



UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND

RELINQUISHMENT OF COMMAND

And

RETIREMENT CEREMONY

In Honor Of

ADMIRAL ALVIN “BULL” HOLSEY



December 12, 2025
Doral, Florida



Presiding Official



General Dan Caine, USAF
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff



Sequence of Events

Arrival of Official Party

Honors

Presentation of Colors

National Anthem

Invocation

Chaplain (Captain) Michael Baker, USN

Remarks

General Dan Caine., USAF

Presentation of Awards & Proclamations

Admiral Alvin "Bull" Holsey, USN

Dr. Stephanie Holsey

Remarks

Admiral Alvin "Bull" Holsey, USN

Relinquishment of Command

Remarks

Lieutenant General Evan L. Pettus, USAF

Reading of the Retirement Orders

Admiral Alvin "Bull" Holsey, USN

Piping Ashore

Departure of Official Party

General Dan Caine



General Dan Caine is the 22nd Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the nation's highest-ranking military officer, and the principal military advisor to the President, Secretary of Defense, and National Security Council.

Prior to becoming Chairman on April 11, 2025, General Caine was the Associate Director for Military Affairs at the Central Intelligence Agency.

He has served in a wide range of operational, staff and joint assignments, primarily as an F-16 fighter pilot, weapons officer, member of the White House staff and special operations officer.

General Caine was commissioned in 1990 through the ROTC program at the Virginia Military Institute, and he has an MA in Air Warfare from the American Military University. He has completed a range of national security and leadership courses, including Harvard Kennedy School's course for Senior Executives in National and International Security, and the Syracuse University Maxwell School's Program on National Security.

As a Command Pilot, he has logged more than 2,800 hours in the F-16, including more than 150 combat hours. From 2009-2016, Caine was a part-time member of the National Guard and a serial entrepreneur and investor.

Admiral Alvin “Bull” Holsey

Admiral Alvin Holsey is a native of Fort Valley, Georgia and was commissioned through the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) program at Morehouse College in 1988, where he Received a degree in Computer Science. He earned a Master of Science in Management from Troy State University in 1995 and attended the Joint Forces Staff College in 2010.

At sea, he deployed with USS Jesse L. Brown (FF 1089), USS Nicholson (DD 982), USS Vreeland (FF 1068), USS Vella Gulf (CG 72), USS Gettysburg (CG 64), and USS Simpson (FFG 56), flying both the SH-2F Seasprite and SH-60B Seahawk helicopters. He commanded Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Light Three Seven (HSL-37) and the Navy’s first hybrid electric propulsion warship, USS Makin Island (LHD 8).



As a flag officer, he served as commander Carrier Strike Group One embarked aboard the USS Carl Vinson, (CVN 70), and as the inaugural commander of the International Maritime Security Construct / Coalition Task Force Sentinel, rapidly setting up an expeditionary headquarters to ensure freedom of navigation, international law, free flow of commerce and stability of maritime commons throughout the Middle East. His staff assignments have included flag aide to Commander Naval Air Force and the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Warfare Requirements and Programs N6/N7), operations officer on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, J-3, Joint Operations Directorate, European Command, deputy director PERS 43 / Head Air Combat Placement Officer, Navy Personnel Command, force operations officer, N3 at Commander Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, and executive assistant to the Chief of Naval Operations.

As a flag officer, he served as Deputy Director for Operations, National Military Command Center, Joint Chiefs of Staff. From 2021 to 2022, he served as Deputy Chief of Naval Personnel / Commander, Navy Personnel Command, and most recently, served as Military Deputy Commander, United States Southern Command.

On 7 November 2024, he was promoted to the rank of Admiral and assumed command of United States Southern Command. His military decorations include the Navy Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (five awards), Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (two awards), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (four awards), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, and various unit, campaign and service awards.

Fair Winds and Following Seas



Fair Winds and Following Seas



Lieutenant General Evan L. Pettus

Lieutenant General Pettus is a native of Fayetteville, Arkansas and a 1994 graduate of the United States Air Force Academy, where he received a degree in Aeronautical Engineering.

He earned a Master's of Business Administration from Bellevue University, Nebraska in 2004, a Master's of Logistics Sciences from the Air Force Institute of Technology in 2008, and a Master's of Strategic Studies from the Air War College in 2013.

General Pettus completed Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, and was first stationed at Royal Air Force Lakenheath, United Kingdom, as an F-15E pilot.



General Pettus is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Weapons School and a command pilot with more than 2,700 hours in the F-15E and A-10. He has flown combat missions in operations Northern Watch, Southern Watch, Allied Force, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and Inherent Resolve.

As a general officer, he served as the Commandant of the Air Command and Staff College, the Commander of the 378th Air Expeditionary Wing, and the Vice Commander of the United States Air Force Warfare Center. His staff assignments include duty as the Chief of the Commander's Action Group, U.S. Air Forces Europe, and the Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, Operations, U.S. Forces Korea.

In his previous assignment, General Pettus served as the Commander, 12th Air Force (Air Forces Southern), Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. As the Air Force component to U.S. Southern Command, Air Forces Southern conducts security cooperation and provides air, space and cyberspace capabilities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean to deter aggression, defeat threats, rapidly respond to crises, and work with allies and partner nations to build regional capacity to ensure a secure, free and prosperous Western Hemisphere.

