

COASTLINE

2025 in Review



Look back at NAVSTA Rota's major events featured in the Coastline this year!

December 11, 2025 / Volume 35, Issue 11

U.S. Naval Activities Spain

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Happy Holidays from NAVSTA Rota!



Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota Commanding Officer Capt. Charles Chmielak, Executive Officer Cmdr. Justin Jennings, and Command Master Chief (CMC) Donald Alvarado got their gift delivery training from Santa himself during this year's holiday greetings video, which will be releasing soon. Thank you Team Rota for your accomplishments this year. Have a happy holiday season!

CO: Sorry, Team Rota, just getting some reps in to get ready for the big day.

XO: We just wanted to drop in and let you know how proud we are of all of your accomplishments throughout this year.

CO: Service members in Spain conducted more than 100 individual bilateral training events with our Spanish allies, bolstering interoperability and increasing lethality and capability. Morale, Welfare, and Recreation opened

the Waterfront Fitness Center, promoting healthy habits in close proximity of our five DDGs. Our Air Operations team supported more than 12000 flights and moved more than 5000 tons of cargo while Port Operations conducted more than 200 ship movements, allowing U.S. and allied vessels to execute operations wherever and whenever called upon. Our Security and Emergency Management teams achieved superior grades during Final Evaluation Problem, demonstrating our unwavering commitment to the safety, security, and welfare of our Rota family. Our Public Works department worked around the clock on over 150 projects worth more than 600 million dollars to steer Rota into the future. From our award-winning Navy Lodge to the best galley in the Region to our DODEA faculty that continue to provide a top-notch education for our growing community, Team Rota continues to provide unparalleled quality of service to ensure that you, the warfighters, and your families are cared for. We had many guests and visitors from across the Navy and from around the world visit our beautiful corner of Spain to see the incredible work that you do every day. We have shown on an international stage what Team Rota can do!

CO: XO, CMC, I'm getting a little tired of hanging here. Should we head down now?

XO: Oh, but I was starting to feel so santa-mental!

CMC: We would be nothing without the support of our Spanish hosts and our local communities.

XO: We would like to wish all of you: service members, civilians, contractors, local nationals, and families a very happy holidays.

CMC: And a happy new year too!

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coastlineeventas@gmail.com or 653-78-0296.

On The Front Cover



Coastline editions published over the course of 2025 make up a spread for the cover of this year's year-in-review. Thank you everyone for your continued support. We hope that you all enjoy looking back at what our installation was up to this year, and have a happy holidays!

Do You Like to Write or Take Photos?

The Coastline is looking for guest writers and story ideas. Are you traveling some place fun, attending a sporting event, participating in a workshop or cooking class or leading special training in your office or community? If so, we want to hear from you! Please send story and photo submissions or story ideas to The Coastline at rotacoastline@gmail.com.

Publication is subject to approval.

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NAVY FAMILY OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM



The **Navy Family Ombudsman Program** is designed to provide better and faster communication between Navy families and Navy leadership. Navy commands and all deploying units, including the reserves have an Ombudsman, typically a spouse of one of the command's active duty members. **Ombudsmen** are official, appointed, liaisons between commanding officers and families. They can expedite communication between the command and families. In addition, Ombudsmen provide information on services, upcoming events, and/or help in crisis situations. **Air Force Key Spouses & Family Readiness Assistants** are similar to Ombudsmen, support service members, their families, and command leadership. Contact your command's representative to be added to their distribution list.

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JANUARY

U.S. Navy EOD Participates in Black Sea Exercise Poseidon

Courtesy Story

Under Commander Task Force (CTF) 68, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) 8 along with EOD technicians from the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group participated in the mine countermeasures (MCM) exercise Poseidon, Oct. 31-Nov. 10, 2024 in Burgas, Bulgaria. U.S. Navy EOD liaison officers were also invited to be observers and advisors aboard Bulgarian, Romanian, and Turkish ships conducting various exercise-related activities within Bulgarian territorial waters. The ships form part of the new Black Sea MCM Task Group.

"We share our NATO Allies' commitment to a safe and prosperous Black Sea," said Capt. Jeremy Wheat, commodore, Task Force 68 Navy Expeditionary Forces Command Europe-Africa, who oversees EODMU 8. "Poseidon is a demonstration of that collective commitment."

Poseidon is an annual MCM exercise led by Bulgaria, Romania, and Türkiye. Activities included MCM training operations, floating mine response (FMR) training serials with live demolition charges, and diving operations with live explosive charges to rehearse bottom

mine search, locate, and over-pressure procedures. Poseidon is an inherently defensive exercise that aims to reduce maritime threats for all mariners, while advancing NATO Ally interoperability and capability.

