



Global Exchange

THE ASSOCIATE NEWSLETTER FOR THE NEXCOM ENTERPRISE

From the CEO

As we enter spring, there is optimism that there's a light at the end of the tunnel in regards to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the COVID-19 vaccine continues to be distributed around the world, I encourage each of you to get the vaccine to protect you and those around you. As soon as I am eligible to receive it, I will get one for my health, the health of my family, my co-workers and the patrons we serve. I know we are all looking forward to returning to some semblance of normalcy that we enjoyed prior to the pandemic.

To further keep our DoD workforce safe, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III signed a memo on Feb. 4 directing all individuals on military installations and those performing official duties on behalf of the Department from any location other than the individual's home, including outdoor shared spaces, to wear masks in accordance with the most current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. His memo states that individuals must wear masks continuously while on military installations except: (1) when an individual is alone in an office with floor-to-ceiling walls with a closed door; (2) for brief periods of time when eating and drinking while maintaining distancing in accordance with CDC guidelines and instructions from commanders and supervisors; (3) when the mask is required to be lowered briefly for identification or security purposes; and (4) when necessary to reasonably accommodate an individual with a disability. Individuals must consistently wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth and that comports with all current guidance from the CDC and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. I know I can count on each of you to continue to follow these safety measures to keep all of us healthy.

As you may have heard by now, on Jan. 4, 2021, Gregory J. Slavonic, Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of the Navy, issued a memorandum that directs the consolidation of the Navy's Permanent Change of Station lodging program (Navy Lodge) and Navy's Temporary Duty Lodging program (Navy Gateway Inns & Suites) under NEXCOM. To achieve this objective, a small Working Group team from Navy Lodge and NGIS, along with NEXCOM's CMDCM and CNIC's Force Master Chief, met on Feb. 1 for the first of several sessions to conduct the necessary discovery work and follow-on plans to ensure a smooth transition. I have directed Capt. Craig



Abraham, NEXCOM's Deputy Commander of Military Services, with support from Jerry Hieb, Deputy Director, Fleet and Family Readiness (CNIC N9B), to lead this effort. By Oct. 1, 2021, we are directed to have initial Operational Capability with Full Operational Capability by Sept. 30, 2022. I am committed to ensuring a smooth consolidation process that meets the prescribed timeline and ensures no disruption in services to our military members and families, while being mindful of the needs of both Navy Lodge and NGIS associates throughout the transition. There are many details to be worked out and I will share those with you as they are developed.

Finally, on Jan. 8, I was designated, in addition to my job as NEXCOM's CEO, as the Special Assistant for Resale Transformation. I will be reporting to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower & Reserve Affairs. I know I can count on your continued support as I move into this additional military resale role.

Thank you for all you have done and all you continue to do for our patrons. I know the past year has not been easy, but you have accepted the multitude of changes with grace and with our patrons' best interests in mind. I, and the patrons we serve, will be forever grateful.

Stay safe and keep charging!

Robert J. Bianchi
Rear Adm., Supply Corps, USN (Ret.)
Chief Executive Officer
Navy Exchange Service Command

“Get the Gouge”

CMDCM(AW/SW) Dayna S. Winn
Command Master Chief
NEXCOM

I hope everyone had a great holiday and welcomed in the New Year in your own special way. I know for me, I was glad to see 2020 go, but to be honest, 2021 isn't starting off much better. The COVID cases have been on the rise as of late and now there are additional strains to contend with. Even though COVID was the topic of conversation in 2020, you found a way to deliver PREMIER Customer Service!

“You fashioned a very successful year amid all the challenges and I know that you will make 2021 even better!”

January marked my one year anniversary with this awesome command and being back in my home state of Virginia is great. Looking back over the past year, my tour started with a thundering roar when I went to San Diego in my very first week, then three weeks later it was off to Italy and Spain. During both of these trips I was able to meet some remarkable associates and was privileged to see what makes this command click on all cylinders (YOU)! Next, I was able to attend the District Vice President conference where I learned why NEXCOM has been around for 74 years. Then there was a screeching halt to all travel and any normalcy that we were used to when COVID-19 brought the entire world to a full stop.

