

**Commander's Intent
for the
United States Submarine Force
and Supporting Organizations**

March 2018



Introduction

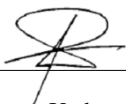
The demands on the United States Submarine Force and supporting organizations continue to grow at an unprecedented rate. The threat continues to evolve and expand rapidly in at least three world regions, each posing substantially different operational demands for both high-end warfighting and peacetime operations. As a result of decisions made many years ago, the number of submarines has begun a long sustained reduction that will increase these demands on each ship and crew. The growing age and expected lifespan of our submarines and undersea systems compel us to pay careful attention to maintenance and modernization while dealing with budget uncertainty. New technologies such as unmanned systems and new capabilities such as cyber warfare present new challenges and new opportunities, but in the near term will not replace or minimize the demands placed on the Submarine Force.

This *Commander's Intent* is addressed to submarine crews and leadership (i.e., the "Submarine Force" or "Force"), and the commands and organizations that build, support, and enable the Force of today and tomorrow (i.e., "supporting organizations"). To ensure success in the face of growing challenges, this document provides background and principles for every member of the Force and supporting organizations (active duty, reserve, government civilian, and industry) to understand our priorities and direction, and their role in achieving them.

In operational planning, 'Commander's Intent' is defined as a clear and concise expression of an operation's purpose and the desired end state that supports mission command, provides staff focus, and helps subordinate and supporting commanders achieve the commander's desired results without further orders. This document lays out the mission, purpose, basic concept of operations, unit task allocation, and desired military end state. It also provides some additional guidance to key Submarine Force leaders.

This *Commander's Intent* ensures the Submarine Force is executing our National Defense Strategy, aligns our efforts with the Navy's Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority, and updates and supersedes the *Commander's Intent for the Submarine Force and Supporting Organizations* of December 2015. This update preserves the fundamental direction of its predecessor documents. This consistency and continuity should make it clear we remain on the right track – our foundation is solid, our traditions reinforce the right attributes, and we have much to be proud of as a community. Our Force is truly "forged by the sea."

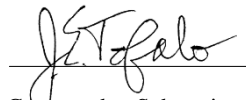
Submarines and their crews remain the tip of the undersea spear; supporting them is our primary focus. Our supporting organizations are essential to keeping our submarines and our people ready, effectively employed, and equipped with the best possible tools and enabling capabilities. All of us have vital work to do in maintaining U.S. undersea superiority, and we are confident that you will rise to the challenge as you have done in the past.



Director, Undersea Warfare



Commander, Submarine
Force U.S. Pacific Fleet



Commander, Submarine
Forces

The Commander's Intent

Situation

We are a Maritime Nation. Approximately 70% of the world is covered in water, 80% of the population lives within a few hundred miles of an ocean coast, 90% of global commerce travels not by plane but by ship, and over 99% of intercontinental communications (including financial transactions) travel not by satellite, but via an underwater cable. Our founding fathers saw the importance of the maritime domain stating in the Constitution that the Congress had the power “to raise and support armies”...but requiring it “to provide and maintain a Navy.”

Our Challengers. America's military remains the strongest in the world, but our advantage is shrinking due to rapid advancements by rival states. Russia is investing in new military capabilities, including nuclear systems that remain our most significant existential threat. China is aggressively pursuing the most capable and well-funded military in the world, after our own. North Korea publicly seeks the ability to attack us with nuclear weapons. Iran supports terrorist groups and openly calls for our destruction. Terrorist organizations such as ISIS and al-Qa'ida are also determined to attack the United States, and threaten our way of life. These ever-evolving challenges demand our continued vigilance, commitment to combat readiness, ability to quickly adapt and learn in the face of change, and our strict adherence to the Navy core attributes of our professional identity.

The Undersea, Critical to Homeland Defense. The SSBN force is the only survivable leg of our strategic deterrent triad, and under New START carries approximately 70% of the nation's accountable nuclear warheads. Our SSN and SSGN forces have the unique ability to enable all-domain access and hold critical adversary assets at risk. Consistent with our history as a maritime nation, the responsibility to prevent challengers from using the sea to threaten the U.S. and its allies falls predominantly on the Navy. As anti-access / area denial systems proliferate, the share of this Navy responsibility that falls on U.S. submarine and undersea forces will only grow.

Lethality and the High-End Fight. For the first decade of the 21st Century our Navy primarily focused on a land war against Middle Eastern regional threats, with emphasis on power projection ashore and fighting from relatively uncontested littorals. We have now shifted to an emphasis on high-end combat in contested blue water against near-peer competitors. With increased capability and capacity of our challengers both individually and collectively, the Submarine Force must likewise concentrate on its overall lethality including each submarine's high-end combat effectiveness. Because of our unique access, asymmetric capability, and far-forward 'on scene unseen' peacetime operations, much will be asked of us in all stages of conflict. Consequently, improved lethality and high-end combat effectiveness must permeate our day-to-day peacetime training, certifications, and culture, so we can be certain to dominate when abruptly shifted to combat operations. We also work closely with the rest of the Navy, and our partners and allies, to exercise our forces using worldwide response plans to ensure we are ready. Our nation depends on us to be ready and vigilant because - From the depths, we must strike.

