Admiral Milton Sands Removed from Naval Special Warfare Command

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In a sudden and controversial move dated **August 22, 2025**, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth removed *Rear Admiral Milton "Jamie" Sands III* from the leadership of the **Naval Special Warfare Command**, the command of the Navy SEALs, after just one year in the role.

Sands was dismissed on the same day that two other high-ranking military figures were also removed: **Vice Adm. Nancy Lacore**, head of the Navy Reserve, and **Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Kruse**, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA).

Official Pentagon communications did not provide specific details on the reasons for the dismissals. However, journalistic sources suggest that this is the latest step in a wave of removals of officers considered insufficiently loyal or opposed to the current political-military line.

Sands' Profile and Career

A native of Connecticut, Milton Sands attended the **United States Naval Academy**, graduating in 1992, and since 1995 has served as a Navy SEAL operator. Over the years, he commanded the **SEAL Team 8**, was commodore of the **Naval Special Warfare Group 2**, and held key positions such as commander of the **Naval Service Training Command** and Chief of Staff of the **US Special Operations Command**.

Navy SEALs Admiral Milton Jamie Sands removed from Naval Special Warfare Command

In March 2024, he took command of the **Naval Special Warfare Command**, but his term ended on **August 22, 2025**, despite many colleagues praising his professionalism and integrity.

According to an exclusive by *The Iceman (Substack)*, Sands was known for a command style based on the values of the SEAL ethos: subordinating the ego to the team, denouncing “illegal, immoral, unethical, or simply unacceptable” behaviors.

This approach reportedly led him to clash multiple times with the Pentagon, which was considered aligned with political priorities divergent from his. Defenders of Sands, such as Alex Plitsas (former Pentagon official) and former SEAL Dave Madden, highlighted his apolitical and integral profile, suggesting that his removal was linked to political dynamics.

Reactions and Consequences

The dismissal has raised alarm among analysts and members of Congress, particularly Democrats, who interpret it as an attempt to punish independence and silence dissent within the military forces and intelligence structures.

On social media – for example, on Reddit – comments stand out like:

> *“The NSWC site confirms the news with the Admiral Sands bio being removed.” (~ “The NSWC site confirms the news: Admiral Sands' biography has been removed.”).*

Furthermore, there is concern that the removal of high-profile figures like Sands and Lacore marks a crackdown on leaders considered too independent or too focused on ethics and transparency.

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Sands' dismissal fits into a broader context. Throughout 2025, numerous senior officers have been ousted:

- Admirals, generals, and heads of bodies like the **Navy**, the **Air Force** (including the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs), and the **Coast Guard**.
- Entire intelligence structures, such as the DIA and the NSA, with removals and revocation of assignments as well as cuts to personnel and budget.

The role of Chief of Naval Operations has meanwhile been filled by the new Admiral Daryl Caudle, while the replacements for Sands and Lacore have not yet been officially appointed.

Conclusions

The removal of **Rear Adm. Milton “Jamie” Sands** — known for ethical and independent leadership — represents another episode of tension between military leadership and the U.S.

political-military leadership. The case highlights the fragile balance between professionalism, obedience, and integrity within the armed forces, in an increasingly politicized context.

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