



U.S. Navy 249th Birthday Celebration Communication Plan

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BACKGROUND: Oct. 13, 2024, will mark the Navy's 249th Birthday. In 1972, Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Zumwalt designated October 13 as the Navy's official birthday, to "enhance a greater appreciation of our Navy heritage, and to provide a positive influence toward pride and professionalism in the naval service." The central theme of this year's celebration is "Warfighting Strength and Readiness" highlights our Navy's focus, that everything we do and have done is through a warfighting lens, to deliver decisive combat power. The announcement of this theme allows planners at all echelons to focus on talking points, guest speakers, and solicitations for this year's commemorations. Beginning with the establishment of our Navy in 1775 and continuing to our current modern fleet, our Navy has answered our Nation's call to service. The U.S. Navy has been the shield of the Republic for nearly 250 years. We are the most powerful navy in the world.

Navy commands will plan and execute U.S. Navy birthday commemorations in a manner consistent with applicable policy, regulations, and laws. Each year, they will synchronize their efforts in celebrating the Navy's birthday to gain the maximum institutional benefit for internal and external audiences. Institutional benefit includes:

- Increased awareness and support for the U.S. Navy.
- Enhanced appreciation of Navy missions, and history and heritage for Sailors, former Sailors, and their families.

To the maximum extent possible, fleet Navy birthday events are to be synchronized with National Capital Region (NCR) events. For optimal sequencing, all Navy birthday ceremonies (including those associated with Navy birthday balls) should, be planned to execute prior to or the same day as the NCR Navy birthday ball which will be taking place on Oct. 19, 2024.

Per [OPNAVINST 5726.8B](#) (Outreach: America's Navy, pdf) and to the extent feasible, Navy birthday events should leverage tours of Navy installations, fitness events, U.S. Navy Band performances, Navy birthday ceremonies, Navy birthday balls, Navy heritage celebrations, and similar events to raise awareness of our Navy birthday, history, and heritage. Paragraph 0507 of [SECNAVINST 5720.44C](#) (Department of the Navy Public Affairs Policy and Regulations, pdf) provides guidance concerning public engagement events appropriate for commemoration of our Navy's birthday.

PURPOSE: This plan streamlines and aligns Navy communication efforts commemorating the 249th Birthday of the U.S. Navy. It is designed to support Navy commands and staffs as they celebrate the Navy's founding and history in speeches, social media, written and broadcast materials, and in discussions with Sailors, colleagues, partners, and other key stakeholders.

MISSION: Execute Navy Birthday events in a manner that brings honor and respect upon our service.

TIMING OF CAMPAIGN: Oct. 12-19, 2024

THEME: *Warfighting Strength and Readiness*, highlights our Navy’s focus that everything we do and have done is through a warfighting lens to deliver decisive combat power.

TOPE: Celebratory, Commemorative

GOAL: Inspire esprit de corps among all Naval personnel through the commemoration of the Navy’s 249th birthday by showcasing readiness, capabilities, capacity and the Sailor, all while celebrating victories of the service and honoring our shipmates who stand and have stood the watch.

OBJECTIVES:

- Encourage Navy leaders, commands, and units to hold a Navy birthday celebration — either virtual or in-person — that uses NHHC content to engage Sailors directly to celebrate the Navy’s birthday and our shared Navy history and heritage.
- Encourage Navy leaders, commands, and units to hold Navy birthday events that use the theme and key messages of the Navy Birthday campaign.

AUDIENCES:

- Primary: Navy Sailors, Navy Families, Navy Veterans, Retirees, Senior Navy and DOD Leadership
- Secondary: American public

MESSAGING FRAMEWORK FOR NAVY BIRTHDAY THEME: *Warfighting Strength and Readiness*

| Key Message | Supporting Talking Points |
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| The U.S. Navy is always ready to defend our shores, maintain sea control, and protect our national security and economic interests. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Since our Nation’s founding, through peace, war, and every challenge in between, the U.S. Navy has stood the watch to protect America’s economic vitality, sustain our Nation’s influence, support our Allies and partners, deter conflict, and when called upon, defended our freedom through combat.• Historically our Navy has proven to be the first line of defense, ready to engage wherever needed, during peacetime or war ensuring freedom of the seas.• For generations, a strong Navy has ensured American influence across the world, expanded economic opportunities for the American people, and guaranteed the rules-based order underpinning global security and prosperity. |

