



FROM THE BRIDGE

ISSUE NO.7



ELEVATING EXCELLENCE THROUGH UNRESTRICTED SUPPORT



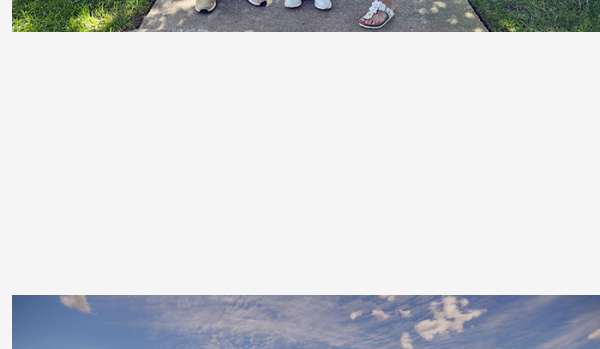
Unrestricted giving is the engine that powers all philanthropy at the Naval Academy Foundation. As the most versatile way to invest in the Academy's future, unrestricted gifts provide essential, flexible support that allows the Foundation to direct funds where they're needed most and meet the evolving needs of midshipmen.

Naval Academy Foundation Board member Lynn Atkinson has a long history of prioritizing unrestricted giving in her philanthropy with the Foundation—a decision she says is influenced by her desire to make a meaningful impact on the Brigade of Midshipmen.

[Read More](#)

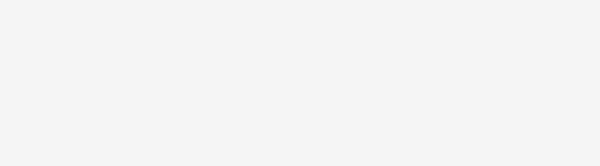
ONE PARENT'S JOURNEY TO PHILANTHROPIC GENEROSITY

Inspired by her daughter's journey at the Naval Academy, Courtney Elish transformed her pride as a parent into generous financial support, helping ensure future midshipmen thrive through her family's efforts.



A NEW CHAPTER AT NAVY-MARINE CORPS MEMORIAL STADIUM

Bruce R. Lakefield '67 and wife Bernadine make landmark \$10 million commitment to support new pavilion for flagship events and hospitality.



[Learn More](#)

TAYLOR FAMILY EVENT WING DEDICATED AT FAC

Michael Taylor '86 honored for transformational \$15 million gift to support U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association & Foundation daily operations.



[Read More](#)

COLUMBARIUM FUNDS RAISED

Thanks to generous support, the U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association & Foundation has met its \$1.8M goal for the new Hospital Point columbarium annex—construction to begin soon!



[Learn More](#)

FIRST FRIDAY FACULTY LECTURE SERIES: Series 2 Recap



WARGAMING EFFORTS AT THE U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY

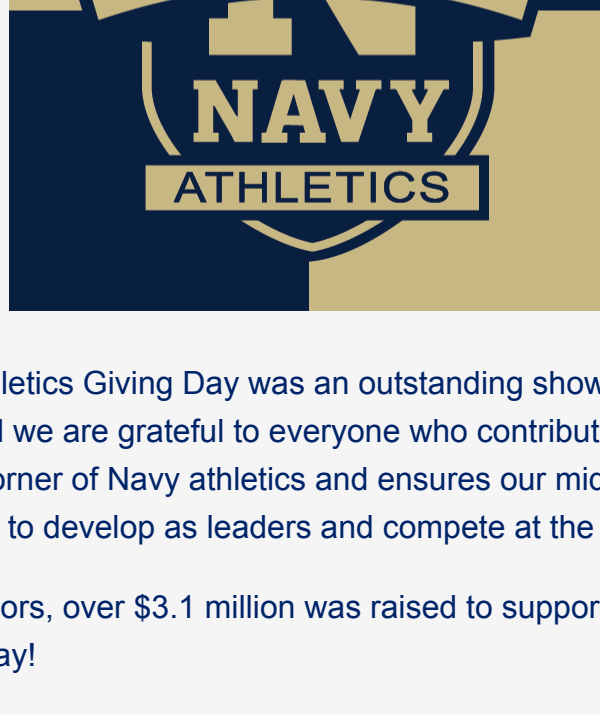
The 2025 First Friday Faculty Lecture series kicked off this fall with a substantive look at the academic work driving the Naval Academy's mission today. The season opened with a first-ever hybrid program held during President's Circle Weekend in Hopper Hall in October. CDR Kenneth Maroon, Col Eric Reid and CAPT BJ Armstrong, led a focused session on wargaming, outlining how this long-standing strategic tool continues to shape decision-making and officer development.

