

Sailor jumps overboard in suicide attempt on USS Abraham Lincoln

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Revelations of a suicide attempt by a sailor aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln—alongside accounts of other sailors being prevented from going overboard—have brought to light the mounting crisis of morale among service members in the nearly six-month US war debacle against Iran.

A sailor assigned to the carrier's air wing went overboard on August 3 in turbulent seas and was recovered about an hour later by an air-wing search-and-rescue helicopter, according to US officials cited by CNN. The sailor, who was wearing a life vest, was medically evaluated on the ship and then evacuated for further care. An official described the episode as a mental health crisis.

In an August 13 MS NOW interview, the sailor's wife, who requested anonymity, said she did not learn that the sailor who had gone overboard was her husband until four days later. She had heard on August 3 that "someone" from his squadron had jumped, she said, after a friend of her husband contacted her. She characterized the incident as an attempted suicide.

The four-day delay in notification is an indictment of the command's treatment of military families. The wife told MS NOW that her husband had raised mental health concerns with the leadership throughout the extended deployment. He had gone to medical personnel on the ship to appeal for support, but his concerns were dismissed.

On Friday, as he was departing aboard Air Force One for a trip to New York from Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, President Trump was told by a reporter that families of USS Abraham Lincoln sailors were concerned about conditions aboard the carrier.

Trump replied, "Well, no, that ship is moving. No, they're not," and said it would be replaced by "another very similar ship." The reporter then asked whether the sailors' deployment had lasted too long amid the Iran war and Trump answered, "No, not nearly long enough."

The President's response encapsulates the contempt of the entire ruling elite for the conditions of sailors and other military men and women in the war against Iran. For personnel who have spent more than 250 consecutive days at

sea—and amid multiple reported suicide attempts—Trump makes clear that the health and lives of American soldiers are expendable.

The response of Democratic Party Senator Richard Blumenthal from Connecticut to the crisis is typical of the "opposition" in Congress to Trump's policies. Blumenthal wrote a letter to Secretary of War Pete Hegseth and acting Navy Secretary Hung Cao that he had received "reports" about the conditions on the Lincoln and was requesting answers to some questions. He did not condemn the treatment of sailors or call for an end to the disastrous and criminal war but called for a military strategy to win the war.

The Navy has responded to the crisis by claiming that there is no increase in suicidal thoughts or attempts, while multiple independent news accounts have described the extraordinarily long deployment as being responsible for grave psychological distress.

Alongside the August 3 incident, the *Military Times* reported that multiple sailors had tried to go overboard during the ninth month of the deployment. However, the Navy declined to provide a precise number of crew members who had attempted to jump or engaged in self-harm.

One sailor told *Stars and Stripes* that watch standers had stopped another crew member from jumping "a few months ago" and said a shipwide announcement had informed the crew of the incident. A spouse of a USS Lincoln sailor, Maria Rodriguez, told *Military Times* that her husband had seen a shipmate preparing to go overboard while on watch, and he intervened.

A parent quoted by *Stars and Stripes* described the psychological consequences in blunt terms and questioned the reasons for the war in the first place. "My son is currently on that ship and listening to him say that he and his shipmates constantly think about jumping off the ship just for relief is so hard to listen to." She said, "We are all tucked in at night in our beds while our loved ones are out there fighting with no understanding as to what they're defending."

At an August 6 town hall, family members directly

confronted Acting Navy Secretary Cao, Vice Admiral Douglas Verissimo, commander of Naval Air Forces, and Vice Admiral Joseph Cahill, commander of Naval Surface Forces. One spouse said there had been a “broken trust between us and the leadership.” Relatives also demanded an explanation for the absence of a return date, the reports of self-harm and the deterioration of basic living conditions. The officers invoked operational security and refused to state when the Lincoln would return home.

The USS Abraham Lincoln sailed from San Diego on November 21, 2025, on what was initially presented as a Pacific deployment, less than a year after it returned from a 162-day deployment in December 2024. It was redirected to the Middle East and arrived in January, remaining in the Arabian Sea to support US combat operations against Iran that began on February 28.

By early August, Navy officials said the carrier had logged 250 consecutive days at sea and had supported 40 continuous days of combat operations in the Fifth Fleet region. The carrier has now been deployed for more than eight months, with its originally anticipated May return postponed and no publicly announced date for its return home.

By contrast, aircraft carriers generally make a port call every 30 to 45 days for resupply, maintenance and crew rest. The Lincoln, however, went much of its deployment without such calls. It had only a brief visit to Guam in December, during which many sailors reportedly could not disembark, and in early July for a short stop in Oman, where personnel were restricted to a secure compound.

Sailors and family members have reported food rationing, shortages of drinking water and basic supplies, dysfunctional air conditioning, disrupted mail, long workdays, limited time off and more than a week during which personnel could not do laundry. Other accounts presented by families have included moldy showers, broken toilets, no hot water for weeks and meals reduced to half a cup of rice and two tortillas.

The Navy stated that its leadership was “continuously conducting assessments to monitor and sustain the psychological readiness of every sailor” and that more mental health professionals were being sent to the carrier. Yet the command’s refusal to disclose the number of attempted suicides or self-harm incidents makes independent assessment impossible.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported that the Pentagon is preparing to replace the Abraham Lincoln with the USS George Washington, which is sailing from its home port at Yokosuka, Japan, to the Middle East. The shift is described as part of a scheduled deployment, but it was announced amid the mounting concern over the Lincoln’s living

conditions and the strain placed on its crew during the Iran war.

The Lincoln’s crisis has revealed the real social character of the imperialist war against Iran. The strategic aims of the conflict—an effort to impose US dominance over the Middle East by military means—are determined by the financial aristocracy while the cost is to be borne by working class sailors, soldiers and their families.

A 2025 *Military Medicine* study cited by *Stars and Stripes* found that inability to rest when needed, limited access to quality physical and mental healthcare, restricted communication with family and a lack of opportunities to relieve stress were among the greatest sources of deployment distress for sailors.

The President’s angry and callous response to a reporter who questioned him about the horrible conditions facing sailors aboard the Lincoln is a warning. The failure so far of the White House and Pentagon to impose a military defeat on Iran—not a single objective of the unprovoked and illegal imperialist war has been achieved—intensifies the likelihood of a much deeper and catastrophic conflagration up to and including a new world war.

Speaking on Friday at the David S. Mack Center for Training and Intelligence, a Nassau County police training facility in Garden City/Uniondale, New York, Trump asserted, “After we finish defeating Iran—which is being very badly defeated—pretty soon I’ll be declaring the Hormuz Strait a territory of the United States.” Carrying out the annexation of the Strait of Hormuz—something which US imperialism has been planning for decades—requires a military campaign that will sacrifice the lives of both American and Iranian military personnel in the interests of the American oil monopolies and financial oligarchy.



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