Mission

The mission of the United States Navy per U.S. Code is to be ready to conduct “prompt and sustained combat incident to operations at sea.” Our Navy, prepared in this way, will protect America from attack and maintain our strategic influence in key regions of the world.

The mission of the U.S. Submarine Force is to execute the mission of the U.S. Navy in and from the undersea domain. In addition to lending added capacity to Naval forces, the Submarine Force in particular is expected to leverage those special advantages that come with undersea concealment to permit operational, deterrent, and combat effects that the Navy and the Nation could not otherwise achieve. These effects may be delivered within the undersea domain or across domain boundaries; they may be delivered from submarines far-forward or in broad ocean areas; they may be the result of carefully coordinated operations integrated with other forces or achieved by independent operations; and they may be accomplished in peacetime, a time of tension, or during conflict.

Purpose of the U.S. Submarine Forces (“Why”)

The Submarine Force and supporting organizations constitute the primary undersea arm of the U.S. Navy. We provide:

Conflict Deterrence: We use undersea advantages to provide a survivable strategic deterrent and a robust and credible conventional capability that deters both nuclear and conventional conflict.

Access with Influence: We are an elite force charged by the Nation with exploiting unique undersea advantages to provide the U.S. influence, especially far forward where other forces cannot complete the mission, and where persistent undersea concealment provides unique access.

Vital Intelligence: We use undersea concealment to provide unique intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance in support of U.S. national interests in the variety of contexts that characterize today’s unstable international environment.

Warfighting: Finally, if necessary, we use our undersea advantage to conduct strike warfare ashore, conduct theater and unit-level anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and anti-surface warfare (ASUW), and perform other warfighting missions by employing special forces and advanced capabilities across multiple domains.

Concept of Operations (“How”)

We are uniquely capable of, and often best employed in, stealthy, clandestine and independent operations while maintaining the flexibility to fully integrate our resources and combat power with the fleet.

We exploit the advantages of undersea concealment which allow us to:

- **Conduct undetected operations** such as strategic deterrent patrols, intelligence collection, Special Operations Forces support, non-provocative transits, and repositioning.
- **Penetrate adversary defensive perimeters** to deny safe haven, reduce defenses, and exploit opportunities created by being inside their fence line.
- **Deliver attacks with surprise** at a time and place of our choosing.
- **Be survivable** without dependence on significant defensive weapons.
- **Create ambiguity and uncertainty**, compelling inefficient adversary resource expenditure, plan disruption, and degraded confidence.

We remain at a high level of material and operational readiness to provide a global stabilizing presence in key locations, and when required quickly commence independent sustained deterrent patrols or offensive operations far forward.

We maximize self-sufficiency and the ability to operate effectively with mission command orders and limited external guidance, material support, outgoing communications, or active transmissions.

We foster a force-wide culture of integrity, accountability (both for our actions and for mission accomplishment), initiative, toughness, self-improvement, learning, trust and motivational leadership at every level, which enables building individuals and teams that are competent, resilient and adaptable. We don't live with problems and we constantly guard against normalizing deviation from our standards. Our peacetime culture of preparedness allows us to overcome obstacles and the ability to fight hurt when called upon in combat. We never compromise our high standards and constantly assess changes in risk and the situation at hand.

Subordinate Unit Task Allocation (“Who does what”)

Everything we do supports one or more of the following four Lines of Effort (LOEs), and at the execution level this is the most important part of the *Commander’s Intent*. For each Focus Area the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) is indicated.

Blue Line of Effort: Strengthen Naval Power at and from the Sea. This effort develops warfighting capability, capacity and endurance, and ensures the readiness and operational proficiency to safely and stealthily execute challenging missions. It requires effort in the headquarters, maintenance organizations, and at the waterfront to ensure we are trained and ready to operate and fight decisively.

Focus areas and evidence of improvement:

- a. Improve Strategic Mission efficiency and resiliency (OPR: N9s).
 - 1) Complete STRATCOM realignment.
 - 2) Institute Campaign Plan, security and survivability CONOP initiatives.
 - 3) Assess the margin associated with safely executing the SSBN at-sea requirement.
 - 4) Codify Contingency Mod-Alert and Continuity of Operations plans.
- b. Meet Combatant Commander requirements for surge and deployed SSBNs, SSGNs, and SSNs (OPR: Squadron Commanders).
 - 1) Deploy units ready to conduct high-end combat and challenging peacetime operations as directed by deployment Letters of Instruction.
 - 2) Achieve surge SSN readiness as needed to support OPLAN requirements, homeland defense, and TASW operations (OPR: Squadron Commanders).
- c. Continue to develop, refine and validate SUBFOR plans to rapidly respond to OPLANs (OPR: N5s).
 - 1) Further mature the Submarine Response Plan.
 - 2) Conduct Force Generation exercises in Atlantic and Pacific (AGILE PLAYER/DAGGER).
 - 3) Assist JFMCC OPLAN development to optimize USW employment in the high-end fight.
 - 4) Assess how various Rules of Engagement scenarios might change our approach to OPLAN response.
 - 5) Using operational feedback, assess impact to OPLAN response of operating with low or no bandwidth communications.
- d. Improve the Combat Culture in our Force (OPR: N7s).
 - 1) Instill a warfighting culture in everything we do. Include in our day-to-day discussions the importance to our nation of both our Force and our missions.
 - 2) Improve professionalism and personal responsibility.
 - 3) Develop toughness in every aspect of our lives. Relate everything we do physically, emotionally, and psychologically to how it will help us in combat.
 - 4) Frame every mission we do through the lens of warfighting.
- e. Define and develop full-spectrum Theater Undersea Warfare (TUSW) (OPR: UWDC).