In November, Dr. Ellis Fenske and Dr. Joe Hatfield presented a briefing on Tor and the Dark Web. Their discussion provided attendees with a grounded understanding of anonymity networks, cybersecurity implications and the challenges these technologies pose in modern information environments.

The series concluded on 5 December with Dr. Joseph P. Smith's examination of project-based learning "the Oceanography way." His session demonstrated how hands-on inquiry, rigorous data analysis, and real-world application prepare midshipmen for operational problem-solving.

Each lecture reinforced the depth of expertise within the faculty and the value of direct engagement with the Academy's academic leaders. Stay tuned for the spring lineup to be announced soon—we cannot wait for you to join us in February!

THANK YOU FOR A STRONG NAVY ATHLETICS GIVING DAY



This year's Navy Athletics Giving Day was an outstanding show of support for the physical mission and we are grateful to everyone who contributed. Your generosity strengthens every corner of Navy athletics and ensures our midshipmen have the resources they need to develop as leaders and compete at the highest level.

Thanks to 2,467 donors, over \$3.1 million was raised to support Navy Athletics during Giving Tuesday!

With more than 95% of the annual athletics budget coming from private support, your participation makes a direct and measurable impact. Whether you designated your gift to one of our 36 varsity programs, supported club sports, or contributed to the **Fund for Athletic Excellence**, you helped advance the mission that prepares midshipmen to win—on the field and far beyond it.

Thank you for standing with Navy athletics and for continuing to invest in the *Margin of Excellence* that sets the Naval Academy apart.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



ARMY-NAVY FOOTBALL

13 DECEMBER 2025

3 p.m. ET-Kickoff at M&T Bank Stadium, Baltimore, MD. [Details](#)



WEEK OF GRATITUDE

12-15 JANUARY 2026

A Week of Gratitude—to thank all who make our mission possible!

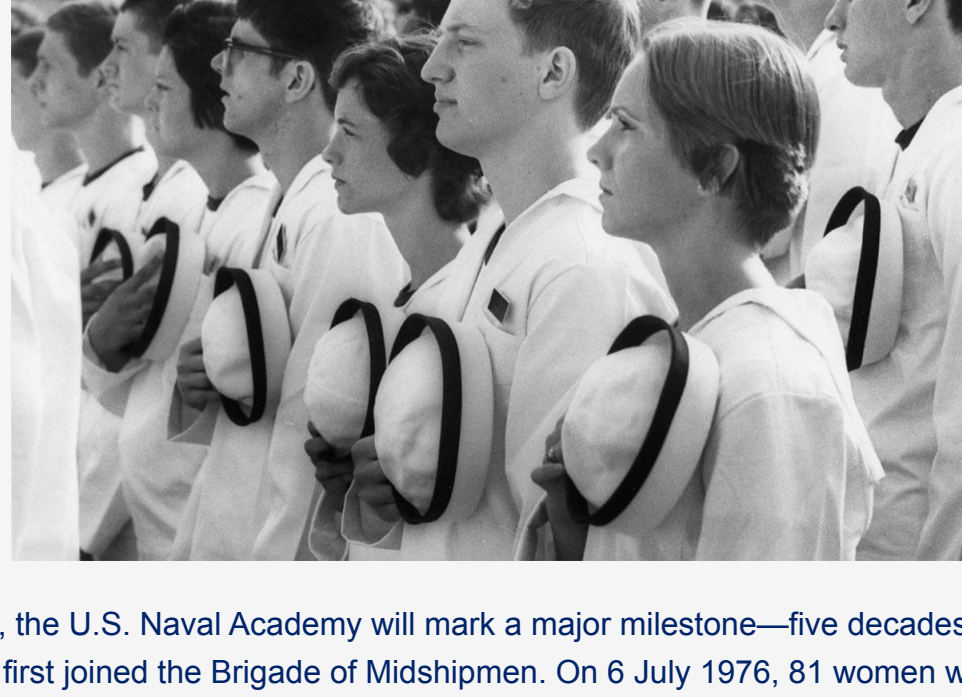


USNA LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

25-29 JANUARY 2026

The Elements of Winning Teams. [Details](#)

HONORING 50 YEARS OF WOMEN AT THE NAVAL ACADEMY



In 2026, the U.S. Naval Academy will mark a major milestone—five decades since women first joined the Brigade of Midshipmen. On 6 July 1976, 81 women were inducted as the first female midshipmen, forever changing the face of the Academy.