Did you stop? Of course not! You continued to find ways to be relevant by being the first to provide face covering to Sailors, creating the NEX



Quarantine Support Program, virtual entertainment series, the Drive/Up program, supporting military members and their families placed on ROM in our Navy Lodges, creating a safe and healthy environment within our locations for both the patron and yourselves and so much more.

On Thanksgiving, we had associates in our European District volunteer to come in and serve my shipmates that were unable to be home with their families. This may seem like a small act, but with COVID halting travel and the risk of suicide for those young men and women serving abroad, it was HUGE! That meets the Extra Nautical Mile criteria in my book! Thank you to all the volunteers that made this possible.

We finished up a very successful CPO season, the first of its kind that ran from Nov. 18, 2020 - Jan. 29, 2021. Our Uniform/Tailor Shops saw over 4,800 CPO selectees while another 700+ selectees ordered online. Thank you goes out to everyone involved with this process.

In closing, you fashioned a very successful year amid all the challenges and I know that you will make 2021 even better! Please continue to be diligent in your efforts to root out this virus from all of our locations for the health and safety of our patrons and yourselves.

Associates Awarded Navy Civilian Service Commendation Medal

Seven NEXCOM associates received the Department of the Navy's (DoN) Civilian Service Commendation Medal for their superior service and work on behalf of our military members and their families. The DoN Civilian Service Commendation Medal is the fourth highest honorary award at NEXCOM and is awarded for individual contributions.

Aaron Frazier, General Manager, NEX Annapolis, Maryland; Patrina (Trina) Jordan, Northern District Vice President; Melanie Fix, Assistant Counsel, NEXCOM; Donna Wright, Vice President, Merchandising Support; Keith Kopecko, Divisional Merchandise Manager, Planning and Replenishment, NEXCOM, Ray Wax, Vice President, Operations Field Support, NEXCOM; and Michael Good, Chief Financial Officer, NEXCOM are the first enterprise associates to receive this award since it was established by the DoN in 2018.

To qualify the award, the recipient's action must show a significant and far reaching impact over months or years, demonstrating leadership, innovation, unusual ideas, insights or unique services to a project, business initiative or NEXCOM civic or community endeavor with a sustained record of outstanding performance. There are a limited number of this award given annually.

Frazier and Jordan received the award for their work standing up the Downrange Program for NEXCOM associates and for being their sponsors during the COVID-19 pandemic. Jordan went above and beyond by driving to the Air Force Base to make contact with the Air Mobility Command (AMC) team in order to get NEXCOM associates scheduled for air flights. For his part, Frazier ensured NEXCOM associates received all the required documentation needed for travel, brought associates dinner every night after he left work as well as his days off and checked on them while they were on restriction of movement orders at Navy Lodge Annapolis.

Fix received her award for her superb legal work which was instrumental in the development of agreements with Gap Inc. to permit NEXCOM to do business with the brand in NEX locations in 2021. Her partnership with Merchandising was recognized as of great value to the command.

Kopecko, Wax and Wright led Operation Bowline, a cross-functional team of 14 associates that was created to resolve significant NEX retail pricing issues that occurred during a major technical upgrade to NEXCOM's Retail Merchandising System. Initially, the Bowline team rapidly identified and corrected issues that threatened significant, negative impact to the NEX FY19 Navy Blue holiday season. Additionally, over the course of eight months, the team identified opportunities and implemented standardized solutions in both business processes as well as technical integrations that enhanced daily operational function and opened lines of communication across siloed business units. The team's determination and consistent willingness to work creatively and collaboratively prevented significant short and long-term profit loss.

