

# Navy and Marine Corps Medical News

*A Public Affairs Publication of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery*

**Issue 21**  
**October 31, 2008**

## Inside this Issue:

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Admiral's Call by the Surgeon General of the U.S. Navy Vice Admiral Adam. M. Robinson, Jr.</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Navy Medicine Personnel – Get Out and Vote on Election Day, Nov. 4th!</b>                      | <b>3</b> |
| <b>NavMed Info Systems Command Arrives in San Antonio</b>   | <b>4</b> |
| <b>Med Professionals Build on Maritime Strategy Core Capability</b>                               | <b>4</b> |
| <b>NHB Nurse Spends More Than a Year Advancing Skills of Afghani Counterparts in Kabul</b>        | <b>5</b> |

## Items of Interest:

**October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.** For over 20 years, women and men have been educating themselves about early breast cancer detection, diagnosis and treatment. Though breast cancer is usually detected and diagnosed in women over the age of 40, breast cancer can affect both women and men, sometimes at a very early age (20's). One of the ways to check your breast health is a monthly self breast exam. Mammograms are the best line of defense in the early detection of breast cancer. If you suspect that you may have breast cancer, you should contact your physician immediately. For more information on breast cancer, visit <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/types/breast>

## Medical and Dental Corps Achieve HPSP Recruiting Goals

By **Christine A. Mahoney**, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Public Affairs Office

**WASHINGTON** – Navy Medicine's Medical Corps and Dental Corps each had a successful year accessing new officers. The Medical Corps reached its Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) recruiting goal of 225 while the Dental Corps reached its goal of 57 for Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2008.

"With the continuing medical school tuition increases and the growing lack of viable higher education loans, pre-medicine and pre-dental undergraduate college students are turning toward Navy

Medicine as an option for their education," said Capt. Thomas Miller, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) Medical Corps Career Plans Officer. "HPSP is great scholarship for students. Medical and dental school tuition is paid for in full thus relieving students of the burden of worrying about how they are going to pay for school or going into debt. The students can then put their full focus into their studies and training."

According to Dr. Sandra Yerkes, Health Professions Scholarship Program Manager/Medical Department Accessions Department, Navy Medicine Manpower, Personnel, & Train-

*(Continued on page 3)*



**ARIMA, Trinidad and Tobago** - Capt. Tim Shope, embarked aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge (LHD 3), reviews X-rays during surgical screenings at the Arima District Health Facility as part of the partnership between Continuing Promise (CP) 08 and Trinidad-Tobago Oct. 25. *U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Apprentice Joshua Adam Nuzzo*

## Admiral's Call by the Surgeon General of the U.S. Navy Vice Admiral Adam. M. Robinson, Jr.

### BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY, Washington, D.C.—

Ever since I took office a year ago, I have traveled frequently across America talking to and meeting young men and women who have the spirit and drive to succeed.

I tell these men and women, the future generation who will occupy the Boardrooms of Wardrooms of this Nation and our Military about the importance of staying focused, staying busy and leveraging the myriad of opportunities that lie ahead.

I don't have to tell you that in the Navy, a Cornucopia of Opportunities, there's lots of examples to draw from -- a basket of so many different colors and flavors that one can partake in.

I have always encouraged my Hospital Corpsmen, my Nurses and all of my staff to go to school and to become involved in professional activities and the Navy has allowed our people to do that. It is a wonderful launching pad whether you want to stay for a career or serve for just four years.

Speaking from personal experience, attending the very first class of the Health Professions Scholarship Program in 1972 and having my four years of Medical School at Indiana University paid for, in the military, we have a number of wonderful programs that will help financially those students who are prepared to go to medical school, and those who seek to enter careers in the health sciences and technology or any other field of their choosing.

Opportunities such as Graduate Medical Education, the Uniformed

Services University of Health Sciences and the one I just mentioned -- Health Professions Scholarship Program to name a few and students are always welcome to come and visit our hospitals, bases, ships and schools and are welcome to ask whatever questions they may have.

This year, I am so proud of the fact that Navy Medicine's Medical Corps and Dental Corps each had a successful year accessing new officers. For the first time in several years, the Medical Corps reached its Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) recruiting goal of 225 while the Dental Corps reached its goal of 57 for Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2008.

The Navy not only provides a tremendous professional education, but also the opportunity to develop personally and spiritually.

The military gave me a comprehensive life -- the growth and tutelage and ability to learn a career path that's provided solid graduate medical health education that sets the member up with the right institution and gives them a quality downtime with their families at home.