"We achieved various MCM training objectives with our highly capable Bulgarian, Romanian, and Turkish Allies," said Cmdr. John P. Kennedy, commanding officer, EODMU 8. "I am personally grateful to Bulgaria for hosting this iteration and to all three nations for inviting us aboard their MCM ships."

Within the scope of Poseidon, the NATO hosts activated their Black Sea MCM Task Group for the third time since its summer inception. Bulgaria, Romania, and Türkiye formalized the trilateral task group earlier this year, and Türkiye assumed command first.

The Black Sea NATO Allies invited the U.S. and other non-Black Sea NATO Allies to be observers and to share their expertise and best practices.

"Türkiye graciously invited me aboard TCG Yzb. Güngör Durmuş to observe MCM operations during Poseidon," said Lt. Chad Keller, EODMU 8 liaison officer. "As the flagship of the Black Sea MCM

Task Group, the ship participated in various exercise serials within Bulgarian territorial waters. It was fascinating to witness our allies regional expertise, tactics, techniques, and procedures in the MCM domain.”

Keller also had the opportunity to engage with the crew and task group members, including current Task Group Commodore Capt. Yusuf Karagüllü. The Turkish naval officer also commanded Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group Two in 2021.

"While embarked, Capt. Karagüllé and task group liaison officers from Bulgaria and Romania shared their perspectives on present- and post-war, de-mining efforts, given their unique vantage point as Black Sea nations," said Keller. "We also discussed their thoughts on NATO involvement during future activations of the task group."

With the Poseidon activation, the task group concluded the three active periods it scheduled for 2024. Bulgaria is scheduled to assume command of the task group after the holidays on Jan. 2, 2025, according to Defense News.

CTF 68 closely tracks floating mines through open-source channels. Since

March 2022, more than 120 have been found in the Black Sea, with approximately 78% near Ukraine, 8% near Romania, 7% near Türkiye, and 5% near Bulgaria.

"We are proud to participate in Poseidon and our NATO Black Sea Allies' MCM Task Group, because both of these initiatives really get after the dangerous but noble and life-saving mission of de-mining the Black Sea," said Wheat. "Advancing MCM interoperability in this region is crucial at time of unprecedented risk from floating mines as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine."

CTF 68, headquartered in Rota, Spain, is a part of the U.S. Sixth Fleet (C6F) and commands all Naval Expeditionary Combat Forces in U.S. European Command and U.S. Africa Command areas of responsibility. Navy Expeditionary Combat Forces bridge the gap from sea to shore and provide expeditionary capabilities in remote, complex and austere environments.

C6F, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and interagency partners to advance U.S. national interests, security and stability in Europe and Africa.

The image shows the front page of the Alambique menu. It features a green header with delivery information, the restaurant's logo with the name 'ALAMBIQUE' and 'RESTAURANTE & HAMBURGERERIA' below it, and a large section titled 'YOUR RESTAURANT' with a grid of food photos. Below this is a section for 'PREMIUM MEATS & BURGERS' with images of various cuts of meat and burgers. A QR code is in the bottom left, and social media links and delivery details are in the bottom right.

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Cooper S Countryman

Transmission: 7-Speed Dual Clutch Transmission

Fuel: Gasoline

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Upholstery: TCB2 Vescin/cloth combination Black/Blue



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Defensa y Yo Professors Visit Naval Station Rota, Spain

By Lt. Charena Dedios
Naval Station Rota Public Affairs

Professors from public universities across Spain visit U.S. Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, Spain as part of the Defensa y Yo program, Jan. 14.

Spanish professors hailing from 16 different universities, and academic experts in the fields of international relations, political science, law, history and the like, participated in a series of engagements across the installation for a base tour.

In collaboration with the Spanish Armada and European Union Naval Force Operation (EUNAVFOR) Atalanta, the installation visit included tours from various departments and units

across NAVSTA Rota, including the fire department, Air Traffic Control Tower, Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 79, and USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51). Operational briefs from Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 60 and EUNAVFOR Atalanta were key highlights of the visit.

The professors enjoyed lunch at NAVSTA Rota's Gateway Galley and had the chance to "meet and greet" senior leadership from both U.S. Navy and Spanish Armada.

"The opportunity to provide a view into the daily operations of our installation, and to share the mission of our combined U.S. and Spanish efforts to support our warfighters and the fleet is something I will always value," said Capt. Teague Suarez, NAVSTA Rota's commanding

officer. "We are happy to partner with programs such as Defensa y Yo, created by the U.S. Embassy and Consulate General in Spain to develop a deeper understanding of our current defense and security environments in this incredibly dynamic time and theater."

Defensa y Yo is a program created by the U.S. Embassy and Consulate General in Spain as an initiative to raise awareness among Spanish university students about international security and defense topics, implemented by the support of non-governmental organizations, such as Helsinki España, and a network of Spanish public universities.

