



Global Exchange

THE ASSOCIATE NEWSLETTER FOR THE NEXCOM ENTERPRISE

From the CEO

This spring has been a busy one for the NEXCOM Enterprise! First, I'm happy to announce that our worldwide rollout of our X-Store point-of-sale system is now complete! The rollout, which began in June 2022, encompassed 267 stores and 1,959 cash registers. This massive rollout was completed on time in just 10 months! As with any new system, there have been some growing pains and hiccups along the way, but rest assured, our Operations and Information Technology teams continue to work to ensure this new system is working as it should be. Thank you for your patience and working through the disruptions to ensure our patrons continued to receive PREMIER customer service.

April also brought the good news that NEXCOM has earned the designation as a "VETS Indexes Recognized Employer" in the 2023 VETS Indexes Employer Awards! It was an honor to be recognized for something we do naturally – hire and retain veterans and military family members! To find out more about this award, check out the story on page 3.

As you may have heard, a cyber transport systems journeyman with the Massachusetts Air National Guard, was arrested in April and accused of leaking classified documents online. In the wake of that incident, the Deputy Defense Secretary, Kathleen H. Hicks, sent guidance on Safeguarding Responsibilities Regarding Classified Information. She stressed to all DoD personnel that failure to appropriately safeguard classified information is a reportable security incident; that all personnel should refrain from speculating about unauthorized disclosures and should take care not to discuss classified information with any person not authorized to receive such information; and not to access or download documents with classified markings from unclassified websites,



either from home or work, as the data may be classified, it may be associated with hostile foreign elements, or it may contain malicious code or embedded capabilities that could introduce cyber threats into our information systems. Ms. Hicks stressed that personnel with access to classified information are trusted stewards of that information and the responsibility to safeguard classified information is a lifetime requirement for each individual granted a security clearance. Please do your part to ensure that classified information stays classified!

Finally, we have entered into the 101 Critical Days of Summer, which starts Memorial Day and runs through the end of Labor Day weekend. Please be careful while you're out enjoying the warmer weather or traveling with your family or friends on vacation. Also, be careful in the summer heat. For tips on what you can do to avoid heat-related illnesses, I encourage you to read the article on page 4. Stay safe, enjoy your summer and Keep charging!

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

“CMC’s CORNER”

CMDCM (FMF/SW/AW) Anna Wood
Command Master Chief
NEXCOM

Kon’nichiwa, Hafa Adai, Annyeonghaseyo and HELLO! These are just some of the ways I have greeted our command members and Sailors across the globe since our last conversation. I hope it is evident that I have embraced my role to get the word out on how amazing our command is, to be the “voice of NEXCOM”! I am also bringing back feedback to HQ to be the “voice of Sailors and associates” as well!

Thank you for all you do for our Navy!

In March, I was in sunny San Diego to visit our NEXCOM team at Naval Base San Diego, Naval Air Station North Island and Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach. There is more to Southern California than sunshine and beaches; I witnessed the hundreds of NEXCOM family members excited to serve the fleet. While in San Diego, I briefed the Region Senior Enlisted Leaders (SELs), hosted by the Installation Command Master Chief (CMC). I conducted an impromptu All-Enlisted Call on USS BOXER (LHD-4), thanks to CMDCM Romero, which was super awesome to talk with our “Haze Gray and Underway” Shipmates. Finally, I was fortunate to have an hour to speak to our Fleet Marine Force SELs at Camp Pendleton during their BSO-27 Conference. Oorah!

In April and May, I was in Newport, Rhode Island, to deliver the command brief to Supply Corps School and Senior Enlisted Academy. I also took my first trip outside the U.S. to visit our team and Sailors in Chinhae and Busan, South Korea. Although we don't have a large NEXCOM footprint across the Korean peninsula, I was able to communicate with our AAFES SEL counterpart to help increase Quality of Life there, specifically uniform item availability. From there, I went to Yokosuka and Atsugi, Japan, and then Guam. What an amazing group of associates we

have who are so happy to serve! Thank you for your welcoming spirit! I have a soft spot for our service members serving overseas as I spent 11 years abroad and understand personally some of the struggles they and their families face.