- 1) Fully analyze and develop kill-chains.
 - 2) Continue to define, develop and validate undersea warfighting tactics and capabilities to include informing the Full Spectrum Undersea Warfare CONOPS.
 - 3) Maintain a quality tactical development (TACDEV) level of effort of 20 or more TACDEV exercises per year in support of Submarine Tactical Objectives Roadmap (STORM) priorities and objectives.
 - 4) Assess our warfighting capability and integrate advanced capabilities (e.g., TASW Offset (TASW-O), USW-DSS, URCIs, LVA, etc.) in order to advance combat effectiveness across the full spectrum of operations.
- f. Maximize operational availability (Ao) by mitigating planned and emergent maintenance/modernization challenges (OPR: N4s).
- 1) Achieve 27 month SSBN EROs and 6 month ERPs.
 - 2) Execute the transition to Trident Refit Facility Bangor.
 - 3) Partner with NAVSEA and private shipyards to normalize SSN depot maintenance length.
 - 4) Execute the 688 service-life extension initiative.
 - 5) Improve I-level maintenance to optimize SSBN, SSGN and SSN Ao.
 - 6) To compliment the Guam 2030 vision, standup Task Force Guam.
- g. Continue to communicate the Integrated Undersea Future Investment Strategy (IUFIS) to align government and industry with our future capability and acquisition priorities (OPR: OPNAV N97).
- 1) Strategic Deterrence: Maintain survivable and effective SBSB.
 - a) Deliver COLUMBIA SSBN – Navy’s #1 priority.
 - b) Sustain OHIO and D5 through end-of-life; pace threat through aggressive modernization.
 - c) Deliver D5 LE2 and recapitalize NC3.
 - 2) TUSW: Deliver a whole and ready USW force with overmatch in all domains.
 - a) Produce at least 2/yr SSN; sustain modernization; execute the Tactical Submarine Evolution Plan (TSEP).
 - b) Evolve/expand wide area search and cueing with IUSS, SURTASS (including expeditionary SURTASS-E which can support heavy weather and/or high speed), and TASW-O efforts.
 - c) Produce payloads for independent and integrated fires.
 - d) Enhance LPI/LPD communications.
 - e) Develop subsea and seabed warfare capabilities.
 - f) Field a family of unmanned undersea vehicles.
- h. Execute the Submarine Electronic Warfare (EW) Wholeness Campaign Plan (OPR: UWDC).
- 1) Execute the NAVOPS reorganization.
 - 2) Update EW training and doctrine.
 - 3) Field EW tactical TEMPALT.
 - 4) Finalize plan for Next Generation EW Architecture.
 - 5) Optimize Direct Support Element (DSE) support plan.
- i. Review and validate the SSGN Operational and Training Cycle (OPR: CSGs).

- j. Fully standup UUVRON ONE to include full manning, the right operating budget, vehicle and support system inventory, and a regular schedule of operations, exercises and tactical development (OPR: CSP).
- k. Develop an underwater target list (OPR: CTFs with support from N2s).
- l. Improve our information assurance (IA) and operational security (OPSEC) both at sea and ashore (OPR: N2 and N6).
 - 1) Refine and update our Personal Electronic Device (PED) policy.
 - 2) Update our social media policy.
 - 3) Improve our cyber readiness through better adherence to IA policies.
 - 4) Vary our operating patterns and tighten our security.
- m. Work with the systems commands to improve the TEMPALT process to support rapid delivery of new warfighting capabilities (OPR: N4).

Green Line of Effort: Achieve High Velocity Outcomes. This effort challenges us to implement best practices and leverage lessons learned at every level of our enterprise. We will aggressively transition rapid prototyping efforts from developer to operator so we can feedback lessons and drive improvement throughout the acquisition process. We are an organization that conducts introspective self-assessment in order to drive improvement at every level.

Focus areas and evidence of improvement:

- a. Assess FRTP tuning effort to ensure it is meeting OPLAN requirements. (OPR: N5s).
- b. Zero Class A mishaps: Leverage the Navy’s Comprehensive Review (CR) to improve training, certification, and operations (OPR: N7).
 - 1) Execute CR POA&M to include a plan to improve mariner skills, navigation, and application of nautical rules of the road.
 - 2) Further institutionalize Force Improvement and Operational Safety initiatives throughout the Force.
 - a) Implementation of Operational Fundamentals 2.0.
 - b) Expand and improve human factors awareness.
 - c) Improve the OSO community of practice, lessons learned and FON programs.
- c. Align and strengthen Submarine Force Operational Safety (OPR: CSL/CSP COS).
- d. Continue aggressive pursuit of proven rapid operational prototyping. Finish transition (or termination) of URCI Generation I projects, and drive transition of URCI Generation II projects based on assessment of military warfighting utility. (OPR: N8s).
- e. Complete operator hotwash of key 2017 operations (TASW-O, TASW Ops, UUV Ops) and develop action list (OPR: CTFs).
- f. Continue evolving Subsea and Seabed Warfare (SSW) concepts for transition to theater OPLANs. Deliver advanced SSW technologies to address emerging mission needs (OPR: OPNAV N97).

