

Family members outraged over unbearable conditions on aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln

Kevin Reed
11 August 2026

Corporate news reports and social media posts have revealed that more than 5,000 sailors and Marines are enduring severe exhaustion, shortages of necessities and deteriorating living conditions aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln. The aircraft carrier has been away from San Diego for nine months and is in its fifth consecutive month of US combat operations against Iran.

In reporting published August 5 by MS NOW, relatives of personnel aboard described “moldy showers,” food shortages and shipboard stores running out of basic toiletries. The outlet spoke with a dozen family members, who warned that exhaustion and declining morale could produce fatal mistakes aboard a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier conducting sustained flight operations.

One parent whose stepson is aboard said she had been told that a doctor or therapist on the ship warned the crew needed to reach port before people started “losing their minds.” “You’ve essentially stranded them out there,” she said.

Another mother said her son messaged her about locked showers and a meal that came to two tortillas and a half-cup of rice. Referring to Trump, she said, “He put our nose in a war that we shouldn’t be in.”

Family members said sailors have faced non-operational toilets, showers without hot water, laundry facilities broken for weeks and prolonged waits for basic hygienic supplies. They described lines of an hour or more at the ship’s store, which was said at times to lack soap, deodorant and toothpaste. Relatives also reported periods in which food portions were rationed.

A Navy veteran father told MS NOW that his son had seen holes worn through the carrier’s flight deck. On a ship whose air wing launches and recovers combat aircraft in rapid succession, flight-deck maintenance, sleep deprivation and the readiness of the crew are matters

of life and death.

The reported evidence of material wear exposes the incompatibility between sustained combat tempo and the well-being of enlisted sailors and junior officers.

Family members said many crew members are working punishing shifts and, depending on their assignment, rarely receive a day off. The MS NOW report said the crew had received only two days off the vessel since departing San Diego. This is a schedule that has intensified the emotional strain on personnel separated from their families with no reliable timetable for return.

The USS Lincoln left Naval Air Station North Island in San Diego on November 21, 2025. Its roughly 5,000-plus personnel were initially sent on what families understood to be a normal seven-month deployment, but the tour has since been extended twice, without a fixed return date.

The carrier stopped briefly in Guam in December and then did not make another port call until July 7, when it pulled into Oman after 208 continuous days at sea. This duration was reported as a modern-era record for a US aircraft carrier. As of August 7, the ship had been deployed for 259 days.

The deployment uncertainty is also compounded by the Navy’s plan to shift the Lincoln’s home port from San Diego to Bremerton, Washington, after deployment. MS NOW reported that families were told they would receive a 58-day window to move residence once the ship returns, while Navy leaders were treating December 31 merely as a target date for setting a time frame, not a confirmed homecoming date.

The USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN-72) is a U.S. Navy Nimitz-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. It is essentially a mobile air base and command platform at sea. Commissioned on November 11, 1989, it is 36 years old as of August 2026 and is the fifth ship of its class.

The carrier entered the U.S. Central Command area in late January and was positioned in the Arabian Sea as Washington built up forces around Iran. Its principal purpose has been to furnish a mobile air base from which US forces can conduct air strikes closer to Iran, without depending entirely on airfields in allied regional states.

Carrier Air Wing 9 began combat sorties against Iranian targets on February 28 under Operation Epic Fury. U.S. Navy footage subsequently showed F/A-18E Super Hornets launching from the Lincoln's deck in support of the operation, demonstrating the ship's role as a central platform for the air war.

The carrier has operated in and around the Arabian Sea and Gulf of Oman, waters that are critical to US efforts to control sea lanes around the Strait of Hormuz. Reports have also described an expanded mission beyond the air campaign. This has included operations related to blockading Iranian ports and coastline, interdicting shipping, monitoring and targeting Iranian naval forces and protecting selected commercial transit.

At an August 6 meeting with approximately 200 family members in San Diego, acting Navy Secretary Hung Cao reportedly said the Navy was preparing the USS Theodore Roosevelt carrier strike group to deploy and eventually relieve the Lincoln. But he declined to say when that replacement would occur, citing operational security. Responding to questions from family members, Cao could not specify a return date.

Responding to the crisis, Democratic Party Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey said, "This is a profound failure of leadership—and a betrayal of those who serve. We cannot claim to support the troops while leaving them hungry. Our service members deserve better." Booker did not condemn the war as illegal nor demand an end to it and the immediate withdrawal of the aircraft carrier and all US military forces from the region.

When the war began on February 28, the Trump administration presented the campaign as a short mission which would be over in a few weeks, but the war assumed the features of a widening regional conflict. US strikes against thousands of targets were met by Iranian counterattacks against US-aligned states and installations. The conflict required an expanding demand for munitions, personnel and naval assets.

By March, Dan Caine, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the US had struck more than 5,000 Iranian targets, including more than 50 Iranian naval vessels. Yet Iran continued launching attacks against Israel and against countries hosting US forces, including Bahrain, Qatar and

Kuwait. Eighteen US service members have been killed and 624 have been wounded in the war.

The result has been a debacle for US imperialism. The stated objective of forcing Iranian "unconditional surrender" has not been achieved as the US campaign became increasingly dependent on overstretched forces and munitions. The conditions aboard the USS Lincoln expose the official claims of precision warfare and military dominance as lies and war propaganda.

On March 2, President Trump said Operation Epic Fury could last "a month or longer," while also declaring, "We projected four to five weeks, but we have capability to go far longer than that." Later, Trump asserted that the war "is going to be ended soon," while acknowledging it would not be over the following week and threatening renewed attacks if Iran resumed fighting.

Secretary of War Pete Hegseth has refused to provide an updated estimate. Asked how far into the campaign the US was, he said that Trump "gets to control the throttle" and that it was not for him to say whether the operation was at "the beginning, the middle or the end."

When critics called the war a "quagmire" and warned of another Vietnam or Iraq-style disaster, Hegseth responded with denunciations and called such characterizations "reckless." Hegseth claimed the administration was "not allowing mission creep" because the president had imposed a supposedly "very specific mission."

The crisis aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln calls for an understanding among Navy men and women about the real causes and reasons for the war against Iran. The unfolding disaster in the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea is part of the decades-long drive by US imperialism to subordinate the entire Middle East to its dictates. This drive—which began with the first Gulf War against Iraq in August 1990—is now expanding into a global conflict and threatening to plunge humanity into a new world war.



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