Good has served as an integral part of the CEO's Council for Diversity as its Executive Sponsor from its inception in 2005. In this role, he established the council's financial support, encouraged associates to get involved in diversity activities and developed a culture that would be NEXCOM's own through recruiting the right talent for the council and encouraging the growth and development of council members and associates.



NEXCOM Implements Paid Parental Leave Policy

On Oct. 1, 2020, NEXCOM implemented its Paid Parental Leave (PPL) policy for associates who are approved for Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The new policy allows associates to substitute PPL for unpaid FMLA for the birth, adoption or placement of a child/children from foster care.

“Offering paid parental leave is another way NEXCOM is helping associates better balance their work and home life.”

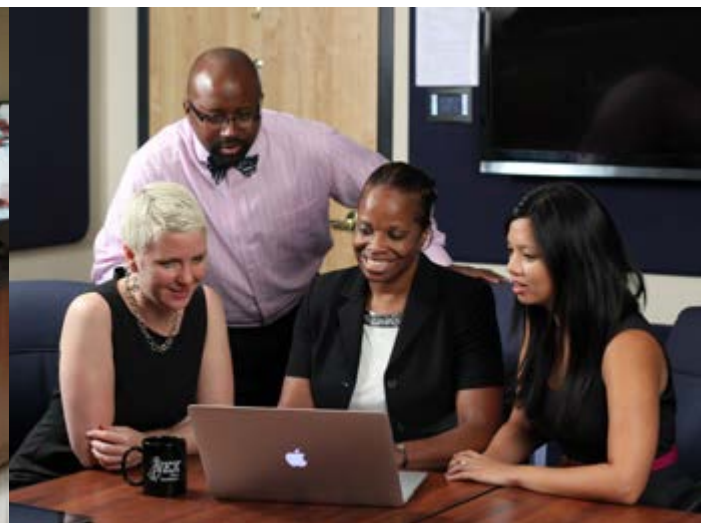
“One of Rear Adm. Bianchi’s tenets in his CEO Guidance is taking care of associates today and tomorrow,” said Diana Vazquez, Manager, Labor/Employee Relations, NEXCOM. “Offering paid parental leave is another way NEXCOM is helping associates better balance their work and home

life. We know a happy associate will be happier at work and better care for our patrons and their fellow associates.”

In order to utilize NEXCOM’s PPL, an associate must be covered by the FMLA provisions. A covered associate may elect to substitute up to 12 weeks of agency paid PPL for unpaid FMLA, depending on their FMLA balance. This benefit is conveyed only to associates whose birth or adoption event occurs on or after Oct. 1, 2020, and is granted exclusively for the purpose of care and bonding with the child.

Associates may use their PPL within a 12-month period, beginning on the date of the birth or placement of a child/children in their home. Unused PPL cannot be carried over and associates will not be paid out for unused or expired leave. PPL does not impact annual and sick leave accrual balances. Under the law, an associate must agree to subsequently work for at least 12 weeks once the associate’s PPL concludes.

More information about the PPL policy can be found on the [Code H Hub page](#) or contact the local NEXCOM Human Resources department.



COVID-19 Reminders

**By: Kristin Miller, Command Safety Manager,
NEXCOM**

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is widespread and can affect people in various ways. Here are just a few tips to help maintain a safe and healthy environment for all our valuable associates and patrons.

In the Workplace

- **Wear a cloth face covering at all times in NEX locations, Navy Lodges, Distribution Centers and headquarters offices. Face coverings must be double layered and be worn correctly, covering the nose and mouth. Face coverings with valves and neck gaiters are prohibited.**
- **Social distance whenever possible by maintaining a six foot clearance from others.**
- **Maintain all strict cleaning protocols. Now is not the time to get complacent.**
 - o **Wipe down high touch point areas such as front desks, register counters, cash registers, handheld scanners, pin pads and touch screens frequently using the cleaning materials provided.**
 - o **Common touch surfaces such as door knobs, elevator doors/buttons, stairwell and escalator railings, door handles, locks and latches, light switches, customer facing refrigerator and freezer handles should be wiped down at least once per hour using the cleaning materials provided.**
 - o **Clean Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) such as safety glasses, goggles and face shields after each use. Make sure there is enough PPE for everyone. It is not a good idea to share.**
- **Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol to clean hands.**

Do not report to work sick or when you're not feeling well. Answer the questionnaire honestly when entering work so that you don't put others at risk.

