

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY BOARD OF VISITORS**

**July 21, 2026
Library of Congress, Washington D.C.**

The Board of Visitors meeting took place at the Library of Congress on July 21st, 2026. The meeting started at 0900 EST with a photo of all members in attendance and the U.S. Naval Academy Leadership. The Chairman opened the session at 0905 EST. Members of the public were welcome for the open session.

Members Present: Senator Dan Sullivan (Chairman); Representative Rob Wittman (Vice Chairman); Senator Chris Van Hollen; Representative Christopher Deluzio; Representative Ronny Jackson; Representative Derrick Van Orden; Mr. Walt Nauta; Mr. Sean Spicer; Mr. Earl Ehrhart.

Meeting Agenda

Chairman's Opening Remarks

Superintendent Update

- Completing the Circle
- New USNA Team Members
- Macdonough Hall Updates
- Strategic Plan and OPT Updates
- YP Next

Commandant Update

Midshipman Spotlight

Provost Update

Athletic Director Update

Admissions Update

Chairman's Opening Remarks: Senator Sullivan, USNA BoV Chairman, addressed the Board with opening remarks on the busy summer training period across the fleet. Midshipmen are conducting summer training globally aboard U.S. Navy ships and submarines, embedded with aviation units, and with various Marine Corps units throughout the Fleet. Senator Sullivan reported that \$86 million for the stormwater management facility was authorized in last year's NDAA, but not appropriated. He noted the funding was included again in this year's NDAA, in both the House and Senate markups, with the Senate having marked up its version approximately three weeks prior to the meeting. He characterized the project as a strategic necessity recognized by the Board, and expressed optimism that the funds will be appropriated this year given its inclusion in both chambers' authorization bills. The Chairman discussed a provision he and Senator Sheehy secured in the NIL bill marked up in the Senate Commerce Committee, on which he also sits. The provision codifies into law the protections established by the President's Executive Order safeguarding the Army-Navy game window, specifically, one hour before scheduled kickoff through 30 minutes after the scheduled conclusion of the game. This legislation, if passed, would ensure the window cannot be altered. He noted the broader NIL bill,

led by Senator Cruz with bipartisan work alongside Senator Cantwell, included hearings in which NCAA leadership went on record affirming the significance of the Army-Navy game, even as some conferences (Big Ten, SEC) reportedly remain opposed to the other aspects of the bill more broadly. The Chairman emphasized that Navy and Marine Corps forces remain in harm's way, noting that troops were killed in action over the weekend. He commended the Superintendent for a video sent to Midshipmen at the onset of OPERATION EPIC FURY, calling it an important reminder of the purpose of the U.S. Naval Academy. Finally, Senator Sullivan highlighted that the Academy's applicant numbers remain strong, continuing to outpace peer institutions.

Superintendent's Update: LtGen Borgschulte provided the Superintendent's update, opening with a brief personal note that as he closes out his first year in the role (approaching 11 months) he was surprised that the summer was proving far busier than anticipated. He reviewed the agenda and introduced new members of the leadership team, including the new Commandant of Midshipmen, Captain Clint Cornell, who succeeded Captain AJ Jackson's service as interim Commandant, and was returning to the position of Deputy Commandant. The Superintendent thanked the Board for its support on the Army-Navy game protections, noting the timing was especially helpful given concurrent College Football Playoff discussions. He outlined his strategic vision to expand Army-Navy into a "Super Bowl-like," fleet-week-style experience, extending beyond the game itself to a full week of events designed to boost recruiting for the entire military, by connecting the public with the military, and extend well past the two academies' own interests to benefit the broader relationship between the nation and its armed forces. He reviewed the period since the Board's last meeting, spanning graduation and Induction Day, and previewed updates on MacDonough Hall, the Academy's primary athletic facility for non-varsity athlete midshipmen, nearing operational readiness after years of work, including his vision for its role going forward, and an admissions update highlighting record applicant numbers this year.