- g. Leverage IT systems to improve operational efficiency (OPR: N4s).
 - 1) Continue Nosis and CTQS improvement and automation.
 - 2) Optimize O and I-Level maintenance planning and execution.

Gold Line of Effort: Strengthen our Navy Team for the Future. This task falls to everyone who leads in the Submarine Force and supporting organizations. Our people-centered efforts must benefit both Sailors and their families, and also our vitally important government civilians and Reservists, all with the goal of strengthening our one Navy team. We achieve our other Lines of Effort with, by, and through our people.

Focus areas and evidence of improvement:

- a. Reduce operational stress on shipboard Sailors by expanding Forcewide Quality of Life initiatives (OPR: N1s).
 - 1) Explore efficiencies for inport duty watchbills and rotation.
 - 2) Execute annual JO symposiums.
 - 3) Evaluate enlisted career paths.
- b. Continue to institutionalize Submarine Force Waterfront Toughness (OPR: N00M).
 - 1) Establish permanent eMHP across the Force.
 - 2) Expand Executive Coaching to COB/EDMC.
- c. Execute new Navy Frameworks.
 - 1) Submarine Force Leader Development (OPR: N7s).
 - 2) Civilian Workforce (OPR: ED).
 - 3) Family (OPR: FORCMs).
- d. Refine our Longterm Personnel Strategy (OPR: N1).
 - 1) Refine Women in Submarines Integration Plan through SSGN decommissionings, COLUMBIA SSBN delivery, and the SSN 'trough'.
 - 2) Mitigate 'personnel tax' through inactivation delays.
 - 3) Execute NAVOPS reorganization.
 - 4) Develop Officer C4I training strategy.
 - 5) Develop a forcewide wartime manning document that accounts for internal TYCOM organization.
 - 6) Continue to meet minimum fit (85%) / fill (95%) threshold for our submarines.
- e. Emphasize professional behavior throughout the force. (OPR: N1s/FORCMs)
 - 1) Drug and destructive behavior deterrence.
 - 2) Prevent conditions which lead to fraternization.
 - 3) Continue broader Navy efforts to eliminate sexual harassment.
- f. Review and refine Reserve Integration Policies (OPR: N01R).
 - 1) Improve retaining submarine qualified enlisted from AC to RC.
 - 2) Codify RC strategy to support war plans.
 - 3) Formally document SUBFOR RC peacetime roles and responsibilities.
 - 4) Update CSG-8 Missions, Functions, and Tasks to add support to CTF-69 TASW mission.

Purple Line of Effort: Expand and Strengthen our Network of Partners.

We will look to leverage and expand the relationships we've built with other services, agencies, industry, local communities, allies and partners to improve our ability to meet our peacetime and wartime mission demands.

Focus areas and evidence of improvement:

- a. Demonstrate assurance and support to our allies by conducting non-traditional SSBN port visits (OPR: N9s).
- b. Mature Diesel Electric Submarine Initiative (DESI) operations (OPR: N5s).
- c. Continue to build allied nation interoperability and TASW effectiveness (OPR: CTFs).
 - 1) Improve NATO TASW concept development and ASW proficiency.
 - 2) Formalize US/Japan/Australia TASW initiatives.
 - 3) Expand TASW partnerships across the Pacific by building trust and cooperation.
 - 4) Plan and execute multilateral engagements with PACOM/EUCOM countries.
 - 5) Establish a standing TASW Operation in the Pacific (OPR: CSP N3/N5).
- d. Improve submarine rescue capability (OPR: URC).
 - 1) Implement best practices/lessons learned from ARA SAN JUAN rescue operation.
 - 2) Take a "kill chain" approach to improving Sub Escape and Rescue.
 - 3) Establish standing Sub Escape and Rescue (SER) EXORD that is integrated with TRANSCOM and strategic lift.
 - 4) Conduct U.S. SSN escape and rescue exercise.
 - 5) Revitalize Submarine Escape and Rescue Review Group (SERRG). (OPR: CSP DMO)

Desired End-State (“What success looks like”)

Each of the below elements of success for Undersea Warfare Vision 2025 involves careful attention along all four Lines of Effort. We must:

Own the Best: We have the best undersea systems and platforms. For the Submarine Force, this means buying the best submarines and maintaining and modernizing them to ensure we stay the best. It is also about buying, maintaining, and modernizing the best supporting systems, including off-board and surveillance systems, training infrastructure, etc.

Grow Longer Arms: We maximize our effective reach from the undersea. This includes range and geographic area, the breadth of effects we deliver, the domains we impact (undersea, land, air, surface, cyberspace, etc.), and the influence achieved through a system of undersea forces. Developing and building sensors and weapons with increased range and accuracy is very important, as is expanding our reach more firmly into the seabed and electromagnetic spectrum, and other domains. It is about covering additional area and mission capabilities by adding unmanned systems and a family of vehicles (small, medium, large, extra-large) to the Submarine Force tool kit. It is also about expanding our operator’s ability to maximize the reach from weapons and sensors we already have.