Thank you to our District VPs Roland Santos and Matt Barnwell; our General Managers Dave Thompson, Rick Pimentel, Charlene Dubose, Lisa Ballejo and the Region CMCs and Installation CMCs for hosting tours, briefs and meetings to provide an opportunity for the community to address concerns personally. Bravo Zulu to the teams at each of these locations for speaking to me about the unique concerns of our patrons and trusting me to help make a difference.

Every year, the Navy meritoriously promotes 18 First Class Petty Officers to Chief Petty Officer through the Sailor of the Year program. I recently sat on the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV) board at the Pentagon to select the Navy Shore SOY. What a privilege it was to “Make a Chief” that day!! Additionally, I spoke on behalf of NEXCOM at the U.S. Fleet Forces SOY Board Spouse/Guest Education Event. One more audience to celebrate what we do for our Navy families!

THANK YOU for all that you do for our Navy! If there is anything that I can do to make your jobs easier, please know that I sincerely want to help and make a difference. YOU MATTER!

I want to be your first call, just let me know what is on your mind: anna.wood@nexweb.org; (757) 631-3608 (w); and (757) 353-0632 (c). Looking forward to building our strong team focused on QOL and mission readiness!! Hooyah!

NEXCOM Earns VETS Indexes Recognized Employer Award

NEXCOM earned the designation “VETS Indexes Recognized Employer” in the 2023 VETS Indexes Employer Awards. The award recognizes NEXCOM’s commitment to recruiting, hiring, retaining, developing and supporting veterans and the military-connected community.

“As a Navy veteran who was fortunate enough to become NEXCOM’s first civilian CEO, I’m very

“Veterans bring a wealth of talent and experience with them, which is utilized in every area of our organization, from retail, to services, to hospitality, to telecommunications.”

proud of our ongoing efforts to actively support our military communities by employing veterans,” said retired Rear Adm. Robert J. Bianchi, Chief Executive Officer of NEXCOM. “In fact, nearly half of our global workforce of 14,000 associates has a military affiliation. Veterans bring a wealth of talent and experience with them, which is utilized in every area of our organization, from retail, to services, to hospitality and to telecommunications. They make us a stronger organization, one that is better able to serve the needs of our men and women in uniform.”

The VETS Indexes conducts an in-depth survey and recognition program that analyzes employers’ policies, practices and outcomes in detail in five areas: veteran job candidate recruiting and hiring; veteran employee development and retention;

veteran-inclusive policies and culture; support for members of the National Guard and Reserves; and military spouse/family support. Participating organizations included companies large and small, government agencies and departments, nonprofit groups, colleges and universities. VETS Indexes recognized 200 organizations across the following award levels: 5 Star Employer, 4 Star Employer, 3 Star Employer and Recognized Employer.

“NEXCOM has demonstrated a commitment to recruiting veteran and military-connected employees, and then helping them grow and develop into leaders,” said George Altman, managing director of VETS Indexes. “The number of organizations participating in the 2023 VETS Indexes Employer Awards more than doubled since last year – but even in this highly competitive environment, NEXCOM distinguished itself among veteran employers and should be commended.”



Nearly half of NEXCOM’s 14,000 global workforce is military affiliated including U. S. Navy veterans, retired Chief Yeoman Robert Ross, Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer and retired Senior Chief Storekeeper Cleveland Rogers, Office Services Manager.

Bring Safety Home – Hot Weather Precautions

By: Alexandra Sahagun, Safety Program Coordinator, NEXCOM

NEXCOM associates have responsibility to follow safe and healthful practices, both at work and at home. While most of us work safely at our job, many forget to take this mentality home.

According to the National Safety Council, in 2021, 78% of all preventable injury-related deaths occurred in homes and communities.

Prevention of Heat-Related Illnesses

With potential heat waves impacting most of our locations in the summer, heat-related illnesses, both on and off the job, are on the rise. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an estimated 700 people die from extreme heat every year in the United States. There are four forms of heat-related illnesses: heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps and heat rash. While each may manifest into different forms of heat-related illnesses, prevention is key.

Drink Plenty of Fluids

Stay hydrated, regardless of your activity level. Sugary drinks and alcoholic drinks can cause you to lose more body fluid and should not be counted towards your daily fluid intake. In addition, try to drink room temperature water. Cold drinks may cause stomach cramps. Most importantly, don't wait until you're thirsty to start drinking fluids!