At Home

- **Wear a mask to protect yourself and others when going out (keep social gatherings to a minimum), practice social distancing and wash your hands frequently throughout the day.**
- **Maintain a routine as much as possible including a consistent sleep-wake cycle, working hours and daily activities.**
- **Make social distancing a positive by taking time to focus on your personal health, training, diet, physical activity levels and healthy habits.**
- **Go for a walk or exercise at home. Get out in nature as much as possible.**
- **Social distancing can cause anxiety and depression because of disruption to routines, isolation and fear over the pandemic. If you or someone you know is having a difficult time, help is available. Information on NEXCOM's [Employee Assistance Program](#) can be found on the Code H Hub page under the EAP tab.**
- **Make the best use of technology to finish your work, attend meetings and engage with co-workers with the same frequency required during active office hours.**
- **Keep ergonomics in mind when setting up a work space at home if teleworking. Tips can be found on the [Code S Hub page](#) under Safety/Training topics.**
- **Check in with friends and family members to see how they are doing. This will also help you feel more connected, social, healthier and engaged.**

We are all in this together. Take care of yourself and look out for others. Stay safe and well!

401(K) Plan Contribution Accelerator

By: Karen Lofland, Benefits Specialist, NEXCOM

If you take one simple step, you can significantly increase your 401(k) balance at retirement. How? Turn on the 401(k) Plan Contribution Accelerator feature. Log into your account at www.prudential.com/NEXCOM. On the bottom of the Account Summary page, activate the "Contribution Accelerator."

How it works

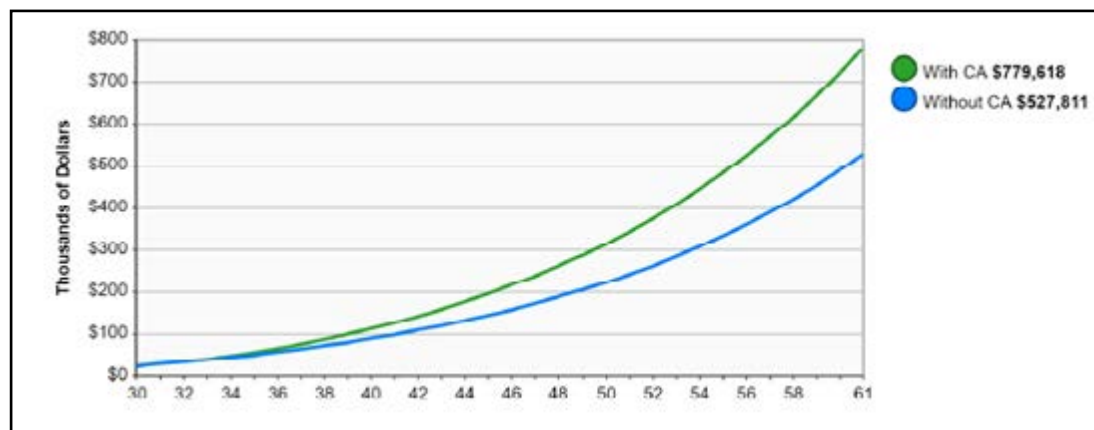
First, decide the percentage you want to increase your contributions by each year, the maximum percentage you want to contribute and when you want the increase to take effect. From then on, the system will automatically "escalate" or increase your contribution percentage each year on the date you designate, up to the maximum percentage you selected.