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| <p>Our Navy relies on a strong, diverse and healthy force—ready at all times and focused on warfighting and leadership at every level.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The U.S. Navy’s enduring advantage is our workforce—both uniformed and civilian—across our active and Reserve components. • The Navy's focus is on executing the National Defense Strategy by optimizing its four priorities of readiness, capabilities, capacity, Sailors. • Trained, educated, and resilient American Sailors remain our asymmetric advantage and are the true source of the United States Navy’s strength. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We actively build strong warfighting teams by providing world-class training and education maintaining an edge over those who challenge us. |
| <p>Maintaining the world’s best Navy is an investment in the security and prosperity of the United States.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • America has always been a maritime nation. The seas are the lifeblood of our economy, our national security, and our way of life. • Together with the U.S. Marine Corps and Coast Guard, our Fleets deliver integrated all-domain naval power to the Joint Force in competition, crisis, and conflict. • Our allies and partners recognize U.S. naval forces as their on-scene partner for building combined maritime strength. • Supporting our Sailors with fully manned, maintained, and sustained platforms is critical for credible deterrence. |
| <p>A rules-based international order depends upon free and open oceans.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our forward posture guarantees our ability to respond to crisis and preserve a stable and secure global maritime order. • A ready, combat-credible, forward-deployed fleet is the most potent, flexible and versatile instrument of military power. |
| <p>The history, traditions, and fighting spirit of the U.S. Navy can trace directly back to USS Constitution</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USS Constitution is the world’s oldest commissioned warship afloat and played a crucial role in the Barbary Wars and the War of 1812, actively defending sea lanes from 1797 to 1855. • USS Constitution represents the earliest foundations of the joint Navy-Marine Corps Team. • USS Constitution remains in active commission and is a source of pride for all Sailors, providing a tangible connection to the Navy’s earliest foundations. |

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS: Navy leaders, commands, and units will aggressively leverage all available communication channels to share messaging about the Navy Birthday with Sailors and the public. NHHC will use:

- [Navy Birthday Commemoration Landing Page](#)
- [Naval History and Heritage Command Sextant Blog](#)
- @USNHistory Social Media Channels
 - [Naval History and Heritage Command on Facebook](#)

- [Naval History and Heritage Command on Twitter](#)
- [Naval History and Heritage Command on Instagram](#)
- [Naval History and Heritage Command on LinkedIn](#)

MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS:

| | Key Performance Indicator | Measurement |
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| 1 | Navy leadership and units hold no less than 150 events — either virtual or in-person — that use NHHC-provided key messages and tactics to engage Sailors directly with both the birthday and Navy heritage. | Track commands and units who held events via self-reports in downloadable reporting and lessons learned spreadsheet in Navy Birthday toolkit. |
| 2 | Navy commands use messages related to the theme and key messages of the Navy Birthday campaign, reaching no fewer than 5,000,000 people digitally across Navy social platforms. | Monitor and track 1) unique website visitors to pages featuring Navy Birthday-related content; and 2) reach of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn channels across the Navy. |
| 3 | On NHHC platforms, achieve an average Facebook engagement rate of 18% and a Twitter engagement rate of 15% for Navy Birthday posts. | Monitor and track engagement with posts during the campaign period. |

TACTICS:

| Fleet Tactics | Meets Objective |
|--|------------------------|
| Plan of the Day/Week Notes—(Mandatory for Navy Birthday commemoration as operational commitments permit per NAVADMIN 189/12) that can be used throughout the campaign period. | 1, 2 |
| Bell-ringing Ceremony—(Mandatory for Navy Birthday commemoration as operational commitments permit per NAVADMIN 189/12). Instills in our Sailors and public the importance and sense of pride in our Navy's history and heritage. Event honors our shipmates who stand and have stood the watch. | 1, 2 |
| Cake cutting—(Mandatory for Navy Birthday commemoration as operational commitments permit per NAVADMIN 189/12) Opportunity to reflect on our Navy's history and heritage while celebrating the Navy's 247th birthday. | 1, 2, 3 |
| Reading of SECNAV/CNO Birthday Messages—(Mandatory for Navy Birthday commemoration as operational commitments permit per NAVADMIN 189/12). Provides commands with messages from the Secretary of the Navy and Chief of Naval Operations. | 1, 2 |
| Actively share 249th Navy Birthday content throughout the campaign period on web pages and social channels, and events (virtual or in-person), | 1, 2 |