Beat the Adversary’s System: We beat the adversary’s system by exploiting surprise, confusion, and disruption. For submarines operating independently far forward, ‘beating the adversary’s system’ has special meaning. The Force’s role far forward is to gain access inside enemy defenses and generate surprise, a military advantage acknowledged for thousands of years. Surprise creates advantage because it enables us to exploit full readiness and exquisite timing, and compels the adversary to engage when unready and least able to react effectively. Submarines create confusion in the mind of the adversary about what is really going on. We create disruption, especially of anti-access systems, by applying pressure to the weakest points and at the most vulnerable times. This disrupts adversary plans, forces resource reallocation, and leads to inefficient use of forces – all of which slow down and degrade adversary operations.

Protect our Strategic Assets...and Threaten Theirs: This includes protection from threats (both manned and unmanned, systems and vehicles) to our Homeland, SSBNs on patrol, Carrier Strike Groups, critical undersea infrastructure, cyberspace, strategic ports and chokepoints, and submarines. Likewise, the main role of our Submarine Force is to hold the adversary’s strategic assets at risk from the undersea, the same list we want to protect: their homeland, SSBNs on patrol, carriers, critical undersea infrastructure, cyberspace, strategic ports and chokepoints, and submarines. We also integrate with our U.S., partner, and allied Navy undersea forces – including ASW aircraft and ships – that have vital undersea warfare roles.

Get on the Same Page: We are tightly aligned and tactically on the same page, in operations, planning, and investments. This includes ensuring that we exchange common operational data among air, surface, and subsurface assets. We must keep our naval, joint, and allied doctrine aligned with evolving threat forces' capabilities, behaviors, and intentions. This is also about ensuring we are efficient in our pursuit of capability by avoiding redundant expenditures of effort and resources. Not only must our current operations be well coordinated (e.g., Theater ASW operations), but we must also align our capability planning and our investment profiles to make the most of limited fiscal resources.

Get Faster: End-to-end, we must be “fast” in our operations, learning, processes, acquisitions, and innovation. This does not mean rushing decisions or actions in isolation – we are bold, not reckless. Well thought out, “fast” and efficient operations provide the adversary with less time to assess and react. A culture that includes the ability to quickly learn and adapt will always be better able to respond to threat and environment changes, or an operational error. In our processes, we must aggressively pursue eliminating administrative distractions and cumbersome procedures that do not add value and slow us down. In acquisition, the institutional inertia created by acquisition process habits must continue to be challenged. We must be faster in our innovation and also accept the fact that innovation involves some failure. We must champion the use of operational prototyping, which enables retirement of diverse technical risks in parallel vice series, allowing us to deliver new capabilities faster. We must better link operational Force inputs to speed up capability development. We must move with a sense of urgency to be ready for sustained high-end combat. All of the above will be enabled by us learning better and faster, and naturally innovating.

Be the Best: Our people are the foundation of our strength. They strive to be confident experts of the highest character, and we must enable their toughness, resiliency and professional development. We must develop our people to be leaders, do everything with honesty and integrity, always be teaching and learning, tirelessly pursue excellence, and constantly look for ways to work better and smarter. Success also rests on the effective accumulation of operational experience, a key advantage of U.S. undersea forces.

**Commanders' Guidance to All Members of the
Submarine Force and Supporting Organizations**

Being a professional submariner is about trust – many different kinds of trust. Trust in the knowledge and integrity of a Sailor who certifies a rig for dive, tagout, log reading, etc. Trust in those who build or repair submarines to go to test depth or into combat. Trust in the judgment of those who plan and coordinate an operation or deployment. Trust in our shipmates and leaders to never compromise our high standards, regardless of the impact. Trust in the submarine Captain to do the right thing when faced with a difficult situation and no ability to get advice from ashore. Trust by the Nation in our ability to safely and competently handle an incredibly complex machine doing critical work for national security.

It has been said, “trust cannot be surged.” As submariners you know this. Trust is earned over a long time of demonstrated performance. Trust creates a special bond and accumulates slowly on a foundation of confidence, expertise, and character. Manifest in you, it is upon this trust that we build our Force. You, the men and women of the Submarine Force and supporting organizations, are our foundation of strength. These are not just words. When leaders from other navies visit our submarines and meet our young Sailors, they marvel at their quality. Other navies do not have Sailors like you.

Where does this special need for trust come from? Submariners operate far forward, usually independently and “behind enemy lines” for long periods of time without external support – in both peacetime and wartime. Submarines have small crews where each person has multiple roles, where the safety of the ship depends on each individual’s performance and where we expect initiative and professionalism from everyone.

*This emphasis on trust and this uniquely independent operating environment place special demands on submariners. Although these demands can seem numerous, your approach should be simple. **Do everything with honesty, integrity, and professionalism.** Incidents that violate the trust of the Navy or of a shipmate, damage the special bond upon which everything is built. We go to war together with confidence that we can rely on each other in all circumstances.*

But young Sailors do not arrive as confident experts with all of the tools and experience to meet the high standards of moral character and personal behavior expected of submariners. Leaders and shipmates at all levels within the Submarine Force contribute to who they are, ensuring we develop leaders for now and to inherit the future. They are always teaching and learning. They set an example of confidence and character, demonstrating honesty and integrity in the moment of choice, the tireless pursuit of excellence, and constantly looking for ways to work better and smarter.