Stay Cool Outside

During the warmer months, wear lightweight and loose-fitting clothing. If you can, try to stay in air-conditioned areas as much as possible. Keep in mind that even though fans may provide comfort, if the temperature is in the high 90s, they will not prevent heat-related illnesses. If you can't stay indoors, take frequent breaks, work in the shade

as much as possible and protect your skin with sunscreen and a hat.

Stay Cool Inside

During a heat wave, keeping your air conditioning bill low is difficult. To help, ensure blinds and curtains are shut. It may even be useful to purchase heavy blackout curtains to deflect light and keep your home cool. Weather-stripping doors and windows, especially in older homes, will also keep cool air in and hot air out. Also, ensure your air conditioning filter(s) are clean and changed regularly to help your AC work more efficiently. Avoid hot showers and baths and using the oven as this will only increase the temperature in the home.

Additional Warm Weather Reminders

Never leave your children or pets in a parked car, even if the windows are cracked open. Children are at high risk for heat-related illnesses, as are people 65 years of age or older, pregnant women and those with chronic medical conditions. In 2022, according to the National Weather Service, 29 children died as a result of being left in hot cars.

Have a "Buddy System." If you have to work outdoors in extreme heat, have a friend or neighbor work with you, so you can monitor each other's health or call 9-1-1 in case of an emergency. In addition, have a plan to check in on family members, seniors and neighbors periodically during the hot months, especially during a heat wave.

Check your local news for health and safety updates, including extreme heat events and to ensure you are dressing appropriately for the weather.

Heat safety is the key for a safe summer for you and me!

Associates Win DoN Awards

**By: Donna Simpson, Legal Technician Supervisor,
NEXCOM Office of Counsel**

Several members of NEXCOM's Office of Counsel received awards from the General Counsel of the Navy for their outstanding support of the enterprise.

Alan Kaufman, Counsel, received the Department of the Navy Superior Civilian Service Award for his leadership within his department as well as for his "superb and innovative legal advice and support to the Chief Executive Officer and senior leaders of the NEXCOM Enterprise." In his citation, Kaufman was singled out for his advice and action that led to the successful execution to consolidate the Navy's lodging programs under NEXCOM, as directed by the Secretary of the Navy. In addition, he was recognized for his negotiations between NEXCOM and the Defense Logistics Agency that led to the success of the Navy Maternity Uniform Pilot Program.

Melanie Fix, Assistant Counsel, received the Department of the Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Award for "her superlative legal advice and counsel on a wide variety of issues." In particular, her citation noted her "creative, effective, and relentless case management and follow up" in a 13-year-old embezzlement case that allowed NEXCOM to determine damages and use offset pension payments to pay the restitution judgment, which resulted in NEXCOM recovering significant funds. In addition, Fix overhauled NEXCOM's decades-old Trading Partner Agreement. Her work on this contract document, which contains terms for vendors doing business with NEXCOM, resulted in efficiencies and significant improvements to the command's resale business operations.

Tisha Brown, Paralegal Specialist, received the Department of the Navy Office of General Counsel's Support Staff of the Year award. This award recognizes outstanding performance by employees who support attorneys under the Office of the General Counsel. Brown was cited for her significant contributions

in the process management of Confidential Financial Disclosure Reports (OGE 450s) as well as to NEXCOM's Ethics Program. She also, on her own initiative and working entirely independently, redesigned and published a robust and well developed web page and knowledge management center on the NEXCOM Hub to support the entire ethics program. In addition, she researched and developed proposals to reorganize and redesign the position descriptions and organizational relationships for the five person support staff team within NEXCOM's Office of Counsel and led collaboration efforts with the NEXCOM Human Resources Office to instantiate these changes. On top of all of this, she led efforts to develop a statement of work and a request for procurement for a legal office knowledge management application to replace the outdated and expensive application currently in place.



Melanie Fix, Tisha Brown and Alan Kaufman pictured with their awards.

A ROSCA by Any Other Name...

