

Franchetti Takes the Helm After Gilday's Relinquishment of Office



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WASHINGTON – Adm. Mike Gilday relinquished the office of the Chief of Naval Operations after successfully concluding his four-year tenure as the Navy's top military leader in a ceremony at the United States Naval Academy, Aug. 14.

Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti, who has been nominated by President Biden to be the next CNO, will perform the duties of the CNO until someone is formally appointed to that role in accordance with law.

Gilday became the 32nd CNO in August 2019. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the CNO acts as an advisor to the President of the United States, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. Under direction of the Secretary of the Navy, the CNO is responsible for the command, utilization of resources, and operating efficiency of naval forces and shore activities.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin spoke at the ceremony highlighting the importance of the Navy, and the increasingly critical role the service plays in strategic competition.

“To tackle the national security challenges of the 21st century, we need our Navy more than ever,” said Austin. “We rely on our Navy to project American power, to protect

American interests; we rely on our Navy to bolster our unmatched network of allies and partners, from the South China Sea to the Caribbean; and we rely on our Navy to deter conflict and keep the peace.”

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro acted as the presiding officer and keynote speaker of the ceremony. Similar to Austin, Del Toro emphasized Gilday’s “transformational leadership” and prioritization of readiness during an era of strategic competition.

“Admiral Gilday boldly charged forward, leading and inspiring Sailors at every level, from the tactical, to the operational, to the strategic... he’s also championed our strategic relationships with allies and partners,” said Del Toro. “He served as our 32nd Chief of Naval Operations during a pivotal – and perhaps sometimes even a bit chaotic – time for our fleet, for our Nation, and for our friends around the world – many of whom are represented here today.”

For his part, Gilday reflected on the adaptation and change the Navy has undergone in adjusting to a new and challenging security environment, while also calling for the Department to “act with urgency and purpose” in order to maintain maritime superiority. He expressed confidence and optimism in the Navy’s direction, while praising Sailors and families around the Fleet for their resilience and service.

“We have the best Navy in the world,” said Gilday. “Every day, our people are standing the watch, operating globally and at the tip of the spear, strengthening our alliances and partnerships.”

As he departed, he left the Fleet with a message of service, to be leaders and serve with a purpose.

“Embody humility; selflessness; complete transparency; acknowledge the value of every Sailor and civilian; and always do the right thing, especially when it is difficult,” said

Gilday. "Have total ownership of your job and duty... because when you are called upon to sail into harm's way, your mission is to fight and win for our nation."

Gilday described Adm. Franchetti as exceptionally well-qualified to perform the duties of CNO during this uncertain and unprecedented leadership transition.

"I am proud that she will be my CNO," said Gilday. "She is a Fleet Sailor, an operator, a warfighter. She has already made the Navy better as our Vice Chief of Naval Operations, the Navy is in good hands with her at the helm."

During the ceremony, Franchetti and Del Toro both thanked Gilday, his wife Linda Gilday, as well as their entire family for their service and leadership throughout the years.

"Admiral Gilday and his wife Linda have dedicated so much of themselves and their time over the past four years focusing on quality of life and quality of service issues to ensure our Sailors and their families have the resources they need to be resilient during their time in service to our Navy and our nation," said Del Toro. "I especially want to highlight Linda's significant accomplishments in supporting our Navy families and spouses. You have been a shining example for our service members and families of a remarkable professional and an extraordinary public servant; we express our deepest gratitude to you for your devotion to our Navy family."

VCNO also stressed the importance of a seamless transition with Gilday's departure.

"As we look to the horizon and prepare for the challenges that lie ahead, I will act with a sense of urgency to ensure our Sailors have everything they need to maintain our warfighting edge," said Franchetti.

She added, "For the past 247 years, the U.S. Navy has stood the watch. We, along with the Marine Corps are America's Away

Team, around the world and around the clock. As we look to the future, our mission continues, uninterrupted and unabated. We fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows so that others can too.”

In the absence of a confirmed 33rd Chief of Naval Operations, and in accordance with 10 U.S.C. 8035, Franchetti assumes the responsibilities of the CNO as the current Vice Chief of Naval Operations.

Adm. Franchetti was nominated by President Biden to be the 33rd Chief of Naval Operations this past July. If confirmed, she would be the first woman service chief and member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.