Coordinated with the help of the community relations program at NAVSTA Rota, the Defensa y Yo professor visit

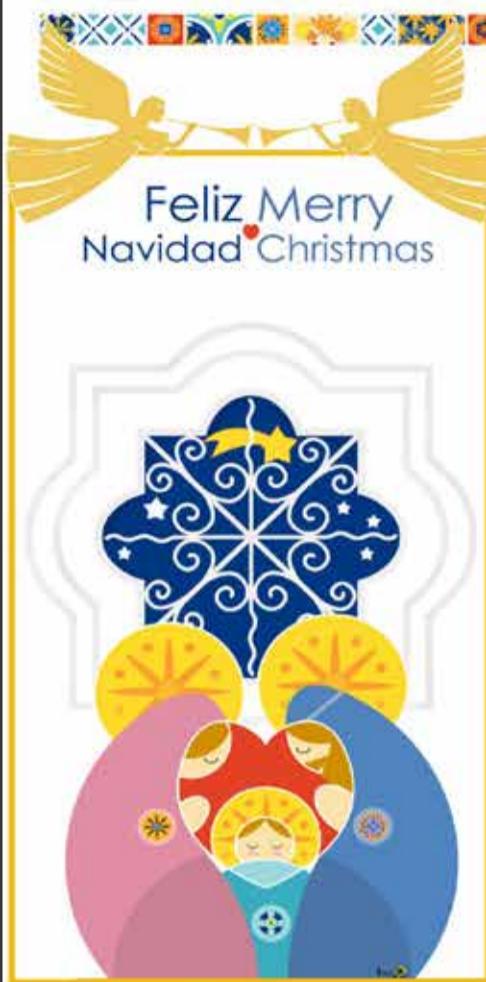
is one of the many ways the installation accomplishes its objective to educate and enhance cross-cultural exchanges that underpin the long-standing relationship between the U.S. Navy and allied Joint Forces in support of mutual national objectives.

As the "Gateway to the Mediterranean," NAVSTA Rota provides U.S., NATO and allied forces a strategic hub for operations in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. NAVSTA Rota is a force multiplier, capable of promptly deploying and supporting combat-ready forces through land, air and sea, enabling warfighters and their families, sustaining the fleet and fostering the U.S. and Spanish partnership.



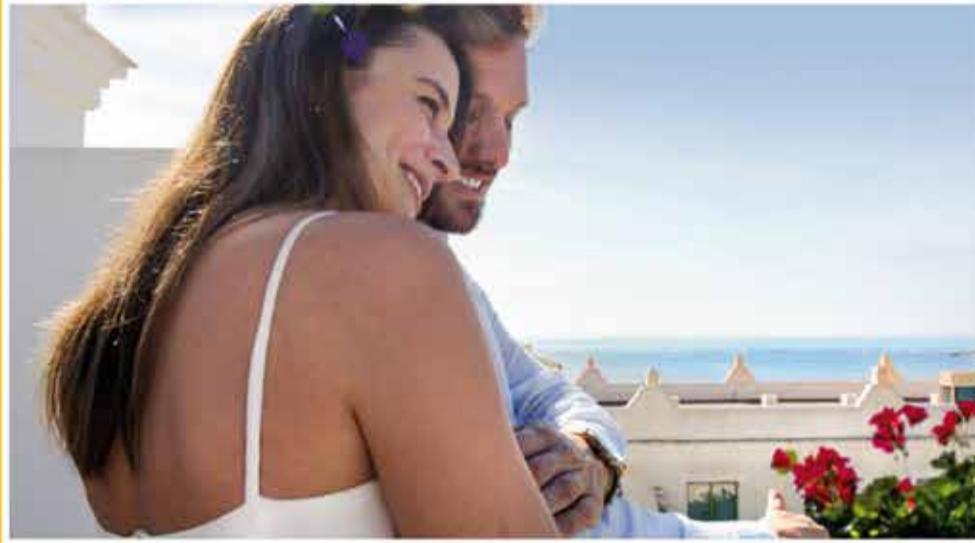
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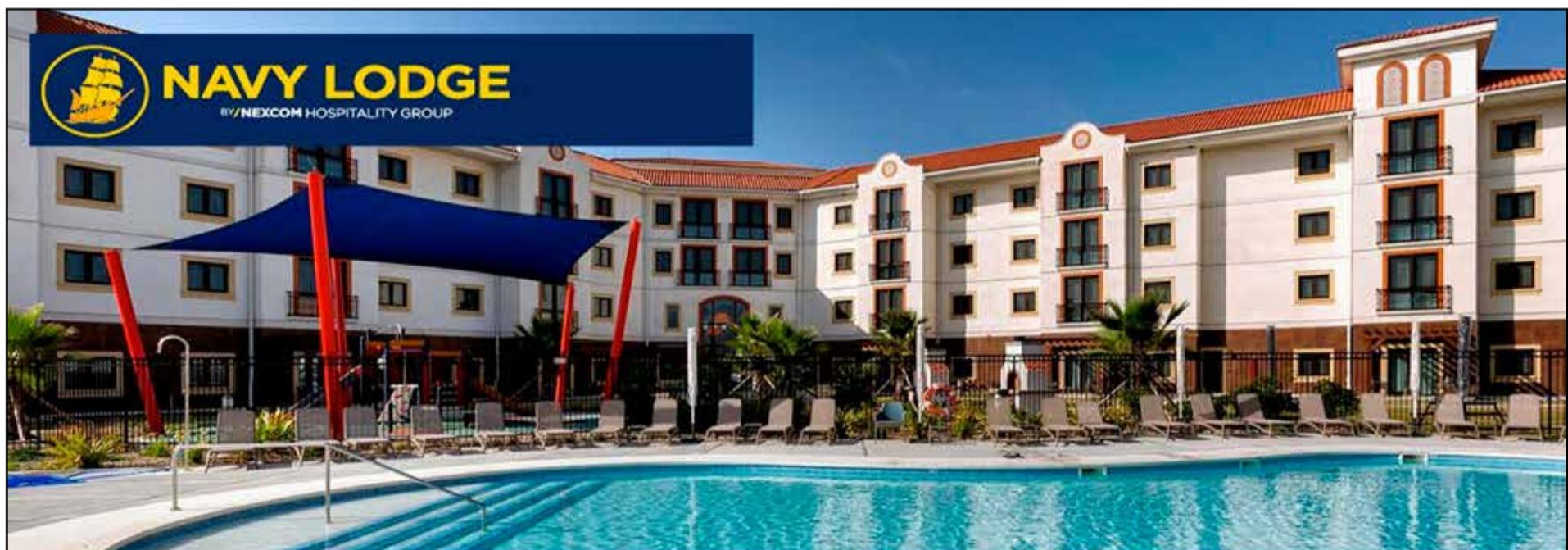