Completing the Circle: LtGen Borgschulte reported that graduation, held outdoors despite the rain, was deliberately kept outdoors to accommodate the roughly 25,000 attendees, well beyond the alternate venue Alumni Hall's approximate 5,000-person capacity and emphasized the importance of that day for families and friends. He commended Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dan "Razin" Caine, the ceremony's guest speaker, who remained outdoors in the rain for the duration, shaking hands with every graduating midshipmen, despite being thoroughly drenched by the end of the ceremony. The Superintendent noted the graduating class landed on target, commissioning approximately 25% Marine Corps and 75% Navy officers. Senator Van Hollen asked whether the 25% cap on Marine Corps commissions is set by statute. The Superintendent clarified that it is governed not by statute but by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Chief of Naval Personnel and the Marine Corps. He noted the percentage is periodically reviewed with Navy and Marine Corps leadership based on the needs of the various communities and specialties. The Superintendent agreed the Academy should not exceed commissioning more than 25% of graduates into the Marine Corps. The Superintendent described I-Day for the Class of 2030 as a powerful and emotional experience for incoming plebes and their families. He recounted the day's traditions, helping the new plebes shave their heads and cut their hair, uniform issue, and the Oath of Office ceremony's

conclusion, in which plebes walk into Bancroft Hall as the doors close loudly behind them, an emotional moment for the parents left outside.

New USNA Team Members: LtGen Borgschulte introduced several new members of his leadership team with the first being the new Commandant of Midshipmen, Captain Clint Cornell, USN. The Superintendent described a rigorous selection process which involved reviewing a field of ten Navy O-6 candidates before selecting Captain Cornell. He and his wife Gitte personally interviewed Captain Cornell and his wife, CAPT Jodie Cornell, as part of the process. The Superintendent next welcomed Colonel Scott Cuomo, USMC as incoming Chief of Staff, soon to relieve the outgoing Chief of Staff, Colonel Roy Nicka, USMC who is moving to a J8 role at the Pentagon to support his continued career progression. Colonel Cuomo comes to USNA fresh from Marine Corps major command as the Commanding Officer of Weapons Training Battalion. While in command, he ran the Marine Corps Drone Attack Team and brings strong connections in autonomous systems to USNA. This is an area tied directly to the Superintendent's priority of integrating autonomous systems into training. Finally, the Superintendent welcomed Captain Bill Fallon, USN, who recently completed his change of command at the Naval Academy Preparatory School (NAPS) in Newport, Rhode Island. He noted NAPS' importance as the feeder school preparing and supplying future Midshipmen to the Academy.

Macdonough Hall Updates: The Superintendent provided an update on MacDonough Hall, one of USNA's key athletic training facilities. The MacDonough Hall renovation has spanned approximately five years. The Superintendent reported the project is now nearing completion, with several teams already training in the facility, including the varsity gymnastics team, volleyball team, and boxing - including boxing as part of Plebe Summer. The facility includes a new double-decker area with cardio equipment, weights, and a basketball court, and is intended primarily for non-varsity athletes. A pool is also part of the facility, but is not yet fully ready. The Superintendent identified climate control and the pool pumps as the most difficult engineering challenges, given the age of the building and its custom, one-of-a-kind air handling system. The building has now been fully sealed and climate-controlled for the first time in its history. A formal grand opening is planned for late August/early September.

Strategic Plans and OPT Updates: The Superintendent reported that following a June leadership offsite, the Academy is updating its Strategic Plan 2030, with completion expected in September. To avoid waiting on a finalized strategic document before taking action, he stood up several Operational Planning Teams (OPTs), each led by an Navy O-6, with a supporting team of experts assigned to a specific functional target. These teams report to him weekly with progress updates and any policy changes or resources needed to accelerate their work. **Branding:** The Superintendent noted that while USNA is well known within its own circles, that recognition doesn't extend broadly to the public, particularly on the West Coast and outside the D.C. area. He framed improved branding as beneficial for attracting stronger faculty and students, and for helping the broader public understand the value of military service. **Admissions:** The Superintendent reported ongoing efforts to increase expertise and resourcing within the admissions office. He announced anticipated changes to the Candidate Fitness Assessment (CFA), including eliminating the basketball throw after a consensus found no correlation with performance on the Navy's Physical Readiness Test (PRT). Changes will be in favor of more