This requires dedication to the individuals' education and a career path that is centered on the family. I truly believe that if I do that for the members and their families, they will be gratified and we will be gratefully to be able to retain them.

As I travel around the country, I also tell young people about the importance of serving. Service does not just have to be military service. As a young man or woman in Amer-



ica, fresh out of school and ready to take on the world, you can serve your Country first by serving in the inner cities such as with AmeriCorps, oversees with the Peace Corps or promoting health and delivering health services at home and across the world with the Public Health Service. There are also many Non-Governmental Organizations that do a lot of goodwill like Project Hope and Project Handclasp, to name a few. These are the things that make a real difference in people's lives.

I want to take this opportunity to let you -- those of you here at BUMED and those of you who work for Navy Medicine across the nation and around the world -- know that I recognize the service that all of you provide as the people who help me make and implement policy and provide world-class, family-centered care that is designed to best care for our Sailors and Marines, our veterans and their families.



**CORONADO, Calif.** - Lt. Cmdr. Stephen Mannino examines a Sailor using a dermatoscope and magnifying loops during a skin cancer screening at Naval Special Warfare medical clinic at Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado Oct 23. *U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Dominique M. Lasco*

## Navy Medicine Personnel – Get Out and Vote on Election Day, Nov. 4th!

From Vice Adm. Adam R. Robinson,  
Surgeon General of the Navy

**WASHINGTON** – Election Day, Nov. 4, is fast approaching, with just a few days to go. I enthusiastically encourage Navy Medicine personnel and their families to exercise their right to vote this election season.

Voting is our not only our opportunity, but our responsibility to be an active member of our American democratic process. Every American should vote as a means to have a direct say, not only in who will be our next President, our next Commander in Chief, but also the manner in which our government will work with and for us in the next four years.

This is an historical time in our nation's history. More Americans

than ever have registered to vote because they want to exercise their right to be heard. Every eligible member of the Navy Medicine family should vote, whether by absentee ballot or by going to your local voting center. This is your opportunity to have a direct impact on our government and our lives.

I add my encouragement to that of our Chief of Naval Operations, ADM Gary Roughead, who said in a Sept 30 video message: "For our Sailors and our families, get to the polls and vote. If you can't get there, make sure that you're working with your voting assistance officers to ensure that you can have an absentee ballot and be able to vote that way."

Thanks to our Federal Voting Assistance Program, here is no rea-

son for Navy Medicine personnel not to vote, either in person or by sending in your ballot. Your vote counts!



## Recruiting continued...

*(Continued from page 1)*

ing Command (NAVMED MPT&E), Bethesda, Md., HPSP is a very popular scholarship program with a high number of quality applicants because it offers a fully funded education.

"HPSP is a wonderful scholarship program that allows a medical or dental student to attend any school of their choice with the Navy paying the full tuition. The student graduates with zero debt from any school of their choice," Yerkes said. "Students are also paid a monthly stipend. The stipend is 1,907 dollars a month. They also receive a 20-thousand dollar sign-on bonus when they accept the scholarship."

BUMED is doing its part to increase interest and bring in new applicants into the Medical Corps. Lt. Andrew Baldwin, BUMED Medical Recruiter, serves as Navy Medicine's ambassador to the public in order to provide first person perspective on serving as a Navy doctor and a graduate of the HPSP.

"I am proud to be a Navy doctor and to be a part of the Navy. When I meet with college students, I am providing them with a direct connection to Navy Medicine. These students are getting a first hand account of my insights about what work we do as Navy Medicine officers and what it means to serve our country," said Baldwin.

He continued, "This past June, I attended the Health Advisors Conference in Chicago that was put on by the colleges and universities. I met with the advisors for these schools so they can put a face with Navy Medicine and make contacts. The advisors were very receptive

and interested in having their students learn more about educational and career opportunities with Navy Medicine. Plus, I share with the advisors our scholarship programs including HPSP. This was a great opportunity for Navy Medicine to gain access to institutions that previously did not have an open door to us."

Since arriving in May, Baldwin stated he found that with the growing media coverage Navy Medicine has been receiving via the USNS Mercy and USNS Comfort humanitarian missions, more and more people are taking notice of the work military medical professionals perform. He added because of this growing interest, students are more open to military medical careers.