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PUBLISHER'S CORNER

BUFFALO SPORT TABERN: A NEW HANGOUT IN THE HEART OF ROTA

Just two months ago, Rota welcomed Buffalo Sports Tavern, a new sports bar that's already becoming a great place to unwind and enjoy some downtime off base.

Buffalo offers an experience designed for anyone who loves sports, good food, and a lively atmosphere. You'll find big-screen TVs showing the best games and sporting events, a solid selection of refreshing cocktails, and a tasty food menu that's sure to hit the spot. All of it comes together in a warm, welcoming setting perfect for hanging out with friends or meeting new people.

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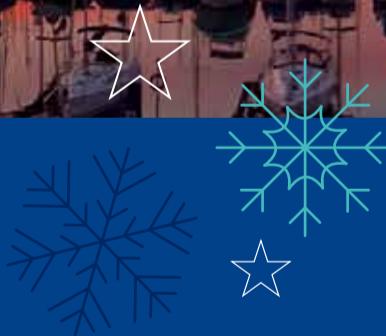
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HSM-79 Holds Change of Command Ceremony

By Mass Communication Specialist
2nd Class Julianna Lynch

Commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic

Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 79, the "Griffins," welcomed its newest commanding officer during a time-honored change of command ceremony aboard Naval Station Rota, Feb. 6.

During the change of command event, Cmdr. Alex "Bender" Haupt, a native of Lodi, Wisconsin, assumed all duties and responsibilities as the HSM-79 commanding officer from Cmdr. Chris "Rexy" Yost, of Mason City, Iowa.

The presiding officer for the ceremony, Capt. David Bizzarri, commodore, Helicopter Maritime Strike Wing Atlantic, talked about the importance of this command and the people who perform the mission.

"There is a reason why you say every

Griffin, every day. It is a mindset and a philosophy HSM-79 lives by and leads by on a daily basis. Griffins always do it the right way to enable and sustain operational superiority," Bizzarri said. "Teamwork is your greatest strength which is forged by the leadership and character of our Sailors and those who lead them."

During Yost's time as HSM-79's commanding officer, he provided a comprehensive strategy to create a path to mission accomplishment for 292 Forward Deployed Naval Forces warfighters in the 5th and 6th Fleet areas of responsibilities. He also established his squadron as a premier 6th Fleet combat unit while ensuring a 100-percent mission execution rate of all Commander Task Force (CTF) 67 operational tasking.

"It has been an amazing honor to

lead and serve the Griffin family in advancing maritime strike warfighting capabilities, strengthening interoperability and relationships with our NATO allies, and supporting United States' deterrence and maritime security efforts for various geographic combatant commanders."

Yost also led HSM-79 in achieving back-to-back Retention Excellence Awards (REA) for fiscal years 2023 and 2024, with HSM-79 being the recipient of the fiscal year 2024 REA Best in Class winner, and the highest retention rates across all HSM.

