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SUBJ/ACADEMIC YEAR 2026-2027 DARK TRIDENT CALL FOR APPLICATIONS//

REF/A/DOC/U.S. Navy Fighting Instructions/09FEB26//

RMKS/1. This NAVADMIN is the call for applications for the Academic Year (AY) 26-27 Chief of Naval Operations (CNO's) research group Dark Trident.

1. Program Information. Dark Trident is a professional development program designed to cultivate Navy strategists, build critical thinking skills, and leverage the diverse expertise of selected officers and civil servants to address the Navy's most pressing challenges. Through collaborative problem-solving, participants refine their analytical leadership skills while developing actionable products and plans to support the execution of the U.S. Navy Fighting Instructions as per reference (a). This year's Dark Trident cohort, divided into three teams, will focus on the three projects listed below. At the end of the year, the group will brief Navy 4-Star leadership on their research findings and recommendations.

2. AY26-27 Dark Trident Research Teams.

a. TEAM ONE. Innovation vs. Fleet Introduction. As the Navy rapidly integrates new technologies into our operational forces, promising capabilities are often delayed by acquisition process timelines, testing requirements, cultural resistance, and fragmented ownership across multiple stakeholders. How can we as a force better bridge the gap between innovation and operational deployment?

b. TEAM TWO. EPIC FURY Lessons Learned to Lessons Applied. Across the Navy we have identified lessons learned from EPIC FURY. After capturing and analyzing this information, what are some enduring changes to doctrine, force design, training, sustainment, logistics, command and control, and emerging technologies? How does it change how we fight moving forward?

c. TEAM THREE. Reimagining Fleet Technical Training. How can the Navy restructure its force development pipeline to develop adaptable warfighters with a deep understanding of fundamental mechanical and electrical theory, allowing them to diagnose and troubleshoot novel problems, enabling them to continue to fight effectively under contested and degraded conditions?

3. Schedule. Dark Trident will take a part-time, hybrid approach over the course of AY26-27 (September 2026 - June 2027). Up to five (5) in-person sessions are planned for development and research at appropriate Department of Navy (DON) installations (such as the Pentagon, Naval War College, Naval Postgraduate School, Navy Labs, Systems Commands, and Operational Commands). In between in-person sessions, the group will meet and work collaboratively in a virtual environment. Applicants should expect to travel tentatively 09-11 SEP 2026 for an orientation held in the Washington D.C. area.

4. Eligibility. Dark Trident team members will be Navy officers (O4-O6, Active Component, Training and Administration of the Reserve (TAR), and Selected Reserve (SELRES)); and civil servants (GS14-15 or equivalent) who will be on shore duty for the entire period of September 2026 through June 2027. Applicants must be able to travel up to five times per year for in-person sessions. Please contact the OPNAV N2N3N5N7 POCs listed in this NAVADMIN for questions on eligibility.

5. Program Specifics. Up to nine (9) Navy officers and civil servants will be selected for each of the three teams comprising the AY26-27 Dark Trident cohort, for a total of up to twenty-seven (27) participants. Selectees are strongly encouraged to attend every in-person and virtual session with the full support of their command. Commands are responsible for all travel/TDY expenses for Dark Trident in-person sessions and must prioritize participants Dark Trident related activities.

6. Admission Process. For AY26-27, the Navy will select up to 27 eligible personnel to participate in Dark Trident. A Navy selection panel will choose individuals with the best combination of experience, ideas, and potential to work with other team members to develop actionable solutions for the CNO. Selectees will be notified upon completion of panel deliberations by mid to late August 2026.

7. Service Obligation. There is no service obligation for participation in this program.

8. Application Procedures. AY26-27 applications are due to OPNAV N2N3N5N7 NLT 02 August 2026 at 2359 EDT. Candidates should specify which team(s) they are applying for in their application package.

9. Application Package. Each nomination package must include the following: an application form including a personal statement, a Curriculum Vitae (CV), a command endorsement letter acknowledging individual/command responsibilities, and two letters of recommendation (one of which must be from the first Flag officer or SES in the applicant's chain of command). Please visit the Dark Trident Information Request Portal (see link below) for additional information on Dark Trident and the application process, and to request application templates. For issues accessing the portal, please contact the Navy Fellowship Office at: navy.fellowships@us.navy.mil. Dark Trident Information Request Portal:
<https://forms.osi.apps.mil/r/XNWRrTMfnq>

10. Ranking Candidates by Rating Official. Individuals providing letters of recommendation to more than one applicant are asked to rank their recommended candidates. Military and civilian applicants should be ranked separately, although a combined ranking may also be submitted. A template for the ranking memorandum is available upon request from the Navy Fellowship Office at: navy.fellowships@us.navy.mil

11. Points of Contact. For issues regarding the application portal, please contact the Navy Fellowship Office at: navy.fellowships@us.navy.mil

12. Released by VADM Y. M. Davids, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Intelligence, Operations, Plans, Strategy and Force Development (OPNAV N2N3N5N7) .//

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