"The media has helped Navy Medicine in connecting with those students and persons who are interested in the medical profession, but may not know that Navy Medicine is a viable option for them. Not only do we have scholarship and educational opportunities, but we offer the opportunity to serve our country. We also provide a variety of service opportunities that Navy doctors won't have in the private sector such as our hospital ships, serving overseas, humanitarian missions," Baldwin said.

According to Miller, persons interested in serving as Medical Corps or Dental Corps officers should note that this way of life may not only suitable them, but their families as well.

"For Navy Medicine health professionals, it is not just about their jobs. They are providing much need health care to our military members and their families. They are serving our country, and they have the full support and commitment of their family members who are onboard with them for this very rewarding journey," he said.

## NavMed Info Systems Command Arrives in San Antonio

By Larry Coffey, Navy Medicine Support Command Public Affairs Office

**SAN ANTONIO, Texas** – The Navy Medicine Information Systems Support Activity (NAVMISSA) held a ribbon cutting ceremony Oct. 21 to celebrate the command's arrival in San Antonio.

Navy Medicine's IM/IT center was reorganized from the Naval Medical Information Management Center in Bethesda to NAVMISSA on Sept. 1 and continues steps to become fully operational in San Antonio.

Rear Adm. Richard Vinci, commander, Navy Medicine Support Command (NMSC), was the guest speaker and spoke about the NAVMISSA team accomplishments and future changes. NMSC is NAVMISSA's parent command.

"Capt. Ortiz (Capt. Tina Ortiz, NAVMISSA commanding officer) has led a talented, hardworking team of what I affectionately call 'electronic brainiacs,'" Vinci said. "The team is aligning NAVMISSA with the DOD Military Health System (MHS) and TMA (TRICARE Management Activity). Their hard work will ultimately pay off with superior information systems products and services across Navy Medicine."

Providing superior information systems products and services to Navy Medicine is NAVMISSA's mission. NAVMISSA also protects Navy Medicine networks

through an effective Information Assurance program that ensures customer privacy, Ortiz said.

NAVMISSA is projected to employ 149 people when the command is fully operational in San Antonio in April 2009 and the Bethesda detachment is closed. The majority of the staff will be hired from the San Antonio area.

Ortiz said there are several benefits to the San Antonio relocation. Relocating to San Antonio places NAVMISSA geographically close to its Army and Air Force service partners but still allows it to remain a separate command. Economic benefits include the ability to attract and retain the right work force while realizing significant cost of living reductions when compared to the metropolitan D.C. area.

There will also be benefits to Navy Medicine, said Patricia Craddock, the NMSC M-5 deputy chief of staff who is responsible for NAVMISSA.

"As NAVMISSA transitions to San Antonio, they will rebuild the organization using a new organization map that will be more agile and capable of responding to the customer's needs," she said. "The new organizational structure will offer stronger program management, which will match the requirements of a system based on the phase of its life cycle – development and deployment, sustainment, or retirement, for instance."

## Med Professionals Build on Maritime Strategy Core Capability

Special Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

**PEARL HARBOR** - More than 100 military and civilian healthcare professionals and planners from across the Pacific Fleet gathered for the 14th biennial Pacific Fleet/Marine Forces Medical Symposium in Pearl Harbor Oct. 22-24 to discuss the future of humanitarian and civic assistance (HCA) missions.

The theme of this year's symposium was "Humanitarian Civic Assistance Into the 21st Century."

As the sixth pillar of the Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower, humanitarian assistance builds on "relationships forged in times of calm" and mitigates "human suffering as the vanguard of interagency and multinational efforts, both in a deliberate, proactive fashion and in response to crises."

The three-day conference combined a unique blend of military and civilian speakers and breakout sessions, challenging the participants to recognize the increasingly com-

plex inter-relationships of military, economic, healthcare, infrastructure, political and diplomatic policies relevant to security issues throughout the Pacific region.

Rear Adm. Joseph Mulloy, the U.S. Pacific Fleet deputy chief of staff for plans, policies and requirements, welcomed the participants to the symposium and kicked off the discussion of HCA missions.

Mulloy compared past humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions, which often had to ramp up quickly, with today's missions such as Pacific Partnership that involve longer, more detailed planning for sustained success.

"Missions like Pacific Partnership make us better prepared, enhance our Navy/Marine Corps team and make us a better Navy," he said. "Pacific Partnership represents the best of our military planning capability."

Mulloy spoke of the medical community's role in HCA missions, focusing much of his remarks on the recent Pacific Partnership missions aboard USNS Mercy (T-AH

19) in 2008 and USS Peleliu (LHA 5) in 2007 that helped build collaborative relationships in Southeast Asia and Oceania by providing engineering, civic, medical and dental assistance.