His military decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (three awards), the Meritorious Service Medal (five awards), the Air Medal (four awards), the Aerial Achievement Medal (two awards), and various unit, campaign and service awards.

History of the U.S. Southern Command

U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) traces its origins to the Caribbean Defense Command (CDC), activated May 8, 1941, as a unified command under the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) during World War II. The CDC defended the Panama Canal, vital sea lanes, Caribbean U.S. sites, and strategic foreign resources like Venezuelan oil. By 1942, it controlled assigned air and naval forces and established a Joint Operations Center in Panama. Personnel peaked at 68,000 in 1943, highlighting the region's wartime importance in protecting vital resources and transit routes. Protecting these vital sea lanes was key to the war effort.

In December 1946, the JCS proposed a unified command system, centralizing operational control within regions. The CDC was formally designated November 1, 1947. Reflecting its broader mission, it became USSOUTHCOM on June 11, 1963.

Since 1996, USSOUTHCOM's area includes 31 nations and 11 dependencies in Latin America and the Caribbean, reflecting evolving security concerns and the region's increasing importance. Following the Panama Canal Treaties, the headquarters moved to Doral, Florida, in 1997. The move symbolized the increased focus on the region and USSOUTHCOM's continued commitment to national security.

USSOUTHCOM employs roughly 1,200 personnel in Doral. Key commands include: Marine Forces South (Louisiana), Southern Air Forces (Arizona), Army South (Texas), Naval Forces South (Florida), and Special Operations Command South (Florida). Subordinate commands include Joint Interagency Task Force-South (Florida), focused on counter-drug efforts; Joint Task Force-Bravo (Honduras), supporting humanitarian aid and disaster relief; and Joint Task Force-Guantanamo (Cuba). These various commands allow USSOUTHCOM to effectively engage with various scenarios and threats. Each command contributes to the overall mission and to national security objectives.

As one of eleven combatant commands, USSOUTHCOM defends U.S. interests within the Caribbean and Central/South America (excluding Mexico). Recognizing strong U.S. ties to the region and its impact on U.S. security, USSOUTHCOM leverages rapid response, partnerships, and regional cooperation to support U.S. national security, defend southern approaches, and promote regional stability. Core activities include countering transnational crime, disaster response, military training, and humanitarian assistance. These efforts enhance U.S. and partner capabilities, addressing transnational threats and fostering regional security. USSOUTHCOM's presence reflects a commitment to mutual support and security in Latin America and the Caribbean. Today, USSOUTHCOM is executing national security imperatives throughout the area of responsibility with credible, present, capable, and engaged combat forces working to counter threats, to strengthen partnerships, and to protect the homeland.

Former Commanders

General Laura J. Richardson, USA

October 2021 - November 2024

Admiral Craig S. Faller, USN

November 2018 - October 2021

Admiral Kurt W. Tidd, USN

January 2016 - November 2018

General John F. Kelly, USMC

November 2012 - January 2016

General Douglas M. Fraser, USAF

October 2009 - November 2012

Admiral James G. Stavridis, USN

October 2006 - June 2009

General Bantz J. Craddock, USA

November 2004 - October 2006

General James T. Hill, USA

August 2002 - November 2004

Major General Gary D. Speer (Acting), USA

October 2001 - August 2002

General Peter Pace, USMC

September 2000 - September 2001

General Charles E. Wilhelm, USMC

September 1997 - September 2000

General Wesley K. Clark, USA

July 1996 - July 1997

General Barry R. McCaffrey, USA

February 1994 - February 1996

Former Commanders

General Alfred A. Joulwan, USA

November 1990 - November 1993

General Maxwell R. Thurman, USA

September 1989 - November 1990

General Frederick F. Woerner, USA

June 1987 - July 1989

General John R. Galvin, USA

March 1985 - June 1987

General Paul F. Gorman, USA

May 1983 - March 1985

Lieutenant General Wallace H. Nutting, USA

October 1979 - May 1983

Lieutenant General Dennis P. McAuliffe, USA

August 1975 - September 1979

General William B. Rosson, USA

January 1973 - July 1975

General George V. Underwood, USA

September 1971 - January 1973

General George R. Mather, USA

February 1969 - September 1971

General Robert W. Porter, USA

February 1965 - February 1969

General Andrew P. O'Meara, USA

June 1963 - February 1965

The Watch

For thirty-seven years
This Sailor has stood the watch
While some of us were in our bunks at night
This Sailor stood the watch
While some of us were in school learning our trade
This shipmate stood the watch
Yes...even before some of us were born into this world
This shipmate stood the watch
In those years when the storm clouds of war
were seen brewing on the horizon of history
This shipmate stood the watch
Many times he would cast an eye ashore and
see his family standing there
Needing his guidance and help
Needing that hand to hold during those hard times
But he still stood the watch
He stood the watch for thirty-seven years
He stood the watch so that we, our families and
Our fellow countrymen could sleep soundly in safety,
Each and every night
Knowing that a Sailor stood the watch
Today we are here to say
'Shipmate... the watch stands relieved
Relieved by those You have Trained, Guided, and Lead
Shipmate you stand relieved.. we have the watch..."

*"Boatswain...Standby to pipe the side...
Shipmate's going Ashore."*