*All of us, from Seaman to Master Chief, Ensign to Admiral, government civilian to Reservist, are at different times shaped by or contribute to this process. It makes us who we are; it makes us the greatest Submarine Force the world has ever known. An empty submarine sitting next to the pier is capable of only one thing: rusting. It is the men and women of the crew and the supporting organizations, with trust in each other, which brings that submarine to life. **Thank you for your service and your leadership—thanks for all you do!***

Commanders' Guidance to Submarine Commanding Officers

As Commanding Officer of a nuclear-powered submarine, you must uphold the highest standards of personal and professional conduct at all times. Our trust in you, along with the trust you enjoy from your crew and your fellow warriors, is contingent on establishing those high standards and holding yourself and your crew accountable. The nation trusts you to take your ship and crew to sea, without direct oversight or close support, and shoulder the burden of accomplishing missions vital to our national defense in the most hostile and challenging environments. Your primary responsibility is to ensure your ship and crew are ready to conduct high-end wartime missions on short notice. Arguably the last of the independent maritime warriors, you have more freedom of action in war and in peace, than anyone else in the U.S. military. We provide the following guidance to help focus your efforts.

Prepare for war. Immediately following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. Submarine Force was not prepared to conduct unrestricted submarine warfare. Commanding Officers were products of a risk-averse peacetime environment that had not anticipated the skills required for warfighting. Given the situation we face, and a reorientation to both the maritime and the high-end fight, do not let this happen to you. You are the product of robust training and competitive screening, and are equipped with the most lethal weapons and technologically advanced equipment in the history of undersea warfare; you have the people and tools to successfully conduct the full spectrum of wartime operations. However, the continuous training you provide your crew is the key ingredient for credible deterrence and success in conflict. Of utmost importance will be your crew's ability to innovate and adjust current tactics, in-situ, based on wartime situations being different than those previously experienced in peace. Prepare yourself for the aggressive action war demands – combat may come at any time.

Be ready to achieve peacetime national objectives. Peacetime operations, and the skills they require, are identical to wartime operations – except for permission to fire. You must be ready to conduct challenging peacetime missions. You alone are in the best position to set the priorities for your crew and ship. Your ability to assess the performance of your team is essential in achieving readiness. You must devote the time for your team to plan, prepare, and practice both in port and at-sea. Practice the way you will fight, with the mantra of wartime aggressiveness, but do not jeopardize safety and stealth during peacetime; you should only consider risking safety and stealth in time of war and to achieve specific, high priority, military objectives. You must maintain proficiency in foundational submarine skills including navigation, contact management, damage control, ship control, communications, weapon employment, force protection, nuclear weapons security, operational and tactical security, and reactor plant operations. You and your crew will be measured against the non-negotiable professional standards associated with each of these areas. Proficiency requires continued practice even after you have achieved an acceptable level of performance. Your Force Commanders value balanced and consistent overall performance in lieu of short-lived performance in one area.

Wear Command well. *Motivational leadership and setting a professional example are important. They combine competence, energy, patience, and balance. It means holding yourself and your Sailors accountable when appropriate, constructively correcting what is wrong, but also noticing and reinforcing what is right. Have a clear vision, well thought out in advance, of what these basic tenets mean to you and discuss that vision with your command leadership team. Have a vision of how you want to project your leadership to your crew, understand how you are perceived, and then work to reconcile the difference.*

Train, mentor, and develop your officers. *Short of winning in war, nothing is more important. Your responsibility encompasses much more than training for near-term missions or events. Cultivate a culture that your officers are first and foremost warfighters, and that their efforts must fully support the warfighting capability of your submarine. Build talent over time so it is available when you and the Submarine Force need it. Guide the development of your officers – push them beyond their comfort zone, but know when to tolerate their mistakes. Practice fighting the ship, assess, recover, and try again, until you are satisfied with performance. Require your officers to own and run their divisions, their departments, and their ship. Actual responsibility and accountability, with an increasing span of control over time, will prepare these officers for future success and eventual command. You are their primary mentor. Use every minute with your wardroom as an opportunity to train your officers, build esprit de corps, and immerse them in what it means to be a professional submariner. You should make the allure of command so great, the challenge of command so sought after, that all your junior officers endeavor to become a Commanding Officer. The longest-lasting and most important legacy of your command will be the contributions your officers continue to make to the Submarine Force.*

Build depth in your teams. *During the intensity of war or challenging peacetime operations, fundamentals must be so deeply ingrained that actions occur without significant effort or thought. Train your teams to know their jobs, perform their duties, and take required actions without coaching or additional supervision. These teams are made of the most talented Sailors in the world; we expect you to maximize each Sailor's potential. Build a professional environment that makes being a submariner rewarding. Enthusiastically bring them aboard and lead their professional development. You have a small elite crew. Know your Sailors intimately and show them how they fit into our culture of pride, integrity, professionalism and accountability; how our elite teams uniquely depend upon the individual; and how their professional successes will lead to their personal successes. Your officers and chiefs must share the weight of responsibility for developing and shepherding their Sailors and know that we trust their judgment.*

