

USSOCOM Commander Highlights Innovation and Joint Education at NPS

New leader of U.S. Special Operations Command visited Naval Postgraduate School early in tenure to tap value of institution's education and research for SOCOM.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- U.S. Navy Adm. Frank "Mitch" Bradley, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), visited the [Naval Postgraduate School](#) (NPS) to discuss NPS mission-driven research addressing frontline operational challenges, Nov. 18.

During the visit, Bradley heard from students and faculty members who highlighted current research initiatives relevant to the special operations forces (SOF) community, met with several of the institution's SOF students, and engaged broadly with all NPS students during a Secretary of the Navy Guest Lecture (SGL).

Overviews about the recently established NPS AI Task Force and the long-standing Joint Interagency Field Experimentation (JIFX) program initiated in-depth discussions about how NPS research delivers operational insight and technological advantage to the joint force. Bradley also met with students and faculty involved in NATO's Bold Machina effort exploring counter uncrewed systems technologies, as well as researchers from the NPS Department of Physics and the Department of Defense Analysis.

"Our strength at NPS comes from pairing advanced education with real operational problems," said NPS President, retired U.S. Navy Vice Adm. Ann E. Rondeau. "The research from our students and faculty consistently delivers meaningful insight and advantage for USSOCOM and



U.S. Navy Adm. Frank "Mitch" Bradley, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), participates in a Secretary of the Navy Guest Lecture (SGL) facilitated by Professor Emeritus John Arquilla at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), Nov. 18, 2025.

the broader joint force. Adm. Bradley's leadership reinforces that commitment, especially in his call for continuous learning and deeper mastery of STEM."

Throughout the day, Bradley engaged directly with students who briefed ongoing thesis work supporting special operations, integrated deterrence, autonomous systems, and advanced analytics. Several discussions focused on accelerating the transition of research to the tactical edge and strengthening collaboration across the U.S. Department of War, interagency partners, and allied nations.

His visit culminated with the SGL where Bradley joined NPS students and staff for a fireside-chat style discussion facilitated by NPS Professor Emeritus John Arquilla. During the session, Bradley reflected on USSOCOM's evolving mission, the importance of operationally grounded education, and the role of innovation within the joint force.

"What makes us effective is the way we combine our values, our precision, and the academic partners who help us understand the environment we are operating in," said Bradley, when talking about the changing character of warfare. "Bringing our values to the battlefield and applying them with precision is what sets us apart."

He also emphasized the criticality of connecting emerging technologies with operational demands, noting how NPS students and faculty contribute to solving real problems for the fleet and joint force.



U.S. Navy Adm. Frank "Mitch" Bradley, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) answers student questions in talk facilitated by Professor Emeritus John Arquilla at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), Nov. 18, 2025.



Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) student U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Max Leutermann briefs U.S. Navy Adm. Frank "Mitch" Bradley, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), on team's autonomous systems research.

"What used to belong only to states now lives in the marketplace," said Bradley, when discussing how adversaries can rapidly access precision tools of lethality. "The kind of work being done here at NPS, where technology, operations and alliances come together, is exactly what we need to stay ahead of that curve."

For Bradley, returning to NPS underscored the impact of graduate education on the operational force. His perspective is shaped not only by leading USSOCOM, but by his own formative experience here as a physics student, an experience that continues to inform his leadership today.

"I've advised a number of Navy SEALs over the years, but never ones whose work extended to the quantum scattering of advanced semiconductors," said Arquilla, making note of Bradley's thesis focus when he was a student at NPS.

Former NPS Distinguished Professor of Physics Nancy Haegel served as Bradley's thesis advisor for his NPS research exploring quantum scattering in semiconductor devices. Although Haegel has since left NPS to serve as director of the National Center for Photovoltaics at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) in Colorado, she recalls her former student well and remained in contact well after their time at NPS.

"Adm. Bradley stood out during his time at NPS for his intellectual engagement, his desire to learn, and, of course, his leadership and vision. He really understood the value of research and brought a research mindset to his graduate work," said Haegel, who attended Bradley's change of command ceremony in Tampa last month.

"What struck me then and continues to impress me to this day as we have kept in touch over the years, is Mitch's ability to engage with and learn from and with everyone he meets," she added. "As someone so talented and gifted, he always models the ability to appreciate and bring out the best talents and gifts of others. That's what the best leaders do."

NPS continues to serve as a convening venue for senior leaders to directly engage with the next generation of Navy and joint force innovators. Bradley's visit reinforced the school's role as a critical hub for applied research, operational problem solving, and advanced education that supports the maritime services and the broader defense community.

"Opportunities like this reinforce why NPS is such an important part of the joint force," said, U.S. Navy Capt. Eric Skalski, NPS Dean of Students. "The discussions today cut across every service and specialty, and they strengthened our students' understanding of how their work contributes to operational advantage."

- Learn about graduate education for special operations forces at NPS: <https://nps.edu/web/ds>

Located in Monterey, California, Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) provides defense-focused

graduate education, including classified studies and interdisciplinary research, to advance the operational effectiveness, technological leadership, and warfighting advantage of the naval service. Established in 1909, NPS offers master's and doctorate programs to Department of War military and civilians, along with international partners, to deliver transformative solutions and innovative leaders through advanced education and research.

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