

NAVY LODGE PROGRAM Celebrates 50 Years

During the week of Feb. 4, Navy Lodge Little Creek-Fort Story in Virginia Beach, Va., kicked off the Navy Exchange Service Command's (NEXCOM) Navy Lodge Program 50th anniversary celebration. The program was created in 1969, and the first Navy Lodge opened at NAB Little Creek on Feb. 6, 1971.

Anniversary cake-cuttings took place at Little Creek and at many of the other 38 Navy Lodges around the world.

"We are excited to share this milestone with all of our guests throughout this year," said retired Rear Adm. Robert J. Bianchi, NEXCOM chief executive officer (CEO). "What started primarily as a resource during permanent change of station (PCS) military moves has evolved into truly a home away from home for our military families. Our guests must think so as well. Our most recent guest service scores were 4.8 out of 5.0, which is outstanding!"

Fifty years ago, the Navy Lodge Program was created to bolster scarce housing options for military families associated with permanent-change-of-station (PCS) moves. Teaming up with the Bureau of Naval Personnel and the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, construction began on reasonably priced temporary lodging facilities.

Unlike other services' temporary lodging facilities, the Navy Lodge Program distinguished itself by operating with non-appropriated funds (NAF).

TODAY'S NAVY LODGE

Over the past 50 years, the Navy Lodge Program has grown to 39 facilities worldwide. When checking into today's Navy Lodge, guests will find amenities such as free Wi-Fi, a complimentary breakfast each morning, and a weekly manager's reception.

Room choices include family suites with flat-screen satellite televisions and fully stocked kitchens. Navy Lodges also have laundry facilities and vending machines, as well as outside play areas and workout rooms at many sites; so guests have what they need in one location. Every Navy Lodge is accessible. As an added convenience, cats and dogs up to 70 pounds in weight can stay with their owners at most locations.

"The service Navy Lodge Little Creek-Fort Story provides to our military members is second to none," said Cmdr. Brent Fulton, USN, JEB Little Creek-Fort Story executive officer. "Last winter, the heat went out in our barracks during a very cold stretch of weather. The Navy Lodge opened up 60 rooms so that our sailors would have a warm place to stay."

The 50th anniversary celebration is planned to continue Navy-wide throughout the year with a series of events, activities and surprises for guests and the military communities where Navy Lodges are located.

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The NL Little Creek, Va., ceremony honoring the Navy Lodge's 50th anniversary included (from left): NEXCOM CEO Robert Bianchi; Navy Lodge Program Vice President Michael Bockelman; Navy Lodge Little Creek-Fort Story General Manager Paige Gillespie; Cmdr. Brent Fulton, USN, JEB Little Creek-Fort Story executive officer; NEXCOM Command Master Chief Shannon Howe; and Capt. Darrell Mathis, NEXCOM deputy director, military services.

NEXCOM PHOTO



NAS Pensacola, Fla., Navy Lodge General Manager Carla Gutierrez and Command Master Chief Mario Rivers cut a 50th-anniversary cake at the Pensacola Navy Lodge on Jan. 25

U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY BRUCE CUMMINS



NB Kitsap, Wash., Commanding Officer Capt. Alan Schrader (back row) and Command Master Chief Beau Willis (far right) joined Navy Lodge Bangor General Manager Elizabeth Leavitt (front row, middle) and staff Jan. 17 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Navy Lodge Program.

U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY 3RD CLASS PETTY OFFICER JULIA GRELLA