Implementation. *The guidance we provide you as Commanding Officer is based on the most important tenets of submarining – winning wars and safely conducting challenging peacetime missions to achieve national objectives. It is general guidance by design because the myriad of implementation steps must be crafted by you, tailored to your ship, and adapted to the situation, talent, and personalities of your command. You must lead your ship, assess your situation continuously, adjust fires as needed, and exercise the full extent of the authority vested in you – that may include making decisions outside the book, fighting hurt, or saying “No” when the situation warrants it. When you assume the title of “Captain,” we rely on you to make those bold decisions every day.*

Commanders' Guidance to the Chief of the Boat

You are the linchpin that enables your ship's success. Together with the Commanding Officer and Executive Officer, you must continually improve the readiness of your crew and families, as well as the ship's material condition. Many problems can be avoided by simply establishing the proper standards and culture at all levels. You set the standard for personal and professional conduct. Always remember you are the Chief of the Boat on a warship, and your mission is to prepare for and win wars. Ensure your Sailors realize the importance of their jobs and how critical they are to protecting our national interests. While there is an extensive Command Master Chief network to support you, never forget your only chain of command is through your Commanding Officer.

The Chief of the Boat is a command position. *As the Commanding Officer's right hand, you must provide sage counsel, forceful backup, and when appropriate a dissenting viewpoint. While collaborating with the Squadron Command Master Chief for best practices and advice, your actions must be in line to support your Commanding Officer's vision and policies.*

Train, mentor, and develop your Chief Petty Officers. *Push your Chiefs beyond their comfort zone. Demand they track their Sailors personal and professional development and own planning, execution and risk mitigation in their area of expertise. Build capacity over time so it is available when you need it. As you train your Chiefs, you must constructively correct what is wrong, but also reinforce what is right. You must lead and empower your Chiefs to focus their cohesion as a Chief's Quarters outward throughout the command. Chiefs must be visible and audible force multipliers on the deck plates; Chiefs make the ship's routine run efficiently.*

Work with the Department Heads. *Along with the Executive Officer, you are in a unique position to guide the efficient and effective operations of the ship. Just as we rely on our Chiefs to train Junior Officers, we rely on your experience and leadership to help train and mentor the Department Heads.*

Establish a healthy culture of training. *Given your submarine's primary purpose is to fight and win wars, incorporate warfighting in as many training venues as possible. Each member of the crew must instinctively know how to react to a multitude of situations. They only develop this reflex through continuing training and practice. Develop a healthy culture of training, and ensure your limited training time is used to maximum effectiveness. If an important event is occurring, involve yourself where you can best add value. The ship control and damage control teams are your personal responsibility.*

Know the crew. *You have a small but highly trained and elite crew. Know your Sailors intimately and understand their personal problems and what motivates them. Ensure your Sailors understand how critical they are to ship safety and mission accomplishment. Train your Sailors to be ready for combat. Make sure they understand everything they do, from basic sanitation to major maintenance contributes to our warfighting readiness. Our ability to operate and win hinges on every Sailor doing their job every day.*

You are the senior deck plate leader. *Be present on the deck plates, talk to Sailors, and answer their questions. Ensure Sailors' time is not being wasted. Ensure the crew understands the Command Vision and the overarching purpose driving the schedule and command activities.*

Commanders' Guidance to Submarine Group and Squadron Commanders

As a Submarine Group or Squadron Commander, you are responsible for the performance of each of your assigned submarines, other assigned units supporting submarine operations, and all associated personnel. Our fundamental business is winning wars. You are responsible for ensuring that your submarines are fully ready to meet the demands of a wartime environment. You are in a unique position within the Submarine Force – you have command responsibility, yet your subordinates include officers who are also in command. Like them, you must also uphold the highest standards of personal and professional conduct at all times. Reflect on the following guidance as you lead your staffs and submarines.

Respect and support the Commanding Officer's ultimate authority and responsibility. *This first principle will continue to be the cornerstone of the ability to succeed in high-end conflict and challenging peacetime operations, and significantly influences the ability to develop decentralized, autonomous commanders at sea. With authority comes responsibility and accountability. Your support and guidance must not undercut the Commanding Officer's authority or reduce their accountability. You must respect your Commanding Officer's authority and responsibility, while discharging your own. Doing this right will be one of the most challenging aspects of your duty.*

Train your Commanding Officers. *One of your most important responsibilities is training and mentoring your Commanding Officers. Maintaining proficiency in warfighting skills is a top priority. You have the greatest influence on your Commanding Officers' leadership, and tactical and technical skills development. Frequently share training, lessons learned, and your experience. Without discounting accountability, you must remain approachable to ensure Commanding Officers are never hesitant to discuss problems or concerns. It is important that you help the Commanding Officer develop the ability to identify, measure, and assess risk, and to develop the decision making skills needed to effectively prioritize issues, train the crew, and maintain, operate, and fight the ship.*

Remove distractions from our Forces Afloat. *Commanding Officers and crews that are distracted by unnecessary requirements will not maintain their focus where it is needed the most. The demands on our undersea warriors are high and will only grow given the situation we face. Our submarine teams are small, elite, and rely heavily upon undistracted, individual performance.*

Ensure deployed readiness. *While the Submarine Force relies on its Commanding Officers to identify and correct their own problems, your staffs provide a unique external evaluation with experience that may not exist on the ship. An inherent tension will exist where you are both responsible for helping a ship prepare for deployment, and responsible for recommending deployment certification to the*

operational commander. While you must work to ensure the deployed readiness of your ships, do not allow this effort and ownership to interfere with an unbiased evaluation of your ships' capabilities.