"Every Griffin should feel a deep sense of pride, purpose, and belonging for their invaluable contributions to the phenomenal forward-deployed mission success HSM-79 achieves every day. I look forward to watching the Griffins continue to soar under the leadership of

Commander Haupt."

After assuming command during the change of command ceremony, Haupt discussed maintaining the legacy of warfighting readiness at HSM-79.

"The Griffins will build upon our legacy of warfighting excellence, tactical enhancements, and integration with our Spanish and NATO allies, to provide for the continued defense of Europe and execution of US 6th Fleet objectives."

HSM-79's mission is to deploy the U.S. Navy's finest, combat ready HSM detachments to conduct joint maritime operations at any time and place by having an extraordinary team of warfighting professionals dedicated to maintaining a culture of excellence.



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MARCH



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DECEMBER 12

- 6pm to 10pm. Living Nativity Scene. España Square. Donation: €2
- 8pm. Flamenco Zambomba "San Joaquín y Santa Ana" by Rocio Ruiz. Mayor Felipe Benítez Auditorium. Price: €10

DECEMBER 13

- 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Live nativity scene. España square. Donation €2
- 6pm. Christmas charity festival "La esperanza de Belén" (The Hope of Bethlehem) Ofelia Márquez Academy. Alcalde Felipe Benítez Auditorium. Price: €6

DECEMBER 20

- 11:30 a.m. Santa Claus parade. Departure from Castillo de Luna
- 5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Collection of letters to Santa Claus. Laguna del Moral Park
- From 5pm to 8pm. "Christmas Ball" photo call- Laguna del Moral Park



DECEMBER 22

- 5:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Collection of letters to Santa Claus, accompanied by Bombastic elves. Castillo de Luna
- 7:00 p.m. Christmas flamenco show. Yvonne Trigo School. Mayor Felipe Benítez Auditorium. Price: €8

DECEMBER 23

- 5:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Collection of letters to Santa Claus, accompanied by Bombastic elves. Castillo de Luna

DECEMBER 26

- 5:30 p.m. Parade of the Star of Illusion

DECEMBER 31

- 11:30 p.m. New Year's Eve Party. Merced Square

JANUARY 2

- 4:30 p.m. Royal Postman Parade.
- From 5 to 8:30 p.m. Royal Bedroom at the Pilar Varo Special Center

JANUARY 3 AND 4

- From 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Collection of letters from the Royal Postman. Castillo de Luna
- From 5 to 8:30 p.m. Royal Bedroom at the Pilar Varo Special Center

JANUARY 5

- 11am Grand welcome and parade of Their Majesties the Three Kings . Marina
- 5pm Parade of Their Majesties the Three Kings

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U.S. Naval Station Rota Holds Change of Command Ceremony

By Lt. Daniel Ehrlich
Naval Station Rota Public Affairs

U.S. Naval Activities Spain/U.S. Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, Spain held a change of command ceremony in front of the installation's headquarters building, June 12, 2025.

Capt. Charles A. Chmielak relieved Capt. Teague J. Suarez as commander of U.S. Naval Activities Spain and commanding officer of NAVSTA Rota during the ceremony attended by more than 150 guests and featured formations of American and Spanish service members.

During the ceremony, Suarez was presented with the U.S. military's Legion of Merit award by Rear Adm. Brad Collins, commander of Navy Region Europe, Africa, Central, which is awarded for extremely meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding duties. This award encapsulated the three years Suarez served as commander of U.S. Naval Activities Spain and NAVSTA Rota since his ascension to the post on July 14, 2022.

"In my view, selection for command at any level is the ultimate compliment to an officer," said Collins. "It is a responsibility like no other, and if done correctly, with your heart and your soul invested, it will be the hardest, but the most rewarding, job that you will ever have."

While in command, Suarez facilitated the scheduled rotation of three guided-missile destroyers, supported the safe redeployment of U.S. forces from Africa, and oversaw the arrival of the fifth Arleigh Burke guided-missile destroyer, USS Oscar Austin (DDG 79), to Spain.

"What an amazing three years!" said Suarez, "We have done so much in my time here, and that is a testament to the dedication of our civilians, local nationals, sailors, marines, airmen, soldiers, and their families. We showed the world the strength of the U.S. and Spanish partnership, especially as part of NATO; that was only possible because of everybody's hard work, and the incredible support of the Andalucian communities around us."

Suarez also directed more than \$500 million of infrastructure modernization projects on the base, and saw the American population grow to more than 7,000 service members and families. He focused on the efforts of personnel from Naval Station Rota's six lines of effort – port operations, air operations, safety, security, quality of life, and the core (fuel, water, power, and information technology infrastructure) – that support the 45 commands from a variety of mission areas that call the installation home.

