

Inclusive Recreation

PHOTO COURTESY OF PACIFIC YURTS, INC.



At Point Mugu, the base is in the process of installing yurts (similar to the one pictured here), which will be fully accessible.



In an effort to make golf more accessible to wounded warriors, the base purchased adaptable golf carts.

NB Ventura County *Embraces* Wounded Warrior Community

From accessible facilities and inclusive programming to adaptable sports and recreation equipment, NB Ventura County (NBVC), Calif., is leading the way in wounded warrior support. In addition to opening a new Wounded Warrior Fitness Center at Port Hueneme this past May, the base installed an accessible beach walkway with Mobi-Mats (and an accessible beach Mobi-Chair) at Point Mugu that leads right up to the ocean, adaptive SoloRider golf carts that allow those with physical limitations to play golf, adaptive bowling center equipment, and new wheelchair accessible Yurts (recreational shelters) from Pacific Yurts, Inc., that the base is in the process of installing at Point Mugu.

“We are getting there and making some great strides in our effort to make our facilities more accessible, both indoor and out, as well as providing programming that is more inclusive and adaptable, wherever possible,” says Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Athletic Director Fred Morgan. “I don’t think you will find a Navy base that is this far along in terms of accessibility for wounded warriors. We try to stay ahead of the curve, and we understand how important it is to embrace the wounded warrior community and provide for their needs.”

INCLUSIVE RECREATION

Point Mugu is really an oasis for wounded warriors, providing ample opportunities to recreate, relax or play sports. The Mugu site has a beach, a nature preserve with plenty of wildlife, an RV park, a motel and several camping sites.

“On one side we have the lagoon and on the other side is the

The wounded warrior walkway and beach chair allows those with physical limitations to pull right up to the ocean and splash around.



ocean,” notes Morgan. “It is perfect for outdoor recreation because we have different levels of camping and enjoying the outdoor experience.”

In addition to the RV spaces and camping sites NBVC is in the process of adding yurts from Pacific Yurts, which will have fully accessible wheelchair ramps.

Though generally classified as a tent, the yurt is much stronger and weathertight. NBVC is installing 16-foot yurts, circular structures that consist of a durable fabric cover, tension band and a wood frame that includes a lattice wall, radial rafters, central compression ring and a framed door. One of the reasons they were chosen by the base is because the yurts have minimal impact on the surrounding soils and, though durable, can be removed without a trace. Their flexibility allows them to be used in a wide variety of applications, from simple cabins to fully furnished retreats, complete with plumbing and electricity.

Because golf is such a popular sport on base, and in the local wounded warrior community, NBVC invested in SoloRider golf carts, which feature a stand-up seat that helps mobility impaired golfers continue to play the sport they love.

Other notable wounded warrior improvements at Point Mugu are the Wounded Warrior Walkway with floating wheelchair and an interpretative nature walk.

“We have special mats that were designed to provide accessibility from the beach to the water and we have the water wheelchair if they want to go into the water and splash around a bit,” notes Morgan.

Other improvements that better enhance the quality of life for wounded warriors on base are the hearing enhancement devices available at the two base theaters, bowling-assist ramps at both the Port Hueneme and Point Mugu bowling alleys and aquatic lifts at the base pool.

WARRIOR GAMES TRAINING SITE

NBVC recently hosted its 1st Annual Wounded Warrior Half Marathon, where Navy Safe Harbor announced that NBVC will be the “Host Training Site” for the Navy Wounded Warrior Sports Program as its athletes prepare for the 2nd Annual Warrior

Games, May 16-21, 2011, at the U.S. Olympic Training Center, Colorado Springs, Colo.

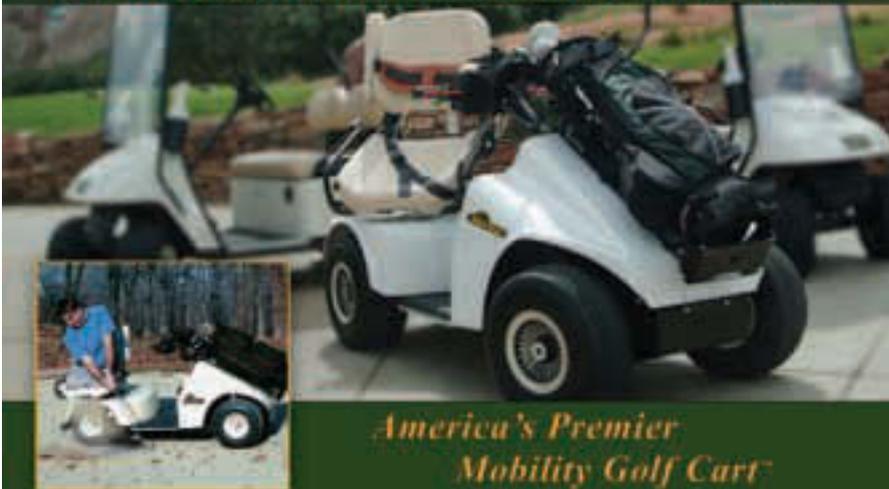
“We are honored to be the West coast training site for the Navy and Coast Guard and to be able to offer our facilities to these wounded athletes who are preparing for the Warrior Games,” says Morgan.