Ensure that submarine schedules are achievable. *Healthy tension will always exist between maintenance periods, dedicated training time at sea, exercises, evaluations, and deployment dates. Work closely with your ships when developing schedules to ensure that the concerns of the Commanding Officer are considered and the ship is set up for success. Inherent in ensuring readiness and safely executing schedules is knowing when to step in to get things back "on plan." Sometimes your higher level perspective is needed to teach and backup the Commanding Officer to say, "Not Yet" when the schedule or situation is "off plan." It is critical that we know when to step in and say, "No" when a "new plan" is needed. Teaching your staffs and Commanding Officers to continually evaluate whether they are "on plan – off plan – need a new plan" will help the entire force develop this higher level perspective toward safely and effectively delivering readiness.*

**Commanders' Guidance for Maintenance Facility, Submarine Tender,
and Naval Submarine Support Center Commanding Officers**

Your primary responsibility is to support submarine Commanding Officers.

Commanding Officers that control maintenance lead the most critical part of our readiness generation process. Your main objective is to complete required preventive and corrective maintenance while minimizing scheduling uncertainty to maximize submarine operational availability. You uphold the highest standards of personal and professional conduct at all times. Although submarine maintenance is a team sport, submarine Commanding Officers rely on the maintainers' expertise in providing for the readiness of their ships. While leading your commands and repairing our nation's submarines, you should reflect on the guidance below.

Support the Warfighter. *It is your responsibility to give our crews the confidence that vital equipment will work properly in the most challenging wartime environments. Although the crew on a submarine is technically competent, their capacity for complex maintenance is limited due to manpower, time, and expertise. Even the most capable crews will routinely require the maintenance facility's assistance to return a ship to a mission ready status.*

Provide realistic maintenance schedules while maintaining our rigorous technical requirements. *You are expected to be continually measuring, assessing, and monitoring the risk associated with maintenance. You must ensure alignment with the ship's Commanding Officer and Commodore on the ship's schedule, which is directly impacted by maintenance progress, risk assessment, and estimated completion date. Alignment of perspectives will ensure better decision making on maintenance scheduling, maintenance completion, and risk acceptance, if necessary.*

Maintain a highly capable workforce and a superior level of support to our forces afloat. *You must continually identify and sustain core maintenance capabilities through regular modernization and training. Challenge your team to develop innovative methods and solutions. Work to remove distractions from forces afloat. Explore ideas that may increase efficiency and effectiveness in planning and execution. Our maintenance teams routinely provide world class repair capability – they have the intellect and experience to improve our processes as well.*

Optimize readiness, while realizing the constraints. *In a financially constrained environment, all requested maintenance may not be possible. You should collaborate with the ship's Commanding Officer and Commodore to ensure alignment regarding prioritization of work, with a particular focus on emergent work. With regular collaboration, an intelligent discussion of the time and resource constraints will ensure the best decisions for the nation are made.*

Support Submarine Readiness (NSSC). *Support our warfighters by assisting and guiding them in maintaining readiness: supply, personnel, legal, medical, spiritual, administrative, and public affairs. Maintain strong relationships with supporting organizations (e.g., base, medical/dental clinics, etc.) and work to align their efforts to support Submarine Force readiness and operations.*

Commanders' Guidance to Training Facility Commanding Officers

Training Facility Commanding Officers provide training resources to submarine crews during their preparation for combat and challenging operations in dangerous environments at sea. While leading your command and training submarine crews, follow the guidance below.

Your primary responsibility is to support our Commanding Officers. *The center of gravity of our undersea Force is the submarine operating independently, forward, with confidence. Since challenging operational environments are difficult to replicate during routine submarine operations, this confidence is largely gained through experience in various training facility venues. You and your instructors should strive every day to teach and mentor our submarine crews to be successful.*

Training facility teachers must be subject matter experts. *Ensure your instructors are experts in their fields by rigorous qualification standards, challenging continuing training and proficiency programs, and robust instructor assessment procedures to validate their expertise.*

Ensure training relevancy. *You must completely understand the curricula, team training scenarios, simulation, and training devices in the training enterprise to balance them with forward deployed tasking, recent intelligence and orders of battle, up-to-date tactical and navigational guidance, fleet lesson learned, and your own observations of fleet performance. You must be aware of the training trends and deficiencies observed by TYCOM and Squadron evaluations to ensure schoolhouse alignment and relevancy.*

Provide timely feedback. *Schoolhouse instructors must find the right balance of teaching and assessing their students. Training commands are not crew performance certifiers, but your assessment and feedback to submarine crews is critical to their operational success, and is a key element of the certifiers' overall assessment.*

You are a key member of the waterfront readiness partnership. *Your partnership with submarine Commanding Officers, Squadron Commanders, maintenance facilities, and other supporting commanders is essential to maximizing the readiness of our submarines and their crews for deployment. Your mentorship of submarine Commanding Officers in developing their training plans is valuable in helping them understand their training needs and determining the best solutions to fill those needs. Your teamwork with other supporting commands ensures the best overall schedule for the ship and her crew to maximize readiness.*

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