Anchored in Service: Eighty Years of NEXCOM

By: Retired Rear Adm. Robert J. Bianchi, Chief Executive Officer, NEXCOM

Over the course of my nearly 44-year career with the U.S. Navy, on active duty and as a Department of the Navy civilian, I've come to appreciate that an organization's mission is rarely sustained by headlines or single defining moments. And, operational readiness is shaped not only by training plans, exercises and deployments, but also by the everyday systems, people and services that support our Sailors and their families. Not surprisingly, it is these steady, dependable services that allow each Sailor and Navy command to remain focused on the mission and always at the ready.

For 80 years, the Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM) has been one of those indispensable pillars of service. Established on April 1, 1946, during the years following World War II, NEXCOM emerged to satisfy a very practical need to support the quality of life of the globally deployed force. Navy Exchanges, ship's stores and Navy Lodges became familiar touchpoints for Sailors navigating the demands of military life. Working together, military members, civilians and industry professionals built the systems that deliver fuel, food, uniforms, equipment and essential services to our Warfighters and their families. As those capabilities evolved over time, the purpose never wavered: to provide reliable support wherever duty calls.

Today, that charge is not simply continuing – it is accelerating. NEXCOM has moved forward with laser focus. Investments in modernized facilities, advanced textile research for uniforms, redesigned Navy hospitality and enhanced personal telecommunications reflect how our command is adapting to the Navy's changing demands. These efforts align closely with the Chief of Naval Operations' emphasis in his 2026 Sailor First priorities and on the concept of a force

“built in the foundry,” shining a spotlight on these essentials that directly shape the quality and readiness of the fleet. Expanded capabilities are reshaping how Sailors and families access NEXCOM’s quality-of-life services that enable them in an increasingly connected world.

I see the results of these initiatives most clearly in the moments that define a Sailor’s career, whether reporting for their first night at boot camp, moving overseas to a new duty station, preparing for deployment or retiring after years of service. In each case, NEXCOM’s dedication fuels the fleet’s momentum. We help reduce uncertainty and reinforce a simple but steadfast truth: Navy readiness is strengthened when NEXCOM steps forward to care for those who courageously volunteer to serve our nation — not only in times of crisis, but every single day.

NEXCOM operates with the understanding that our responsibility extends beyond delivering service. We also carefully manage the resources entrusted to us. One hundred percent of enterprise earnings are returned to support Navy quality-of-life programs, fueling initiatives that strengthen the well-being of Navy communities. Since our inception, NEXCOM has given over $3.8 billion to Navy Morale, Welfare and Recreation! That’s not just good stewardship – that's commitment. NEXCOM is sustaining the force for both today’s challenges and for generations to come.

As I reflect on this milestone for our command, I am struck by how much of our legacy has been shaped by continued presence rather than prominence alone. Over eight decades, NEXCOM’s services have become part of the familiar cadence of Navy life, found in the arrivals, departures and transitions that mark both military service and the broader flow of life itself. That enduring rhythm has built deep trust, one that moves with the fleet and reaches far beyond the shore-to-sea continuum connecting the Navy’s mission to the lives of those it serves.

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About NEXCOM

The Navy Exchange Service Command enables warfighter readiness and strengthens the Navy's quality of life mission. Providing essential products, services, hospitality and outfitting Navy communities around the globe, NEXCOM is continuously evolving to meet the demands of today's military operational environment. As further sustainment to Navy Warfighters and military families, 100% of the command's earnings are directed to Navy quality of life programs, amounting to over $3.7 billion since 1946. NEXCOM's enduring mission and lines of effort serve as a critical resource and a vital capability within the Naval Supply Systems Command Enterprise.