“It is really exciting to be able to partner with our wounded warriors,” adds Capt. David Sasek, USN, NBVC chief staff officer. “This builds on what we have already done in making NBVC a center of excellence.”

More than 200 wounded, ill and injured servicemen and women are expected to compete in seven sports at the games,

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The Wounded Warrior Fitness Center provides specialized fitness equipment.

a joint effort between the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) and the Department of Defense (DoD). All eligible athletes will be drawn proportionately from the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard based on their disability.

The inaugural Warrior Games took place in May 2010 in Colorado Springs and utilized the U.S. Olympic Training Center grounds, the Air Force Academy and the U.S. Army's Fort Carson.

"In May of 2010, 187 men and women represented American sacrifice and duty at the inaugural Warrior Games in Colorado Springs," says USOC CEO Scott Blackmun. "Those athletes stood as a testament to the true Olympic spirit and the essence of sport, and I look forward to welcoming this magnificent event back to our hometown again next year."

The competition helps elevate abilities through athletic competition for wounded, ill and injured service members by providing a focal event to empower the incorporation of athletics into military wounded warrior programs. The Warrior Games serve as an introduction to Paralympic sports for injured service members by inspiring recovery, physical fitness and promoting new opportunities for growth and achievement.

Morgan notes that out of the approximately 600 athletes in the Navy's Wounded Warrior program, 50 to 100 of them train to compete in the Warrior Games each year.

NBVC is also the host for the Navy Boxing Championships, held at Port Hueneme every spring, and the annual U.S. Armed Forces Triathlon held at Point Mugu. In addition, the U.S. Armed Forces Boxing Championships are held in the Warfield Gym every four years.

WOUNDED WARRIOR FITNESS CENTER

The new Wounded Warrior Fitness Center at the BeFit Fitness Center at Port Hueneme was created to provide specialized facilities and equipment for those with physical limitations, and will provide great training facilities for wounded warriors training at NBVC for the Warrior Games.

"This is a wonderful facility," said Capt. Jim McHugh, USN, commanding officer NBVC, during the Wounded Warrior Fitness Center dedication ceremonies on May 6, 2010, "This enables our wounded warriors to continue a good culture of fitness and a good quality of life."

"We have dedicated space here at the BeFit Wellness Cen-

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Fitness Instructor Sharon George works with a wounded warrior on a Pilates reformer machine.

ter for the Wounded Warrior Program, and we are trying to outfit it with stuff that will be needed by them on base,” adds Wounded Warrior Fitness Center Manager Ramona Pagel. “We also have a dedicated area with fitness therapy equipment, and we have several areas that have been modified or that can accommodate people with physical limitations. So, as a base, the whole mentality now is to make things very accessible and user friendly.”

One of the more interesting pieces in the fitness center is a Pilates reformer (see photo) from Balanced Body, which therapists and trainers use with wounded warriors for stretching and strengthening and working on core strength to improve balance or deficiencies.

The facility also has balance boards, Bosu balls, foam rollers and core balls, which are all used to strengthen the core, improve balance and function. Web Slide exercise rails are also available, which allow those in wheelchairs, for example, to attach equipment — exercise bands or TRX resistance straps — to do specific exercises for strengthening.

“The exercise rails are specifically designed to be fully accessible, allowing those of all abilities to get a good workout,” says Pagel.

The Wounded Warrior Fitness Center also has a custom designed stairway area — built by Naval Construction Training Center and Naval Facilities Expeditionary Logistics Center — which allows people to work on strengthening their legs and improving balance. Ergonomic hand cycles and Keiser Spin Bikes are also available.

Pagel is excited that the base will be hosting training camps for the Warrior Games, and is happy that the fitness center is here to help them train.

“Wounded warriors are coming in the first week in December to do their first training camp, and once they get here and we get a better idea of their needs, we can begin to add some more equipment and tailor the facility more to them,” she says.

In addition to the Wounded Warrior Fitness Center, the Be-Fit Wellness Center has a large fitness class area, cardio and strength/circuit areas, and a spin area, providing support for the entire base community.

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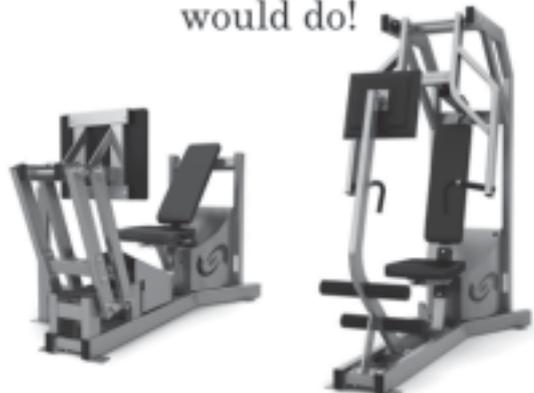
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