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| incorporating key messages as relevant with hashtags #AmericasWarfightingNavy | |
| Conduct ship-wide celebrations using Navy Birthday key messaging and content. | 1 |
| Display birthday materials in prominent areas throughout commands/ships, including command newsletters. | 1 |
| At quarters throughout the Birthday week, or via the 1MC, share NHHC-created POD notes and other NHHC-generated content with Sailors. | 1 |
| Publish and share original or existing blog posts related to the Navy's victories at sea, our everyday heroes, and diversity in action; amplify blogs on social media channels. | 2 |
| Monitor NHHC platforms for Navy Birthday content to share on your command's owned properties. | 2 |
| Fleet Commanders and other fleet concentration area leadership lead town halls Navy-wide during Navy Birthday week. The town-hall(s) could be live-streamed so that the discussion could be with a larger audience. | 1, 2 |
| Movie night/viewing with a discussion. | 1, 2 |
| Fun run—a run that Sailors and civilians can participate in celebrating the Navy's Birthday. | 1 |
| Moments of silence—Hold a moment of silence to reflect on those who have served before us. | 1 |
| Chiefs Mess/Wardroom Luncheons—Provide the opportunity for the Chiefs Mess and Wardroom to reflect on the Navy's history and our diversity throughout the past 249 years. A speaker could be invited to address a certain topic, or command leadership could talk about the command's contribution to the Navy. | 1, 2 |
| Command Picnic, BBQ or Fun Day—Opportunity to celebrate the Navy's Birthday and warfighting heritage. | 1, 2 |
| Navy Birthday Ball—Opportunity for units/commands to attend the annual Birthday Ball, as operationally feasible with current COCOM HP levels. | 1, 2 |
| Historians/ museums—Museums hold events or commands invite historians or relevant authors to come speak in person or virtually. | 1, 2 |
| Unit/Command History—Discuss the history of the command/unit and how the command/unit has supported Navy's warfighting efforts for 249 years. | 1, 2 |
| Wreath Laying Ceremony—Opportunity to reflect on the Navy's past and those who have gone before us. | 1 |
| Navy commands and units use their official social media accounts to engage with primary audiences on the Navy's 249th Birthday celebration. | 1, 2 |

REQUIRED FLEET PUBLIC AFFAIRS SUPPORT:

ALL:

- Plan and execute command-level Navy birthday celebrations, participate in local, and regional Navy birthday events, and report those efforts to NHHC mimosawhiting.civ@us.navy.mil subject line: Report of Local Navy Birthday Celebration/Participation) **NLT 28 OCT 2024**.
- Both virtual and in-person events should be reported. Reports should include any public engagements, interviews, and attendance numbers for commands' individual events. For POD/W notes shared with Sailors or stories and messaging over 1MC or other public address systems, please include a general number of Sailors receiving those messages.
- Report reach numbers for all social-related posts for Navy Birthday.

CHINFO:

- Disseminate the Navy Birthday Communication Plan in coordination with NHHC and provide this plan to ashore and afloat commands by 12 AUG 2024.
- Disseminate the plan with Navy and DOD leadership and coordinate key messages and tactics with key leadership within the DOD.
- Secure SECNAV, CNO, and MCPON messages/speeches/videos for inclusion in the 249th Navy Birthday Celebration Toolkit NLT 15 AUG 2024.
- Display designed birthday banner image on Navy.mil from 12-19 OCT 2024.
- Perform week-of analysis of the #Navy249 and #AmericasWarfightingNavy hashtag NLT 28 OCT 2024.

NHHC:

- Coordinate and support the execution of Navy Birthday events.
- Provide digital resources for use by Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command (USFFC); Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet (COMPACFLT); Commander, Naval Reserve Forces Command (COMRESFOR), Numbered Fleets, Type Commands, Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC), Chief of Navy Information (CHINFO), Regional Commanders, and Commanding Officers (COs) and Officers in Charge (OICs).
- Post the following resources on the NHHC website (www.history.navy.mil/birthday) no later than 19 AUG 2024:
 - Plan of the day historical notes for the week of Navy Birthday
 - Template for Navy Birthday bell ringing
 - Navy Birthday graphics
- Collect information from USFFC, COMPACFLT, CNIC, COMRESFOR, CHINFO, and Navy District Washington (NDW) regarding specific celebratory activities.
- Produce Plan of the Day/Week notes for the week leading up to the celebration.
- Publish Navy Birthday Execute Order for release as NAVADMIN by DNS NLT 19 AUG 2024.

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