Contribution Accelerator in action

Joan currently makes \$30,992/year. She saves 6% of her biweekly earnings so that she can get the full command match of 0.50/\$1 up to 6%. Joan is 30 years of age and has \$20,000 in her 401(k). Conservatively, she thinks she will get a 1% pay increase each year. She is a moderate level investor, so expects to earn an annual rate of return of 7% each year. She intends to retire at age 62. She wants to increase her contributions by 1% each year, up to a maximum of 15%.

By turning on the Contribution Accelerator, Joan has the potential to increase her final balance by \$251,807!

To turn on the Contribution Accelerator, go to www.prudential.com, to start saving more today!



NEX Offers Buy Online and Pick Up in Store Program

NEXCOM rolled out its new buy online, pick up in store program at several NEX locations on Nov. 5, 2020. The Pick/Up Program allows authorized customers to choose from over 5,000 items and over 10,000 skus on myNavyExchange.com/PickUp to purchase for pick it up inside their local NEX store.

“More and more customers are looking for the convenience, ease and safety of shopping from home, but don’t mind picking up their merchandise inside a store,” said Roshella Ricker, NEXCOM’s Director, E-Commerce, Merchandising & Marketing Strategy. “Our Pick/Up Program is our latest initiative to allow customers to shop the way they are most comfortable, either in person or online.”

Currently, customers can purchase items for the home, pet, hardware, electronics, fitness, military pride, tactical, personal care items, vitamins, baby and children’s items, accessories, handbags, shoes and apparel and special holiday items. There is no minimum purchase or surcharge for using the Pick/Up Program. Since the program launched, 2,511 orders have been received with \$562,000 in sales, which accounts for 2% of all web sales.

To use the Pick/Up Program, customers shop myNavyExchange.com and look for items eligible for in-store pickup. After adding the item(s) to the shopping cart, select which store to pick up the items from and then pay and place the order. The customer will receive an email confirmation once the order has been received and another when it is ready to be picked up. Once the order is ready, the customer goes to their NEX with the email confirmation and CAC card and follows the Pick/Up signs to the designated pick up area. If the order is placed two hours before the store’s normal closing time, it will be ready for pick up within two hours. If not, the order will be ready the following morning.

The Pick/Up Program is currently available in 10 locations including NEX Norfolk, NEX Oceana and NEX Little Creek – Ft. Story, Virginia; NEX Pearl Harbor; NEX San Diego; NEX Bethesda, Maryland; NEX Jacksonville and Pensacola, Florida; NEX Yokosuka, Japan and NEX Guam. The program will expand to additional tier 3 and 4 NEX locations in spring 2021.

NEXCOM also offers a secondary program called the Drive/Up Program. This separate program allows customers to order merchandise online and have a NEX associate deliver it to the customer’s vehicle upon arrival at the store.



The Evolution of Equal Employment Opportunity

By: Joan Williams, Equal Employment Opportunity Manager, NEXCOM

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) has historically been associated with the processing of litigious complaints. Normally, complaints and litigation are reactive measures. Even though taking such measures may be warranted because of particular circumstances, the use of certain proactive steps could reduce the need to engage the EEO process.

“NEXCOM’s EEO office is committed to a business model that endorses proactive engagement as a means of addressing workplace issues.”

NEXCOM’s EEO office is committed to a business model that endorses proactive engagement as a means of addressing workplace issues. Its enhanced services focus on proactive measures to contribute to an ideal workplace. EEO practitioners often evolve into the role of consultants who skillfully address a variety of manager and employee issues. Those issues may impact the workforce climate, affirmative employment, internal personnel actions, awareness, career growth, accommodation concerns, workplace behaviors and other work-related issues. The evolution of our EEO practitioners to consultants will result in the routine examination of

possible root causes associated with barriers that prevent equality of opportunity.

As NEXCOM’s EEO office continues to work in conjunction with other command partners such as human resources, diversity and inclusion, training and information technology to ensure optimal success, EEO consultants will be actively involved in the enhancement of fair and impartial workplace practices, dispute resolution strategies, assessing the impact of organizational behaviors and change management. Of course, the EEO office will continue to provide its traditional EEO services as well.

