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Navy Medical Research Unit Commissioned

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LIMA, Peru (NNS) -- Navy Medicine's Medical Research Det. in Lima, Peru, conducted a commissioning ceremony, Feb. 10, transitioning the Naval Medical Research Center Detachment (NMRCD) Lima to a command – the U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 6 (NAMRU-6).

"This is a pivotal day for Navy Medicine Research in Peru and for our partnership with the Peruvian people," said Rear Adm. Eleanor Valentin, commander, Navy Medicine Support Command (NMSC). "We are here to honor the historic, life-saving accomplishments of the American and Peruvian team that was Naval Medical Research Institute Det. Lima, celebrate the beginning of Naval Medical Research Unit 6, and mark what I believe will be an unprecedented future of equally significant accomplishments."

Naval Medical Research Institute Detachment (NAMRID) was established in Lima, Jan. 20, 1983, to study infectious diseases. Since then, the research operations have expanded from a limited number of research projects in Peru to more than 130 research, surveillance and response, and public health capacity building programs in 11 countries in South and Central America.

"Over the last 28 years, the research partnership between our two countries has been a tremendous success," said Valentin. "Our team has had a direct impact on research and patient care for diseases like malaria and Yellow Fever."

The results of Navy medical research in Peru directly impacts the health and well-being of Navy, Marine Corps and civilian personnel who work in this part of the world. The research also benefits the civilian population of U.S. partners in the region.

Valentin compared the life of NAMRID and now NAMRU-6 Lima, to the life of a Navy ship.

"There are four key ceremonies for a Navy ship," she said. "The first is the keel laying ceremony. On that day, the people building the ship celebrate its strong structure and dedicate themselves to build a capable vessel, worthy to join the fleet. The keel laying ceremony for us was Jan. 20, 1983, at the founding of NAMRID."

The second ceremony, Valentin said, is the christening ceremony. That is the ceremony in which the ship is given its name. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus christened NAMRU-6, Jan 13, 2011, giving the command its official Navy name, Valentin said.

"The third ceremony is the most important," Valentin said. "The commissioning ceremony is the day that a ship joins the fleet. Today, I congratulate our crew – the staff, family and friends of NAMRU-6 – as today you officially join our fleet of Navy Medicine Research Units. This ceremony indicates that we, the leaders of the U.S. and Peruvian navies, consider that your vessel and your crew are sea worthy."

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