functional measures such as sit-ups or planks and pull ups. He expressed interest maintaining a CFA that is standardized across the service academies, citing recent discussions with all of the heads of the service academies at the annual COSAS (Conference of the Service Academy Superintendents). USNA will continue using its current CFA this year with changes planned for next year. He raised the possibility of adding a "grit scale" as an additional admissions indicator, citing his admiration for Angela Duckworth's work on grit. He noted a key challenge: existing grit-assessment questions can be gamed by applicants, so the Academy is developing its own questions designed to capture mental and academic toughness as well as the ability to recover after failure without framing the question in a way that makes clear what the "right" answer would be. Artificial Intelligence: The Superintendent described a push to increase USNA's higher/more advanced processing/computing power capabilities, citing admissions as one use case, processing decades of past applications to identify trend lines. He noted USNA's recent team, including the Provost, visited Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) to evaluate their NVIDIA supercomputer as a possible bridging solution while USNA builds/expands its own capability. Supe's Project Program: The Superintendent described this initiative as leveraging USNA's own faculty expertise to solve challenges internally, citing the CFA study as one example of faculty-led work. The program also encompasses robotics and autonomous systems (RAS).

A video was played on YP Next and RAS Integration

YP Next: The Superintendent outlined plans to convert Yard Patrol (YP) training craft into "motherships" for autonomous systems training, while preserving the traditional seamanship and navigation instruction that remains foundational to a Naval Academy education. He emphasized that midshipmen upon graduation must be ready to critically integrate robotic autonomous systems into warfighting, regardless of whether they commission as a Surface Warfare Officer, aviator, or other designator, and this effort will prepare them for the emerging technology increasingly used across the Fleet. He identified several partners supporting this effort: the University of Delaware's robotics and autonomous systems lab, the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory, the Coast Guard Academy and Coast Guard Research and Development Center, and key special operations units. The plan is to pilot the concept before scaling it broadly. As an illustration, the Superintendent described a "parade of drones" concept at Worden Field, in which midshipmen would write the code to execute a coordinated drone display. This is an exercise intended to build critical thinking about autonomous systems and draw talented, technically-minded applicants to the Academy. He noted that the VCNO was impressed with USNA's efforts during his recent visit to USNA. He also referenced incorporating lessons learned from the conflict in Ukraine, such as using drones to ferry fiber-optic cable ship-to-ship to establish secure, jam-resistant communications links. The Superintendent reported USNA expects delivery next month of unmanned surface vessels for hands-on midshipman use, in concert with an industry partner describing it as a combined research project. Senator Sullivan asked whether these unmanned vessels would become part of the Fleet or are being borrowed. The Superintendent clarified they are borrowed, under the partnership as a combined research project, which also includes joint work on tactics such as conducting man-overboard drills using small robotic assets. Representative Wittman asked whether R&D exposure and fleet-specific tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) training should be treated as two distinct tracks. The Superintendent agreed, noting midshipmen remain undergraduates focused on foundational skills, but affirmed the Academy will work to expose them to relevant TTPs so they arrive at the

fleet primed to offer innovative ideas to their commanding officers. He noted additional RAS work underway, including a subsurface unmanned vehicle, already demonstrated to the VCNO, capable of locating objects on the seafloor even in low visibility. He closed by framing one of USNA's differentiators as the combination of world-class faculty and academics, world-class labs, and direct access to the Severn River waterfront in a single location, allowing midshipmen to carry academic foundations through experimentation into practical warfighting application.

End of Update Discussion: Senator Sullivan raised the branding OPT, noting that the Naval Academy may be operating under a false assumption that the broader public already understands what the Naval Academy is and what it represents. He tied the discussion to the earlier Army-Navy conversation, expressing hope that the game-window protections will ultimately be codified in statute through the NIL legislation rather than resting solely on the executive order, and reiterated his enthusiasm for building the game into a "Super Bowl-like" recruiting moment. He asked the Superintendent for initial thinking coming out of the branding OPT. The Superintendent agreed, noting USNA enjoys strong regional name recognition but is less well known nationally, a gap with direct recruiting implications. He described Army-Navy as an opportunity larger than either academy or even the Navy itself, showcasing discipline and grit to the broader public regardless of whether viewers ultimately join the military. He outlined a vision for a full week of events surrounding the game, modeled on the Naval Academy's America 250th experience in New York and past Fleet Weeks. Lastly, the Superintendent highlighted USNA's growing social media presence as an effective tool, citing a recent Friday-night walkout video that generated strong engagement with young Americans, and asked for Congress's help amplifying the Academy's positive stories rather than only its challenges. He highlighted his request for additional Marine and Sailor billets in the public affairs office to support this work. As a further example of visibility efforts, he pointed to a NASCAR sponsorship featuring Naval Academy branding on the car, which has been well received, and expressed interest in expanding similar partnerships while preserving the Academy's traditions. The Superintendent closed by tying branding back to the broader value of a Naval Academy education, noting that much of what the Board saw today; the labs, the facilities, all remain largely unseen by the public. He invited the full Board to Annapolis for a deeper walkthrough of the Academy's programs, so members can better understand and help speak to its work. This concluded the Superintendent's update, with the meeting transitioning next to remarks from Commandant Cornell.