Our EEO program goal is to continuously contribute to the realization of NEXCOM as a model employer. Please contact Sheila Young, NEXCOM Acting Director EEO, at (757) 502-7540 to discuss any workplace issues.

NEXCOM Creates USPHS Commissioned Corps PT Uniform

By: Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Daniel Zink

NEXCOM released a physical training uniform (PTU) tailored specifically for the Commissioned Corps of the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) in December 2020. This PTU is the first official physical training uniform for the USPHS Commissioned Corps and will be similar in style to the optional Navy PTUs.

“NEXCOM has supported the USPHS Commissioned Corps for some time and they are currently authorized to wear our (Navy) dinner dress uniforms, our service dress uniforms and summer white uniforms,” said Paul Shields, NEXCOM Associate Director for the Uniform Program Management Office.

While the USPHS Commissioned Corps does seem to emulate the dress styles of the Navy, one big difference is apparent, the logo.

“USPHS requested our assistance in procuring a physical training uniform that included a high performance shirt and short, fleece hoodie and sweat pant,” said Lindsay Vance Bean, NEXCOM Divisional Merchandise Manager of Uniforms. “Luckily we already had these components on the Navy side with the ‘Forged by the Sea’ program. They wanted to retain the design properties of ‘Forged by the Sea’ but with the addition of their unique logo. We were able to send them samples and, working back and forth, the results were a physical training uniform for USPHS that met all of their requirements.”

Although the PTU is very similar to that of the Navy, there were still technical aspects to work out between NEXCOM and the USPHS Commissioned Corps, especially to make sure that the garments and the logo held up to laundering tests and other subsequent tests.

In addition to the product testing, NEXCOM and the USPHS Commissioned Corps also faced setbacks in terms of time and resources due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We started working on this project in May 2020,” said Shields. “When you look at how initial discussions went, defining the USPHS requirement, getting the design and logo right and then getting the PTU into testing and production in October, it has only been about six months.”

NEXCOM hopes the USPHS Commissioned Corps will consider them moving forward in regards to any future uniform changes it may have.

“The partnership that we have generated with the USPHS and the collaboration we’ve had will lend itself to future projects,” said Shields. “So, if USPHS decides it has uniform needs in the future, we stand by ready to assist them.”



Non-NEXCOM Employment – Some Issues to Think About

By Michael D. Rigg, Ethics Counselor, NEXCOM

In the best of economic times, people often work more than one job. In our present circumstances, under the cloud of the COVID-19 pandemic, seeking additional employment to supplement income is all the more likely. However expected it might be, working a second job, and in particular applying for jobs, bring along with them some risks.

“As a NEXCOM associate, you are covered by statutes and regulations that restrict your activities when seeking outside or post-government employment.”

As a NEXCOM associate, you are covered by statutes and regulations that restrict your activities when seeking outside or post-government employment. In particular, you may not take any official action that will affect the financial interests of a prospective employer. In addition, you must take proper steps to notify your supervisor and remove, or “recuse,” yourself from participation “personally and substantially” in any “particular matter” that would have a “direct and predictable effect” on the financial interests of a prospective employer with whom you are “seeking employment.”

Be careful. You can be seeking employment without realizing it. You are seeking employment if you communicate, to include merely sending a resume, to a potential employer with a view toward reaching

an agreement regarding possible employment. Other forms of communication, such as a phone call or email, can also be considered seeking employment. You might even be considered to be seeking employment if an employment search firm communicates on your behalf with a potential employer.

You are no longer seeking employment two months after initial communication if you haven't received a response. You are also no longer seeking employment if you or the potential employer reject or withdraw from the negotiations. Once a potential employer contacts you about a job, you are definitely seeking employment.