That bold step in 1976 laid the foundation for generations of women who have excelled academically, professionally and in uniform. Their achievements, from trailblazing officers to distinguished graduates, from pioneers in traditionally male fields to leaders at sea and in shore commands, reflect the strength, resilience and excellence that define the Academy.

As we approach 2026, we invite the entire Navy Family—alumni, midshipmen and supporters—to join in honoring this legacy. Together, we celebrate how far we've come and reaffirm our commitment to the principles of service, leadership and opportunities that guide the Academy.

SEE THE DIFFERENCE YOU MADE: 2025 Impact Underway Releases Soon!



The **2025 Impact Underway** report is almost here! See how your support translated into real results across everything from academic excellence to leadership development at the Naval Academy. You'll read about expanded STEM outreach that inspired thousands of young minds, growth in experiential learning programs, and enhancements to global study opportunities—all aimed at preparing the next generation of Naval officers.

Impact Underway will drop soon, detailing how gifts, large and small, are strengthening the Academy's foundation, elevating midshipmen performance and extending our reach both at home and abroad.

PLANNED GIVING: Key Tax Law Updates

Recent federal tax legislation introduces several changes that will directly affect charitable giving beginning in 2026. The elevated standard deduction has been made permanent—\$15,750 for individuals and \$31,500 for married couples filing jointly in 2025, with adjustments for inflation in future years.

Cash gift deductions up to 60% of adjusted gross income (AGI) will also continue for those who itemize. Beginning in 2026, non-itemizers will be able to deduct up to \$1,000 (individuals) or \$2,000 (married couples) in charitable gifts. The law also preserves the existing tax brackets and maintains a high federal estate and gift tax exemption, which will rise to \$15 million per individual.

Two new provisions, however, may influence how you plan your giving over the next two years. Starting in 2026, itemizers will need to donate at least 0.5% of their AGI to claim a charitable deduction, and top earners will see the value of their deduction reduced from 37 cents to 35 cents on the dollar.

These changes make 2025 an important year for anyone considering larger gifts or exploring blended strategies that combine cash with non-cash assets such as appreciated stock, real estate, or IRA giving for those 70½ and older. We encourage you to consult your tax advisor to determine how these updates may affect your plans—and to contact our office if you'd like to discuss how a current-use or legacy gift can advance the Naval Academy's mission: email plannedgiving@usna.com or call 410-295-4186.

Communications Team Earns CASE Best of District II Award



The U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association & Foundation Communications team has been recognized with a CASE Best of District II Award for Best Storytelling for its Legacy of Valor: World War II series. This project honored Naval Academy alumni who served in World War II by capturing their accounts with accuracy, depth, and respect.

Over the course of a year, the team traveled to six states to record the experiences of these veterans, ultimately producing twelve stories published across three 2024 *Shipmate* issues, The Daily Shipmate newsletter and USNA AA&F video and social platforms. The series not only preserved a critical part of Academy history but also reached and moved a broad audience—culminating in a roundtable discussion viewed more than 23,000 times on YouTube. This recognition underscores the importance of documenting the Academy's legacy and the dedication of our team to telling these stories with care.

[Explore the Legacy of Valor](#)

YEAR-END GIVING: Be Recognized in the Fluegel Alumni Center

As we close out the year, gifts to the Naval Academy Fund continue to provide essential unrestricted support for the Academy's highest priorities and for the mission-critical work of the U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association and Foundation. This fund gives the Superintendent the flexibility to address pressing needs as they arise and ensures we can serve the Brigade and the alumni community at the highest level.

We are also pleased to offer a meaningful way to recognize our most dedicated unrestricted supporters. Donors who contribute \$5,000 or more to the Naval Academy Fund between 1 January–31 December 2025 will be acknowledged on a new digital donor wall in the Fluegel Alumni Center. This annual display highlights those who choose to invest in the Naval Academy's *Margin of Excellence* and provides a visible reminder of the strength and commitment of our donor community.

Thank you for considering a year-end gift. Your support directly advances the Academy's mission and impacts every midshipman who walks the Yard.

[Give Now](#)



U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association and Foundation

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