Commandant's Update: In his first address to the Board, Captain Clint Cornell, USN opened by expressing humility and honor at serving as the 92nd Commandant, and outlined his intent to carry out the Superintendent's vision within Bancroft Hall. He shared a brief personal background: a member of the USNA Class of 2001 and classmate of Colonel Cuomo, he grew up in Dickson City, Pennsylvania, outside Scranton, and came to the Academy directly from high school. He swam all four years at USNA, earning Hall of Fame recognition and competing at the Olympic trials, and served as a Battalion Commander as a midshipman. He was commissioned as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) officer, initially serving aboard a minesweeper as a Surface Warfare Officer before EOD training. His subsequent tours took him to Bahrain, Guam, Virginia Beach, and San Diego/Coronado, where he most recently commanded West Coast EOD forces. Captain Cornell then outlined three pillars guiding his approach to midshipman development: Warrior Mindset: Relentless Warfighting Excellence. USNA's core mission is producing unrestricted line officers ready for combat on day one of commissioning. He

emphasized that the Academy's job is building competence in fundamentals, with more specialized training (aviation, surface warfare, special operations, etc.) occurring after commissioning. Team Oriented Leadership: Forged in Adversity. Shifting midshipmen from an individual to a team mindset, beginning with followership, while giving upperclassmen (2/c and 1/c) early leadership opportunities within what he called USNA's "leadership laboratory." He tied this to setting and holding a high standard of servant leadership and accountability.

Character: The Bedrock of Accountability and Discipline. Emphasizing that officers must make the right call even when others around them are pushing a different path, framing this as essential to properly taking care of the sailors and Marines they will one day lead. He noted all of these elements, academics, athletics, leadership development, work together as a unified effort, and there were no questions following his remarks.

Midshipman Spotlight: Midshipman 1/C Mikayla Williams, Plebe Summer Regimental Commander, addressed the Board, describing Plebe Summer as a roughly seven-week indoctrination period transitioning incoming plebes, Class of 2030 into the Brigade. She emphasized that the training is equally important for the detailer staff (second- and first-class midshipmen), who gain early leadership development, practice in peer accountability, and, for first-class detailers, the opportunity to lead peers directly. She described the guiding philosophy as applying "positive pressure with a purpose" at all times, expanding both plebes and detailers' comfort zones to build a growth mindset, while instilling military customs (proper uniform wear, rendering salutes), discipline, and a warfighting mindset. She noted these lessons carry forward into the academic year and eventual service in the Fleet. As a positive indicator, she cited that the Class of 2030 achieved a higher pass rate on the Initial Physical Readiness Test (I-PRT: a 1.5-mile run, plank, and push-ups) compared to prior classes, despite taking the test only four days into Plebe Summer before completing USNA's full physical training program. She also noted plebes complete roughly 500 individual training events over the summer. She reiterated her own role as Regimental Commander, overseeing approximately 300 detailer staff and 1,100 plebes, and serving as a liaison between active-duty staff and midshipmen alongside the Officer in Charge, Captain Farrell, USN. She credited the experience with building her confidence and public speaking ability, both of which she said were previously personal weaknesses.

Midshipmen Spotlight Discussion: Representative Wittman asked about the biggest challenge in bringing underperforming incoming plebes up to standard, referencing the previous year's final PRT pass-rates. MIDN 1/C Williams responded that plebes arrive at USNA for many different personal reasons, and that detailers use creative, individualized approaches while instilling the shared purpose of serving the country. Representative Jackson asked how the CFA will change to ensure candidates are ready for the rigors of Plebe Summer and where the CFA's basketball-throw component originated. The Superintendent said the component has been in use for decades and does test core strength but is not, overall, a good assessment. He noted the initial PRT failure rate has already declined this year, and that USNA did not accept fitness waivers this cycle, turning away some I-Day candidates who would have been accepted in prior years. Senator Sullivan asked whether the goal of Plebe Summer is to bring everyone through with remediation, or as with Officer Candidate School, to expect a known attrition rate, and followed up by asking MIDN 1/C Williams for her personal goal as Regimental Commander. The Superintendent said his priority is maintaining high standards, understanding that some midshipmen will not make it through. MIDN 1/C Williams answered that instilling high standards early, including among the