Ethics and You

By Michael D. Rigg, Ethics Counselor, NEXCOM

This article addresses ethical issues related to Rotating Savings and Credit Associations or “ROSCAs.”

According to “What Is a Rotating Savings and Credit Association?” (thebalancemoney.com): A ROSCA is an informal financial institution where a group of people comes together to contribute money to a common fund. These groups are often made up of family members, friends or members of the same community. Each member contributes an equal amount, and over time, all of the members get an opportunity to withdraw money from the fund. In this way, each member acts as both a lender and a borrower.

Across the globe, ROSCAs have a variety of names, e.g., Tontine (Cambodia), Gameya (Egypt), Tanda (Mexico) and Asusu (Sierra Leone) (Source: discussion paper-ROSCAs.pdf (philadelphiafed.org)). Paluwagans, which originated in the Philippines, are a type of ROSCA.

Among the issues related to ROSCAs are limitations on gifts between employees, prohibitions against fundraising in the workplace and conflicts of interest.

Participation in a ROSCA as a Prohibited Gift

According to 5 C.F.R. 2635.203(b), gift, “...includes any ... loan, forbearance or other item having monetary value.” So, by its very nature, a ROSCA qualifies as a gift. Remember, the general standards regarding gifts between employees found in 5 C.F.R. 2635.302:

An employee may not, directly or indirectly, give a gift to an official superior (such as a first or second line supervisor); and

An employee may not accept a gift from another employee receiving less pay.

While there are exceptions, none of them apply to

a ROSCA, which involves transfer of cash between employees.

ROSCAs as Prohibited Fundraising

Fundraising in the workplace is prohibited, unless it involves an “approved” charity, like the Navy - Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS) or a Recreation and Social Committee (RECCOM) approved in accordance with NEXCOMINST 5420.8L. ROSCAs are neither approved charities nor RECCOMs. Moreover, even if a ROSCA was a RECCOM, “Loans of RECCOM funds to any person or entity for any purpose are prohibited.”

ROSCAs as Conflicts of Interest

ROSCAs substitute for financial institutions, like banks or credit unions. As noted earlier, “... each member acts as both a lender and a borrower.” Each member has a vested interest in the financial health of the participants. So if, for example, a supervisor must consider taking an adverse personnel action against another member of the ROSCA, that supervisor may decline to take the action because it might hurt the ability of the employee to make contributions to the ROSCA. 5 C.F.R. 2635.101(b) (2) reminds us that “Employees shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty.” Extraneous financial matters, such the impact on participating in a ROSCA have no place in the decision-making process.

In sum, if you decide to participate in a ROSCA, keep the ROSCA and your participation away from the workplace and your co-workers.

As always, feel free to contact Michael Rigg, NEXCOM’s Ethics Counselor, at 757-631-3611 or Michael.Rigg@nexweb.org with any questions.

LEARN Turns One!

By: Angela Stanford, Organizational Development & Training Specialist, NEXCOM

LEARN, NEXCOM's digital Learning Management System, celebrated one year since its launch! LEARN gives our enterprise the ability to manage, deliver and track associate training for compliance and continued development. In its first year, LEARN has enabled access to new professional development opportunities, supported enterprise growth and provided a savings to enterprise-wide training initiatives!

In its first year, LEARN has enabled access to new professional development opportunities, supported enterprise growth and provided a savings to enterprise-wide training initiatives.

"LEARN ensures that associates receive consistent training and development, regardless of their location or department," said Stephen D. Hatfield, Director, Learning & Organizational Development at NEXCOM. "This helps to create a uniform skill set and knowledge base across the organization. It enables learners to access learning materials anytime, anywhere and at their convenience, allowing them to learn at their own pace. LEARN is also giving us the ability to create and deliver content to specific audiences, such as our LEAD program that we recently launched for all supervisors and managers. While there is still room for improvement, such as providing devices to field sites, Wi-Fi access issues and buffering times, I feel we've made significant progress in ensuring associates have access to quality learning and development opportunities. We remain committed to continuously and supporting our associates' personal and professional growth to drive the organization's success."

LEARN has provided access to personalized learning

for all associates through the public LEARN Library. Associates can focus on their specific learning needs, ranging from Microsoft Excel, customer service and communication skills, to leadership development courses. In addition to job-related training, LEARN also provides access to health and wellness courses such as personal finance, stress management, nutrition and exercise and mindfulness, which helps support associate satisfaction and retention.

