

Better Together: What the Surface Force Gains Through Collaboration

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The Surface Warfare community met August 20-23 at a number of seminars and symposiums in to review the efforts to make our Surface Force more effective and lethal.



SAN DIEGO (Aug. 23, 2018) Vice Adm. Richard A. Brown, Commander, Naval Surface Force Pacific, speaks at the Surface Navy Association's 20th annual symposium on board Naval Base San Diego on Aug. 23, 2018. SNA was incorporated in 1985 to promote greater coordination and communication among those in the military, business, and academic communities who share a common interest in surface warfare while supporting the activities of the Navy's surface forces. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Alex Millar.

Starting the week off with the Retired Surface Warfare Flag Officer Training Symposium (RSWFOTS) and leading into the active duty Surface Warfare Flag Officer Training Symposium (SWFOTS), flag officers from the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) down met to discuss the latest in Surface Warfare training improvements and guidance. These training symposiums are annual leadership mentoring and training events that provide flag officers from the surface community a venue to discuss the Navy's current and future needs so that naval assets can better support the maritime strategy. More than 60 Surface Flag Officers met in San Diego with a list of objectives – one of which was how to continue to improve current and future readiness, while making an impact at the deckplate Sailor level. The highlight of this two day event was the time that the Flag Officers were able to spend interacting with our Surface Warriors.

Later in the week, the CNO visited the Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center (SMWDC) (<https://href.li/?https://www.dvidshub.net/news/289905/lethal-capable-ready-cno-visits-surface-community-warfighting-development-center>), and Commander, Naval Surface Forces Pacific, Vice Adm. Brown addressed the San Diego waterfront during the keynote speech at the Surface Navy Association (SNA) West Symposium. Brown referenced the CNO's remarks on high velocity learning, recalling his own command philosophy (<https://href.li/?http://www.public.navy.mil/surfor/Pages/Command-Philosophy.aspx>) of good stewardship, professional development, and safety.

"A crew that is well trained, well qualified, and educated is a crew that knows their ship, knows their ship's missions, and will be able to take that ship into battle, fight, and win," said Brown.

He also added, "The biggest risk is the balance between this insatiable need to go do things, and the requirement to build readiness, capability, and competency. You can't generate readiness for readiness' sake. You generate readiness, and then turn that readiness into lethality."

To ensure that standard is met, the Surface Force is addressing the concern of organizational drift into failure by meeting it with data-based analysis, addressing the identified six traits of a mishap, and integrating solutions into the Surface Force that directly mitigate the occurrence of those six traits.

The six traits are:

- o Someone decided not to or did not perform a specific required action or protocol that they had been trained, qualified, and certified to perform.
- o The ship, crew, or watch team had a previous near miss in often similar circumstances, but no explicit action was taken to correct potential causes.
- o Poor log keeping for the entire duration of the period examined by investigators.
- o Ineffective risk identification and mitigation in operational and daily planning.
- o Lack of watch team coordination.
- o Mishap ships were generally regarded as above average performers prior to the mishap.

In addition to addressing the root causes of these six traits, the Surface Force is working to improve the [SWO career path](https://href.li/?https://news.usni.org/2018/06/28/new-career-path-surface-warfare-officers-stresses-fundamentals-training-first-ship-time-sea) (<https://href.li/?https://news.usni.org/2018/06/28/new-career-path-surface-warfare-officers-stresses-fundamentals-training-first-ship-time-sea>) to enhance leadership at sea. [Changing the SWO qualification process](https://href.li/?https://www.public.navy.mil/surfor/Pages/CNSF-Announces-Changes-to-the-Surface-Warfare-Officer-SWO-Qualification-Instruction.aspx) (<https://href.li/?https://www.public.navy.mil/surfor/Pages/CNSF-Announces-Changes-to-the-Surface-Warfare-Officer-SWO-Qualification-Instruction.aspx>) and introducing a mariner's logbook, similar in concept to an aviation logbook, are just some of the ways the Surface community is adapting. Many of these new policies are introduced and explained in depth during conferences such as SWFOTS and SNA West.

These events afford the opportunity for flag leadership across the Fleet to meet together and discuss efforts to improve the Surface Force, as the community continues to maintain and improve its warfighting readiness, emphasizing safety and effective risk management.

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