Social media adds a twist. You may post your resume to your social media account or to an online “bulletin board” that is not aimed at a particular employer. Once a potential employer contacts you in response to your posted resume, however, you will be considered to be seeking employment until you tell the employer you are not interested.

So, be careful out there. As the saying goes, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” If you have any doubts about the rules, feel free to contact Michael Rigg, Ethics Counselor, in the NEXCOM Office of Counsel at 757-631-3611 or michael.rigg@nexweb.org.

Newest NEX Opens in Poland

NEXCOM opened its newest NEX location at Naval Support Facility Redzikowo, Poland, on Nov. 17. The new NEX is the first facility to be open for use on the base.

“We are proud to open our newest NEX location on the Navy’s newest base at Naval Support Facility Redzikowo.”

“We are proud to open our newest NEX location on the Navy’s newest base at Naval Support Facility Redzikowo,” said Bill Darwin, NEXCOM’s District Operations Manager Europe. “Our mission is to support Sailors no matter where they are located around the world. It was a great team effort between the base leadership and NEXCOM to open the NEX ahead of schedule to support our military members and civilians working there. We look forward to being a part of the NSF Redzikowo community for years to come.”

Located in the base’s Multi-Purpose Facility, the new 1,300 sq.-ft. mini mart offers its customers an assortment of food and beverage items, personal and health care items, household essentials and some portable electronics. The store is currently open five days a week. Adjacent to the NEX will be a barber shop which will open in spring 2021.



Associate Spotlight

I am currently in the CHU in Isa Air Base (Bahrain) and I was able to buy things from DownRange Program shopping list. The associate/cashier, DOMINGO ABANES, helped me out in picking the items to buy. He treated me with great courtesy even though the communication was via email. I was able to buy my pre-deployment necessities COMPLETELY. On top of that, I was able to purchase hand sanitizers, food snacks, and BEST OF ALL: SOUVENIRS! In which they are excluded from the shopping guide. Domingo Abanes did his job EXCEPTIONALLY! Hands down!

- **Julio B., NEX Bahrain**

WOW! Outstanding Gina Velez and the other associates helped me get everything I needed for a surprise visit from Hurricane Sally. I take care of my elderly parents that live next door. Thank You all for helping us through a very sad time. My mother had just received her second dose of chemotherapy as a out patient and then to get hit here in Pensacola an lose power for over a week was really hard. Your Associates all helped me get what we needed. Thank you all so VERY MUCH.

- **Tanya B., NEX Pensacola, Florida**

Thank you for all the help and encouragement during my PCS up to Whidbey Island. I was so Thankful to have you work with my extended accommodations and the encouragement and help through a difficult home buying process. Thank you for always cheering me up.

- **Kelly, Navy Lodge Whidbey Island, Washington**

Thank you guys SOOO much for what you do! It is everything. This year has been one for the birds, to say the least. I can't imagine what it feels like in the mind of a kid PCSing in the middle of a pandemic! Thank you for helping us do our best to celebrate despite our circumstances!!! Seriously this made our ROM a little less maddening knowing the staff cares so much!! You guys are amazing!"

- **Courtney C., Navy Lodge Sasebo, Japan**

NEX Guam, thank you all for your logistical support whilst your AOR. You truly embody the significance of MORALE over the warfighters. A wise man once said: "Logistics win wars"-- and you have demonstrated that via your downrange program. The crew onboard the Port Royal appreciated your kind gesture! Looking forward to doing business with you all again in the nearest future.

- **Ens. Yoto T., USS Port Royal CG-73**

Greetings from Niger, West Africa. A huge thanks to the NEX Sigonella, Sicily, team. They coordinated rapid Wi-Fi installation for the 324 Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron personnel at NAS Sigonella. It's a huge mission and quality of life multiplier.