"Words cannot express my gratitude

and pride in the Rota family," said Suarez. "You answered the call, every time. You ensured our warfighters and our Fleet were prepared to execute – to deploy on-time, every time, with the resources they needed to execute their mission. You have been incredible stewards to our community, and exemplary guests and friends to our Spanish allies."

The ceremony featured several distinguished visitors, including Rian Harris, Charge D'Affaires of the U.S. Embassy; Blanca del Pilar Flores Cueto, subdelegate for the province of Cadiz; Javier Ruiz, mayor of the city of Rota; German Beardo, mayor of the city of El Puerto de Santa Maria; and Luis Aparcero, mayor of the city of Chipiona. Vice Adm. Ruben Rodriguez Peña, commander of the Cadiz Arsenal, represented the Spanish Armada as a guest speaker.

"Since we will share needs, we can also share solutions, as we have done up to now," said Rodriguez Peña. "I also hope to continue reinforcing the relationship between our two communities. From today forward, I offer you my full availability for anything you may need and I truly want to contribute to your smooth landing on this craft carrier."

The change of command ceremony is a time-honored tradition of the U.S. Navy, as the incumbent commanding officer

is officially relieved of his duties by the incoming commanding officer. As part of this tradition, both Suarez and Chmielak read their official orders, conducted an exchange of salutes, and made a formal announcement to their superior commander, Collins, that the command of U.S. Naval Activities Spain and NAVSTA Rota had been properly exchanged.

After formally taking command, Chmielak reflected on Capt. Suarez's legacy at Naval Station Rota and looked ahead to what the future of the U.S. presence in Spain holds in store:

I am honored to take command of U.S. Naval Activities Spain and Naval Station Rota. I am thrilled to enjoy the incredible experiences that come with residing in Spain and becoming part of this welcoming community. I cannot thank Capt. Suarez enough for the meticulous work he has done to ensure that U.S. forces in Spain are supported and prepared for whenever the nation calls upon them and to sustain the ironclad relationship with our Spanish hosts and allies. I will do my utmost to ensure that Team Rota continues to maintain the high standard of performance in every one of our efforts keeping focus on shore support for the fleet, fighters, and their families.

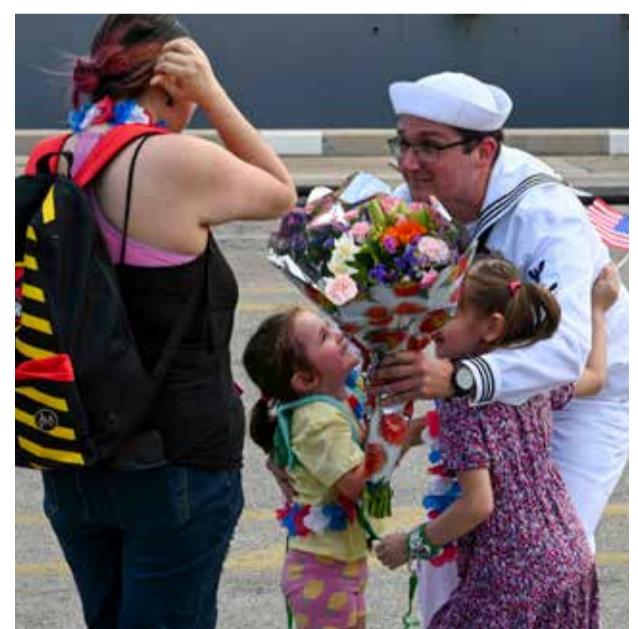
Chmielak is the 35th commanding officer of U.S. Naval Station Rota.



U.S. Naval Station Rota Holds Change of Command Ceremony



USS Oscar Austin Returns from Patrol



Flag Raising Ceremony



4th of July Independence Fest



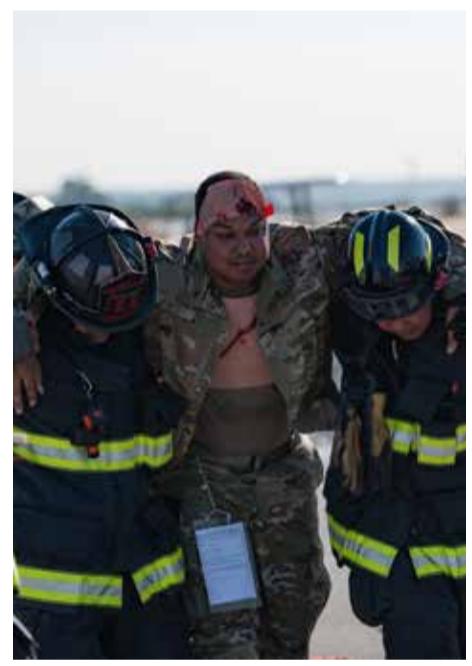
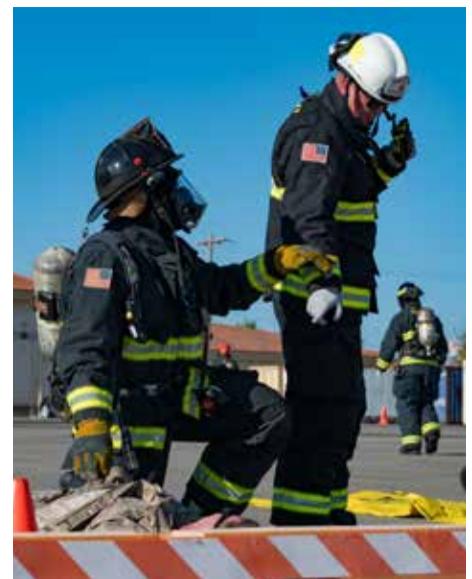
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Naval Station Rota Honors Those Lost on 9/11

