

New CNR Takes Helm at Office of Naval Research



Chief of Naval Research (CNR) Rear Adm. Kurt Rothenhaus addresses the audience during a change-of-command ceremony for the Office of Naval Research on June 16, 2023. Held at the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D.C., the event saw Rothenhaus succeed Rear Adm. Lorin Selby, who retired after a distinguished naval career, as CNR. (U.S. Navy photo by Michael Walls)

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For Immediate Release: June 21, 2023

By Warren Duffie, Jr., Office of Naval Research

ARLINGTON, Va.—The Office of Naval Research (ONR) ushered in a new era of leadership on Friday, June 16, as Rear Adm. Kurt Rothenhaus – was sworn in as the new Chief of Naval Research (CNR).

The change-of-command ceremony took place at the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D.C. Remarks were given by the Hon. Frederick Stefany, assistant secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition, as well as Adm. Daryl Caudle, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command.

ONR supports science efforts around the world, from basic and conceptual research to applied research and quick-turnaround technologies requested by Sailors and Marines. Established in 1946 by public law, ONR's mission is to “plan, foster and encourage scientific research in recognition of its paramount importance as related to the maintenance of future naval power, and the preservation of national security.”

“I’m excited by the opportunity to serve the Navy and nation as chief of naval research,” said Rothenhaus. “ONR is a vital organization ensuring the Sailors and Marines we have the privilege of serving have the weaponry and technology needed to prevail, now and in years to come. I feel a sense of urgency, as we face increasingly capable potential adversaries.”

Concurrent with the duties of CNR, Rothenhaus will also serve as the Naval STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) Executive.

He takes ONR’s helm after serving as the program executive officer, Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence (PEO C4I).

Rothenhaus succeeds Rear Adm. Lorin Selby, himself a decorated submarine commander, naval engineer and acquisition officer, who is retiring after a distinguished naval career.

“ONR has an inspiring history of groundbreaking scientific achievements,” said Rothenhaus. “I’m honored to join the team – its sense of mission and passion for innovation are exceptional. I look forward to continuing the terrific work and strategic agility that Rear Adm. Selby and the ONR team have accomplished during his time as CNR.”

Selby had a remarkable tenure as CNR. He assumed his role in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic and he implemented a vision for [reimagining naval power](#) – “the small, the agile and the many,” which involves small, unmanned, autonomous platforms that can be constructed, tested and adapted quickly; can be built in large numbers; and are less expensive than larger platforms.

To spur faster, more collaborative and more effective testing and experimentation, Selby promoted the ONR-sponsored [SCOUT](#) initiative, a multiagency campaign to identify new ways to bring novel capabilities to warfighter challenges, experiment

with them in realistic operating conditions, and operationalize them in partnership with the fleet and force.

Selby also helped lead efforts to revitalize the Department of the Navy's [Naval STEM Coordination Office](#), and he emphasized greater virtual and remote-learning activities in order to remove geographic barriers, increase the number of students reached, and bolster its commitment to diversity.

Warren Duffie Jr. is a contractor for ONR Corporate Strategic Communications.