LEARN provides a cost-effective way to deliver new hire and annual compliance training, as it eliminates the need for physical training materials and reduces time expenses associated with training. During its first year, LEARN has provided an estimated savings of \$318,225 for new hire training and an annual potential savings of \$382,200 for compliance training. On the horizon is the migration of the NEXCOM Hospitality Group training programs from a contracted learning management system to LEARN, which will provide an additional savings of more than \$10,000 a month.

Another benefit to LEARN is the ability to provide real-time tracking and reporting of associate progress, enabling managers and supervisors to monitor performance and identify areas that require attention. Within LEARN, each manager can view their team's learning plans. NEXCOM headquarters also provides a data dashboard so districts can easily monitor and track completion progress. This data can also be used to modify training programs to maximize their effectiveness. For example, NEXCOM instructional designers have incorporated gamification elements to make training more engaging and enjoyable. In addition, instructional designers are currently working on offering training modules in multiple languages.

LEARN has been an asset to NEXCOM by providing a cost-effective, personalized and efficient way to deliver compliance training, professional learning opportunities, monitor associate progress and improve performance. LEARN is still in its infancy, but the future impact for NEXCOM is positive! Happy First Birthday LEARN!

Associate Spotlight

I HAVE BEEN in military 19 years and never stayed at a nicer or friendlier NGIS than the one in Bahrain! The front desk and housekeeping managers and the maintenance guy were all so helpful and friendly.

MANY OF THE ASSOCIATES at NEX Rota, Spain, recognize me from my frequent visits and always greet me with a smile. I was recognized and treated courteously, as always. Kind of like a small town feeling where everyone knows you. Many retirees frequent this store, and I think most would agree that the staff there brightens our day with the way they treat us.

AFTER GETTING AN OIL CHANGE off base, I noticed smoke coming from my engine. One of my staff suggested to me that NEX Guam has a towing service - and THANK GOODNESS you DO!!! They were able to provide me with prompt support. I really appreciate the help I got from the tow-truck driver. He was friendly, very professional and kept me entertained on the entire ride to the NEX Car Care Center. The tow truck driver and the NEX Car Care Center saved the day for me and I am very grateful for the service I received. Just wanted you to know you have great people working for you. And although the driver was "just doing his job," it meant the world to me.

- Marcy, Naval Base Guam

IT WAS A PLEASURE to stay at NGIS El Centro, California. I felt welcomed, safe and comfortable. I love the cleanliness of the rooms. Thank you, thank you, thank you for your service and for offering this wonderful place!

I WRITE TO TELL YOU of my pleasant experience at Navy Lodge Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. I have been staying at Navy Lodges around the world since 1977. I have never experienced a higher level of cleanliness, courtesy and hospitality than during my stay there. The staff was eager to help and responsive to my every question or request. It is the little things that matter. Navy Lodge Guantanamo Bay is definitely a cut above the rest.

- Neil P.

I JUST WANT TO MAKE SURE that NEX Jacksonville, Florida, is aware of an absolutely wonderful associate you have in your shoe department. I don't believe I have ever experienced such incredible customer service. She went out of her way to assist me and make sure the shoes were right. She was very professional, very kind and determined to do the right thing. I will definitely recommend her to anyone needing assistance. Others could learn from her. She is quite the asset to the NEX. She needs to be recognized for the effort and consideration she delivered. Thank you so much!

LOVE NAVY LODGE NEW YORK! Due in HUGE part to the incredible professional and courteous staff! Extremely caring!! The rooms are also fantastic.... feels like HOME every time I stay!! I'll be back soon. Thanks for EVERYTHING!"

- Joseph B.



The Global Exchange is published quarterly for associates of the Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM) Enterprise by the Public Affairs Office, 3280 Virginia Beach Blvd., Virginia Beach, VA 23452-5724. Send stories and photos to global.exchange@nexweb.org. Content does not necessarily reflect the official views of the Department of Defense. All content submitted is subject to editing and is published based on timeliness and space available. NEXCOM's parent command is the Naval Supply Systems Command.