detailer staff matters most to her. Senator Sullivan followed up, asking whether USNA has a standard or average summer attrition rate. The Superintendent said he would provide the exact figure, but stated plainly that the Academy will help those who put in the work and can lead with lethality, but will not apologize for those who do not make it, noting separations have trended slightly higher this year due to his commitment to maintain a high standard. He described personally completing a plebe workout (including the combat confidence/obstacle course) that week and finding it genuinely difficult, underscoring that the training is not "fluff." He also brought attention to injury prevention (e.g., stress fractures), and that some plebes arrived having been told to prepare physically beforehand but had not done so. Mr. Erhart asked about visibility into Key Performance Indicator (KPI) data correlating admissions/CFA standards with outcomes across recent classes (2028–2030) as CFA components change, to help the Board track the impact of raising candidate fitness standards. The Superintendent agreed this would validate the underlying hypothesis that the CFA is a poor predictive assessment, and announced plans that USNA will increase the weight of the physical fitness component in the Whole-Person Multiple score used by admissions to motivate stronger candidate fitness. Mr. Spicer asked for clarification that simply passing the PRT is not sufficient. The Superintendent confirmed this, noting body composition standards are factored in as well.

Provost's Update: Dr. Firebaugh presented USNA's AI integration effort, organized around several pillars: policy and governance, faculty and staff development, and computing resources. Policy and Governance: A pilot framework, included in Board binders, defines clear expectations for AI usage by class and assignment. Departments are also developing policies for assignments where AI use should be restricted, with safeguards to ensure that's clearly communicated to midshipmen. She characterized the overall approach as deliberately experimental: pilot, measure results, remain transparent about both successes and shortcomings, then iterate. Faculty and Staff Development. USNA has run multi-year AI workshops at the Stockdale Center, mornings spent learning tools, afternoons on applied projects, with results shared later, reaching nearly 100 faculty and staff to date. She cited practical examples, such as faculty building custom "Gemini gem" chatbots for their courses, tied into the Superintendent's Project Program, which includes AI-focused admissions projects. Computing Resources. USNA currently uses enterprise Google Gemini and plans to upgrade to a more advanced version. Dr. Firebaugh recently visited the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), which partners with NVIDIA on a GPU cluster USNA may gain limited access to as a bridge while building its own infrastructure, and plans a visit to the University of Florida to study their AI-integrated curriculum. Core Curriculum Integration. AI is being incorporated into every major and into the core curriculum itself. Dr. Firebaugh emphasized that USNA's core curriculum is not a general-education requirement but a warfighting-focused common skill set. A reference memo lists roughly 30 AI/robotics-and-autonomous-systems (RAS) learning objectives, concentrated in but not limited to, engineering, computing, and weapons. As an example, the Cyber I/Cyber II course sequence is being revised to retain core computing, cybersecurity, and electromagnetic-spectrum fundamentals while adding AI/RAS content and hands-on drone work, dropping lower-priority legacy material such as a buffer-overflow deep dive. A new AI/robotics/autonomous-systems elective is being piloted this year.

End of Provost's Update Discussion: Representative DeLuzio asked whether this shift would meaningfully change the balance between STEM and humanities, noting USNA already carries a