By Alexa Ponce-Matias

Naval Station Rota Public Affairs

NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain (Sept. 26, 2025) - On Sept. 11, Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota gathered to honor the courageous firefighters, first responders, police officers, and innocent lives lost on the 9/11 attacks, with a 9.11km remembrance run and remembrance ceremony.

Each kilometer reflected the bravery, sacrifice, and resilience we all carry together as a nation. Many service members joined the run, displaying solidarity. NAVSTA Rota firefighters also dressed in full personal protective equipment (PPE) to pay respects to the firefighters who gave their lives on Sept. 11, 2001.

The NAVSTA Rota Fire Department hosted the remembrance ceremony in the base chapel where U.S. Sailors, Spanish Armada, personnel alike gathered to reflect upon the significance of the event for both nations, and held a moment of silence for the nearly three thousand who were lost on one of the darkest days that the U.S. has endured. The ceremony also offered a moment for the community to reflect and honor those who rose up to answer the call in the years that followed.

"What I want to charge to especially the younger sailors that are here today and our young firefighters and young police officers, is to not forget those events, to read up on our history, and hopefully

the lessons learned, you will not repeat future mistakes," said NAVSTA Rota Fire Department Assistant Fire Chief Moises Colon, a Bronx native.

The ceremony allowed the community to reflect on the enduring bonds between the American and Spanish communities in Rota, both in happiness and in grief. In the years that followed the 9/11 attacks, the Prince of Asturias, now King Felipe VI of Spain, visited NAVSTA Rota to attend commemoration events and stood alongside American service members, civilians and contractors.

"Spain stood with us on September 11, 2001, as our Sailors and their families here in Rota, far from their homes, grieved the loss of life and the attack on our homeland," said Capt. Charles Chmielak, commanding officer of NAVSTA Rota. "Our alliance remains strong to this day. No terrorist organization, no extremist group, no individual actors can defeat that."

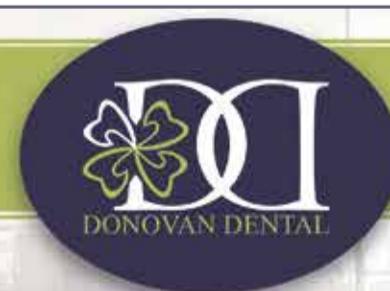
Let us remember not only the lives lost but also the acts of selflessness that were displayed—first responders rushing into the towers, strangers helping each other, and different communities gathering together to help console each other in times of grief. 9/11 reminds us that while tragedy may challenge us, it will not diminish the resilience of the American spirit.

"Also remember that even when it feels like it's the darkest, even when

the cloud of smoke is upon you and you cannot see, even when you feel fear, even when you feel anger, all of those things, just remember the human spirit that was displayed during 9/11," expressed Colon. "What Americans did that day in response, there were many heroes. You guys here are the next generation of heroes."