- **CMSgt Stuart A., USAF**

NCTRF Pivots 3D Knitting Research to Face Covering Development

In May 2020, the Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP) directed NEXCOM's Navy Clothing and Textile Research Facility (NCTRF) to pivot its 3D knitting research from Flight Deck Jerseys to personal protective face coverings for Navy Sailors and the U.S. market to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Seamless 3D knit technology enables rapid prototyping, short lead times and sustainable production of textile products.

Utilization of the The Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) on-going program for 3D knitting technology development within industry has proven to provide a more streamlined and efficient approach to produce an item. Evaluation of the first prototype iteration of a Berry compliant 3D face cover began in July 2020. This particular face cover was a one-size unisex design made of recycled polyester and nylon-spandex blend. The 3D face cover was also evaluated in the lab using strenuous shipboard laundry testing, receiving outstanding results for overall material and design durability. Volunteers from NCTRF, NEXCOM, NAVSUP, OPNAV and NAVSEA wear-tested the prototype for 30 days and provided necessary feedback on its form, fit and function. The overall feedback from wear test participants was implemented in both investigation of new fabrics and updates to design for the next prototype evaluation.

In-depth research was also conducted to determine the most protective and functional yarn blends and knit structures for the next face cover prototype. Several knit structures and fiber blends were tested for particular filtration efficiency (PFE), particle shedding, differential pressure (breathing comfort) and physical properties to evaluate the overall material durability and functionality. The best performing material was down-selected for the next 3D face cover wear test in fiscal year 2021.

Concurrently, the development of a hybrid N95 knit-mask interface that consists of a 3D printed frame and the 3D knitted textile interface design is in process providing a potential for additional source of supply in the medical field and also areas requiring this high level of protection. A prototype of the N95 hybrid design is anticipated to be wear-tested in Phase II in fiscal year 2021. Discussions are on-going in regards to the stringent requirements for N95 as it aligns to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and National Institute for Occupational Safety (NIOSH) certification approval processes required for N95 masks.

"Our continued work with small businesses and new technologies like 3D knitting will continue to move technology forward and greatly benefit our Navy's warfighters," said Magdalena Mulherin, Clothing Designer and technical point of contact at NCTRF for this effort. "NCTRF will continue to pursue new technologies and present new solutions to meet the requirements of Sailors within variable Navy environments."



Micro Market@Sea Satisfies Sailors' Cravings

On Nov. 30, NEXCOM's Ships Store Program opened the first Micro Market@Sea onboard the USS San Antonio (LPD 19). Ship personnel will now have access to over 100 snack items with the potential to stay open 24 hours a day/seven days a week when operationally feasible.

"We are excited to open the first Micro Market@Sea onboard a U. S. Navy ship," said Scott Gray, Vice President, NEXCOM's Ships Store Program. "As a retired Master Chief, I know first-hand that a ship never sleeps and Sailors want to be able to purchase something to eat whenever they are awake and working, regardless of what time that may be. It's great that afloat Sailors now have the chance to be able to do that in their Micro Market@Sea."

The 75 sq.-ft. Micro Market@Sea is an operation that works on an 'honor system' as a self-service, self-checkout store. To checkout, Sailors insert their CAC cards, scan the items for purchase and pay with their Navy Cash Card. The Ships Store Program worked with the Naval Supply Systems Command Business Systems Center in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, to develop a module within the USS San Antonio's ships store software, ROM3, for the self-service check-out capability. In order to help deter theft and assist in monitoring, the store has a camera system set in place at checkout.

NEXCOM has plans to open other Micro Market@Sea locations in the future. "The USS San Antonio is the prototype for proof of concept to see if we could open and run a Micro Market on a ship," said Gray. "With this location official open and running smoothly, we will begin looking at other ships that can support a Micro Market@Sea."

Beyond the Micro Market@Sea, NEXCOM has nearly 50 ashore Micro Markets. The first Micro Market opened at the Southeast Regional Maintenance Center in Mayport, Florida, in 2015. Since then, nearly 50 Micro Markets have opened on Navy bases in the continental United States, Bahrain and Guam.



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