heavier STEM emphasis than sister academies. Dr. Firebaugh confirmed USNA's core curriculum includes more STEM content than peer institutions, citing six engineering courses within the core alone. Dr. Firebaugh described her guiding philosophy that schools and divisions must work within their existing time and resource footprint rather than requesting additional resources for curriculum changes, forcing disciplined prioritization. She called curriculum design a "team sport" requiring departments to understand what's happening elsewhere, citing the YP Next initiative as an example of cross-functional collaboration. The Superintendent added that time itself is a constraint limiting how much can be added to the curriculum, and asked Dr. Firebaugh to also address how outside input from the fleet and from graduates factors into the process. Dr. Firebaugh outlined a multi-step feedback process: an initial internal review of governing curriculum documents and national defense strategy, circulated academy-wide for feedback; input from rotational faculty recently returning from (or headed back to) the fleet; a forthcoming alumni survey; and outreach to commanding officers of recent graduates for feedback on how well USNA prepared them. All input will feed the Core Working Group, and the full set of learning objectives will be made public, something she noted has not been done before. The Superintendent added a plan to survey graduates roughly one to two years out on which training proved most valuable in hindsight. Dr. Firebaugh shared a personal reflection from 2007 (having begun teaching electrical engineering at USNA in 2001): a former core-curriculum student, then deployed and teaching partner-nation forces about power systems, emailed her for help with three-phase power, an experience she said reshaped her view that core curriculum instruction, not just major-specific teaching, is the most consequential part of her work. Representative Van Orden asked how long it takes to implement a curriculum change once identified, for example, adding more three-phase power content. Dr. Firebaugh explained small changes can take effect as soon as the next semester, given end-of-semester course assessments, while large-scale core curriculum changes take longer due to the number of course-years affected. Schools and divisions are responsible for interim solutions for classes that won't receive a full redesign for instance, inserting robotics/AI content into an existing junior-level controls course via updated labs this fall, even as a dedicated new plebe-level RAS course is developed for future classes. She framed this as balancing near-term improvement against longer-term redesign, following a philosophy of not letting the perfect be the enemy of the good.

Accreditation Update: Dr. Firebaugh reported that USNA has been accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education since 1947 and, following a supplemental information request after the Commission's last visit, remains accredited through the 2032–33 academic year. She noted Middle States revised its accreditation standards effective July 1, removing DEI-related provisions from its 15th edition. She also described her separate involvement with the Commission for Public Higher Education (CPHE), a newer accreditor seeking federal recognition (targeted for 2027) that already accredits institutions across several southern states and has been deemed eligible under a new Department of Education process; she has been asked to chair CPHE's first peer evaluation visit of a school. Mr. Erhart noted he had spent considerable time researching accreditation alternatives, drawing on more than 30 years of higher-education experience and consulting outside experts, and thanked Dr. Firebaugh for her engagement on the issue. He characterized the legacy Middle States accreditation process as bureaucratically burdensome, and expressed skepticism that its recent standards revision reflects a genuine philosophical shift, noting it came only after strong pressure from the Deputy Education Secretary and that Middle States was among the last major accreditors to act. He noted the Air Force Academy and West Point boards are also examining non-legacy accreditation alternatives,

and asked to formally bring a Board recommendation on the subject at an appropriate future meeting. The Chairman thanked Mr. Erhart for his depth of engagement, noted USNA faces no immediate need to re-seek accreditation given its status through 2032–33, and characterized his research as surfacing a possible misalignment between USNA's mission and some accreditation bodies, particularly those in the Mid-Atlantic region. He deferred any formal Board action to a future meeting, once more fully briefed. The Superintendent echoed appreciation for the Board's transparency and expertise on the issue.

Athletic Director Update: Mr. Michael Kelly, completing his first year as Athletic Director, thanked the Board for its support and provided an athletics update. Football. Navy football posted back-to-back 11-win seasons, 21 wins over the last two seasons (a mark exceeded by only 7 programs in the country), and won the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy in back-to-back years. The team finished tied for first in the American Athletic Conference, losing out only on tiebreakers, with a stated goal of becoming the first service academy to qualify for the College Football Playoff. Mr. Kelly noted this year marks the 100th anniversary of Navy football's 1926 national championship, with plans for a commemorative throwback uniform. The program produced three NFL draft picks over the last two seasons, and this year's preseason media polls picked Navy to win the American Athletic Conference (AAC) for the first time in program history, which he credited to coaching staff continuity and midshipman development, describing a "next man up" mentality given typical roster turnover. Army-Navy Game / College Football Playoff Advocacy. Mr. Kelly noted the Superintendent has dedicated a full OPT to maximize the opportunity presented by the Army-Navy game. Senator Sullivan asked whether the Board should send a follow-up letter ahead of the College Football Playoff (CFP) Committee's August 10 meeting on CFP expansion, referencing both the President's executive order and the new NIL legislation provision, noting that when money is at stake, written appeals may carry limited weight on their own. The group agreed a letter would still help reinforce the Board's continued engagement and discussed favoring an appreciative tone rather than a critical one. On game locations, he confirmed New York (this December) and Philadelphia (next year) as hosts, with about a dozen cities having expressed interest in future years. Senator Sullivan asked about a potential West Coast venue, given the game's historically East Coast focus; Mr. Kelly said West Coast interest exists and is under consideration but there would be obvious logistical concerns surrounding the Brigade of Midshipment and Corps of Cadets. NFL Draft Highlight. A video was shown of Navy's all-time leading receiver, 2ndLt Eli Heidenreich, being selected by the Pittsburgh Steelers in the NFL Draft, a walk-on recruit with family ties to the Navy and Marine Corps, made possible under newer rules permitting midshipmen to defer military service to pursue professional athletics. Broader Athletics Success. Mr. Kelly highlighted a strong year across Navy athletics: men's and women's basketball won conference titles in the same year for the first time in program history; the Academy claimed 14 total conference championships; the rugby team reached the national championship game; and a Navy gymnast earned a top-5 national ranking. He noted USNA's Learfield Directors' Cup ranking, a measure of overall athletic success across all sports and institutions, improved from 102nd to 73rd this year, the best finish ever among service academies and higher than every American Athletic Conference and Patriot League school, including Power Four programs with far larger budgets. Navy finished the year 17-8-1, the second-most wins in program history, with a decisive win over Army. Capital Projects. Mr. Kelly reported more than \$60 million in concurrent athletic capital projects underway, funded exclusively by the Naval Academy Athletic Association (NAAA) through