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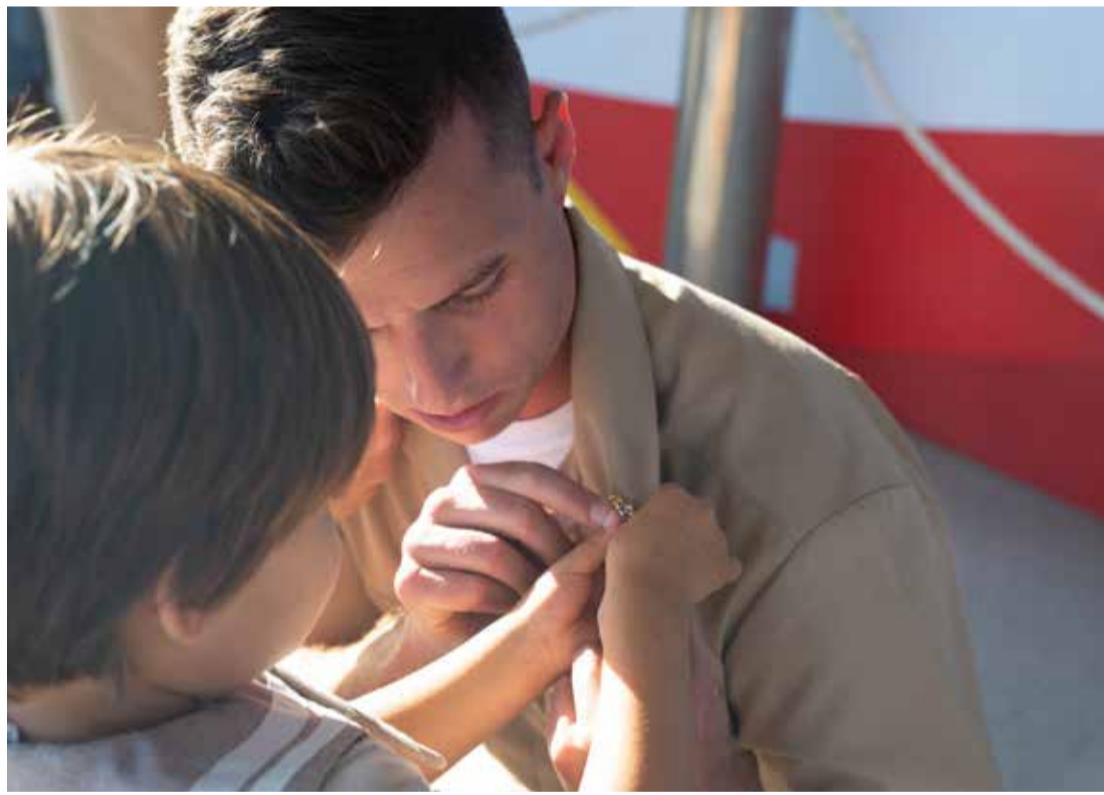
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Let's Eat!

By Pilar Ruiz

A traditional recipe from *A Taste of Rota: local flavors, family stories, and a taste of home*.

Rota's cuisine blends the freshness of the sea with the simplicity of home-style cooking. This beloved recipe, shared by the Puyana Gutiérrez family, is a perfect example of that harmony.



Squid Cooked "Rota Style" – Calamares a la Roteña

Featured in *A Taste of Rota*, our new English cookbook, it celebrates the traditions passed down through generations and the dishes that continue to bring families together at the table. It reflects the heart of our local cooking and the stories behind it.

Ingredients

- 2.2 lb / 1 kg squid
- 3 medium tomatoes
- 2 medium frying peppers (use *cuerno de cabra* instead of bell peppers)
- 2-3 garlic cloves
- 1 medium onion
- Olive oil, to taste
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ cup / 125 ml white wine
- Salt and ground black pepper, to taste
- 2-3 potatoes

Method

1. Clean the squid and remove the skin. Slice into rings and chop the tentacles to match. You can also ask your fishmonger to clean and cut it.



2. Peel and chop the tomatoes and frying peppers.

3. In a pan, gently heat olive oil. Add chopped garlic and onion. When softened, add the chopped peppers.

4. Once the vegetables are tender, add the tomatoes as well as the bay leaf.

5. Place the squid in a pot and pour the sautéed vegetables over it. Season with salt and peppers.

6. When the squid is cooked halfway, add the white wine.

7. Add a splash of water to the pan to loosen the remaining flavors and

pour into the pot.

8. Simmer over medium heat until the squid is tender, adding more water if needed.

9. Traditionally served with fried potatoes.

A tip to take home

For the most authentic flavor, use fresh squid and local frying peppers (*cuerno de cabra*) instead of bell peppers. Add water gradually, letting the stew simmer together and serve with fried potatoes or rice for a comforting finish.

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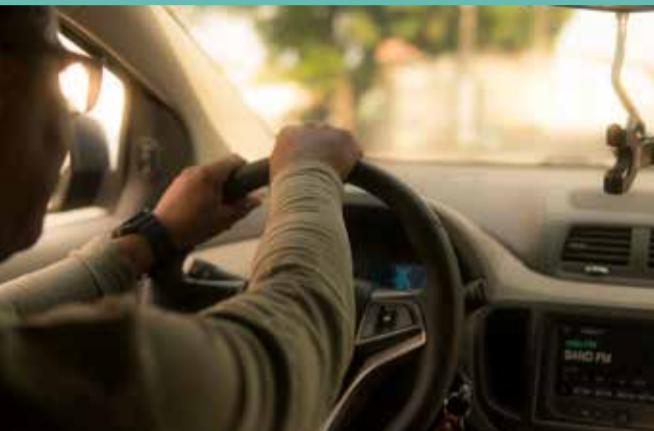
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