To these missions, "you bring resources, you bring heart and you bring respect," he said. "Pacific Partnership personifies planning, compassion, respect and understanding for the local populations."

Mulloy challenged those in attendance to ask the hard questions throughout the symposium about past missions and to look toward continuously improving future missions.

Capt. Scott Flinn, medical commander for Pacific Partnership 2007 (PPO7), followed Mulloy, reviewing the lessons learned and best practices from that mission, thus preparing for panel discussions about experiences and strategies. Flinn concluded that PPO7 met the mis-

(Continued on page 5)

## Med Professionals continued...

(Continued from page 4)

sion of a "by, with, through" operation highlighted by Mulloy in his opening remarks.

"What that means is that we were there 'by' invitation of the host nation, working 'with' them side-by-side, 'through' their help and assistance," Flinn said.

Echoing Flinn, Capt. James Rice, medical commander for the 148-day PP08 deployment, emphasized that the HCA missions are "not about us." But instead, "we are there to support our host nations, our partners."

Rice stressed that the U.S. focus must be on furthering host-nation capabilities to move forward with skills, equipment and expertise to further treat their own people. However, the Mercy medical commander also cited specific examples of how treating individuals affected entire villages.

"This mission and the spirit of Pacific Partnership changed people's lives," he said. "We have a picture of a woman with a smile on her face after receiving a pair of glasses. That picture really captures the meaning of Pacific Partnership."

## NHB Nurse Spends More Than a Year Advancing Skills of Afghani Counterparts in Kabul

By Mass Communications Specialist  
1st Class (SW) Fletcher Gibson, Naval Hospital Bremerton Public Affairs

**BREMERTON, Wash.** - Lack of medical supplies, poor sterility techniques and language barriers were not what Lt. Paul Obertone was expecting when he reported aboard Naval Hospital Bremerton as a perioperative nurse, but those were the conditions he was helping solve during his recent, 15-month deployment to the National Military Hospital in Kabul, Afghanistan.

As part of a 20-man team sent to train the local medical staff, Obertone spent more than a year not only helping the hospital supply itself and teaching medical techniques, but also helping set the groundwork for the teams that followed to continue the work initially started.

The National Military Hospital sat at the center of a web of re-

gional hospitals which had received visits from U.S. medical training teams in the past. When Obertone's team arrived on the scene in August 2007, though, they were the first to tackle the National hospital.

"Regional hospitals have been getting a lot of attention, but not this one," he said. "The 'Bethesda' of the Afghan Army had been kind of neglected."

Obertone said there were some hurdles to cross even before they could get down to the mission of training the hospital staff. Living arrangements, transportation and supply lines all had to be established first. Smack dab in the center of Kabul, the team members even had to provide their own security and force protection. As a multi-service task force, there was also a lot of work put in to learning how to "do things the Army way," for example. According to Obertone, it took more than a month just to lay the groundwork.

"We were the first for the National Military Hospital, so we did a lot of trailblazing," he said, noting that some of the satellite clinics got mentoring teams, but Obertone and his group were the first to work out of the core building.

The training team itself was made of a variety of hospital specialties such as hospital administrators, surgeons and pharmacists. Each teamed up with their counter-

part from the hospital to mentor them and introduce them to medical advances they might not have seen. As an Operating Room nurse, Obertone worked closely with the surgery team to improve their patient care. Cleanliness was his first challenge, ranging from teaching proper hand washing techniques to simply setting up smoking areas outside the surgical areas. He also worked with locals to manufacture scrubs in enough quantity that the surgical teams had enough clean sets to go around. All this was done with the mindset of mentoring for future success.

"It's easy to just go in and do it for them, but that's not mentoring," he added. "What I had to do was say 'how can we best prepare these people to do the best job they can if we had to leave tomorrow?'"

Looking back at his 15 months there, Obertone sees his successes as numerous small victories rather than one big triumph. Even at a year-plus, the team's time there wasn't enough to accomplish everything they'd set out to do. In the long-term, though, their focus on teaching the hospital staff to teach themselves was the main goal. With that objective reached, there's a promise that Kabul's National Military Hospital's level of care will only get better.



Bureau of Medicine and Surgery  
2300 E Street NW  
Washington, DC 20372-5300

Public Affairs Office  
Phone: 202-762-3221  
Fax: 202-762-1705