philanthropic and corporate support rather than appropriated funds. Projects include new South End Zone suites and premium seating (ready this season), a new lacrosse center (groundbreaking April 1), a baseball stadium renovation (ready for next season), a new golf course restaurant and social pavilion along with new golf simulator equipment, and the upcoming Lakefield building on the stadium's north end. He also noted NAAA provided all of the athletic equipment used in the McDonough Hall renovation which demonstrates our commitment to the physical mission of the overall Brigade.

Admissions Director Update: Captain Redmer presented an update on the incoming class. He reported 190 midshipmen came from the Naval Academy Preparatory School (NAPS), plus 49 from civilian prep schools; 43 prior-enlisted Navy and 11 prior-enlisted Marine Corps candidates; and 71 legacy candidates with parents who graduated from USNA. Mr. Spicer asked what percentage of NAPS students this represents relative to the overall NAPS class. Captain Redmer did not have the exact figure on hand but estimated roughly 90%, noting that one NAPS student who reported to USNA was sent home for failing height/weight standards. CAPT Redmer reports that on NAPS I-Day in 2025, 219 candidates began their journey at the Naval Academy Preparatory School. During the course of the year, 13 candidates withdrew, leaving 206 to be reviewed by the NAPS Admissions Board. Following the board, 196 candidates earned appointments to the U.S. Naval Academy as members of the Class of 2030, while 10 were not offered appointments. Of those 196 appointments, 190 candidates accepted their appointments and took the oath on USNA I-Day 2026. The remaining six appointments included two candidates who declined their appointments, two whose appointments were withdrawn, and two who became medically disqualified. He announced admissions is expanding from two to three required letters of recommendation, adding one from a coach or extracurricular activity advisor, and is increasing the weight of the CFA within the Whole Person Multiple (WPM) score. He described an in-progress "grit scale" effort, a joint undertaking between the Midshipman Development Center and the Stockdale Center to develop grit-related assessment questions, tied to a broader "values and actions" survey. Admissions is also exploring using AI to analyze written materials (summer seminar records, background information, letters of recommendation, personal statements) as part of a broader effort to rebalance WPM component weights to better predict midshipmen performance at USNA. On the outreach side, he described using AI to help identify and reach prospective candidates, with attention to "generative optimization" so AI tools point prospective applicants toward accurate USNA information. Mr. Erhart asked how much weight the SAT/ACT will carry in the updated WPM, noting that standardized testing shifted from being effectively unweighted during COVID to now being a clearly defined, publicly posted metric. Captain Redmer said no final decision has been made on whether that weighting should increase or decrease, and that the analysis will be data-driven, with results presented first to the Superintendent and shared with the Board at a future date. The Superintendent added that the broader AI/data initiative, analyzing decades of past applications, is intended to remove guesswork about how much the SAT is indicative of future performance, by tracing what genuinely predicted success at USNA and beyond (retention, promotion, command, post-service outcomes).

Congressman Sullivan adjourned the open portion of the meeting at 1104.