations, testifies at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on joint force readiness in Washington, March 4, 2026. **Credit:**DOW screenshot

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The Navy is participating in exercises and operations worldwide, said Navy Adm. James W. Kilby, vice chief of naval operations, who, along with other service leaders, testified yesterday at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing in Washington on joint force readiness.

Last year in the Middle East, the Navy executed strikes against adversaries during Operations Rough Rider and Midnight Hammer, while defending regional allies and partners.

This year, the Navy participated in Operation Absolute Resolve in the Atlantic, while sailors operate every day to deter China and build partnerships in the Pacific, Kilby said.

Currently, the Navy is supporting Operation Epic Fury. On March 3, a Navy fast attack submarine sank an Iranian combatant ship with the Mark 48 torpedo.

The Navy's primary weapon system is its sailors, the admiral said, noting that the service exceeded its recruiting goals last year and is successfully working to increase retention.

To further support sailors, the Navy is focused on improving quality of life through a new initiative that provides permanent shore-based housing so that no sailor is required to live aboard a ship while on shore duty, he said. Efforts also include expanding child care, improving fitness facilities and expanding meal selections with healthy options.

Always looking for ways to improve, the service is increasing platform readiness by reducing maintenance delays, investing in shipyard infrastructure optimization and developing the civilian workforce. Advanced technologies such as conditions-based maintenance and advanced additive manufacturing are being used to optimize systems.

"The Navy continues to drive toward our goal of 80% combat surge-ready ships, aircraft and submarines with urgency and accountability," Kilby said, adding that he's concerned with the material condition of amphibious ships and is working to improve that.