

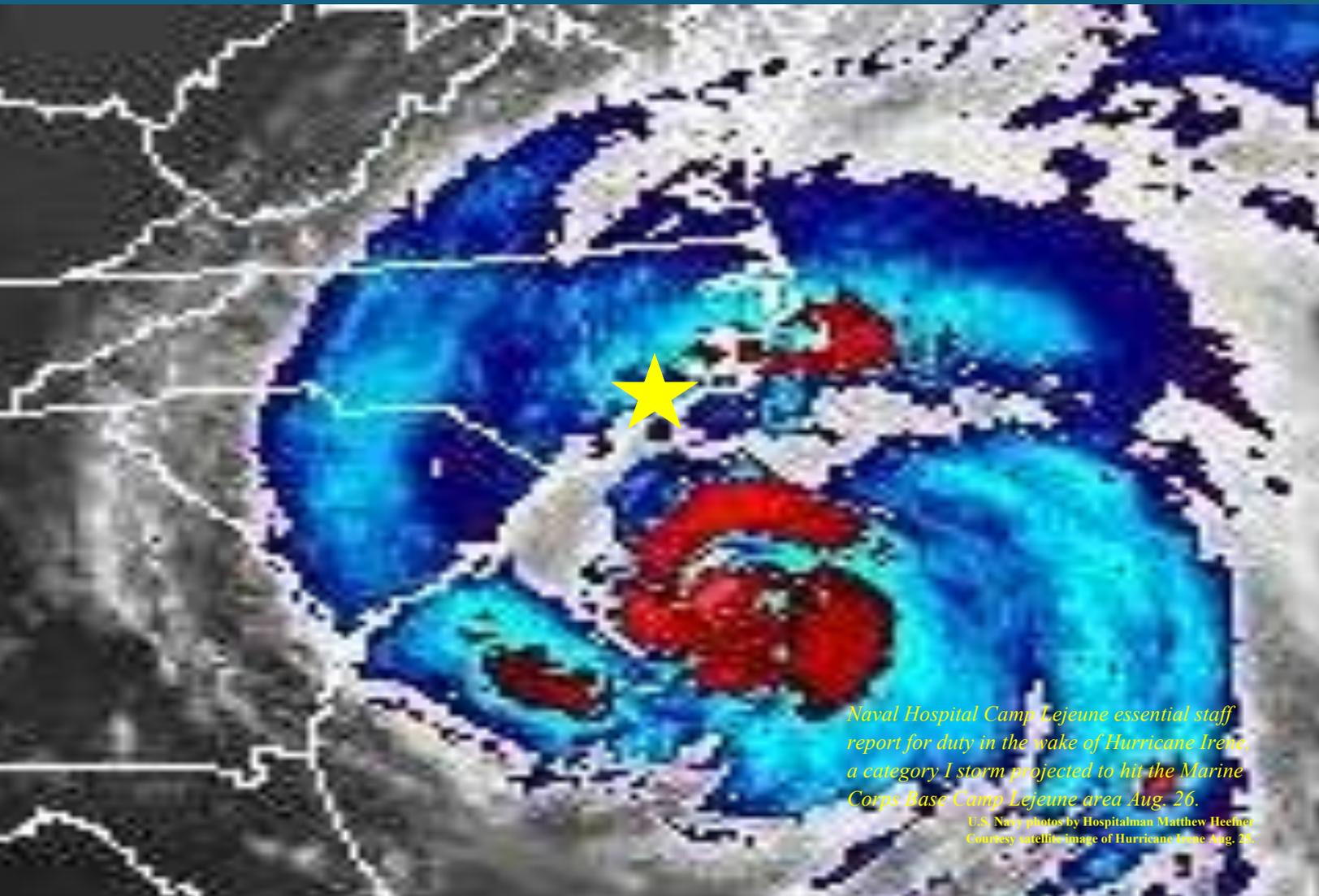
SCUTTLEBUTT

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SPECIAL EDITION

HURRICANE



Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune essential staff report for duty in the wake of Hurricane Irene, a category I storm projected to hit the Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune area Aug. 26.

U.S. Navy photos by Hospitalman Matthew Heeler
Courtesy satellite image of Hurricane Irene Aug. 25

The Beauty of a Hurricane



Capt. Daniel J. Zinder
Commander
Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune

There is nothing like adversity to bring out the best in the military. Hurricane Irene came and Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune stepped up to take care of our patients, and take care of our own, as one big family. For the duration of the storm, we were part hospital, part hotel, part kid-park, and part kennel. And it worked like it is something we do every day!

The camaraderie and cooperativeness was impressive and it was all based on the attitude each person brought to the event.

The Executive Officer, Command Master Chief and I walked around for several hours Friday night to talk to people throughout the hospital, and the one common thread we found was a positive attitude and an atmosphere of making the best of the situation. That same positive thread continued throughout the weekend. BZ to all involved!

Sometimes it takes a natural disaster to remind us of the support, friendship and sense of family we have around us. If there was any beauty in Hurricane Irene, it was the reminder that we are all part of an organization much bigger than ourselves with a unique mission and a wonderful family of shipmates.

I am very proud of all of you, and I thank you for keeping the light of hope and healing lit for our patients, families and staff.

Enjoy this special edition of Scuttlebutt devoted to the hard work and determination by all NHCL staff!

Supporting NHCL Families Family Care Team



U.S. Navy photo by Anna Hancock

With the initiative of Lt. j.g. Lisa Cook, Patient Administration Department, donations from NHCL's Red Cross chapter, and physical space offered by NHCL's Pastoral Care Department, family members of NHCL's essential personnel enjoyed several movies, books, games and activities throughout the shelter-in-place that occurred within hospital grounds from Aug. 26 to Aug. 27., due to the destructive weather brought by Hurricane Irene.



www.facebook.com/nhclejeune

scut-tle-butt

n.

1. Slang for spoken communication; through the grapevine

2. Nautical

a. A drinking fountain on a ship; gathering place

b. A forum for NHCL staff to get 'insider info'

SCUTTLEBUTT



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NHCL Sets Bar for Navy Medicine Emergency Pet Boarding

By Anna Hancock
NHCL Public Affairs

Providing a high level of care for patients, staff members and families is business as usual for Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune staff and leadership. Taking care of essential personnel and expectant mothers' pets? Before Hurricane Irene, some might have said leave that job up to the Army vets.



U.S. Navy photo by Hospitalman Matthew Heefner

Army Veterinarian, Capt. Alberto Bonfiglio, branch chief of the Camp Lejeune Veterinary Treatment Facility, Army Sgt. Mericle and Spc. Chappelle triage a dog before boarding in NHCL's pet boarding area during Hurricane Irene Aug. 26.

The leadership of NHCL wanted to take a different approach. Recognizing that many families value their pets as much as they do their human family members, a team of NHCL staff members from the Directorate of Public Health, Directorate For Administration and command leadership worked together to develop and implement NHCL's Emergency Operations Pet Shelter Area policy for essential staff personnel required to shelter-in-place during the Code Brown Destructive Weather Conditions brought to the area by Irene Aug. 26. The policy was set as a back-up plan for staff members who could not make alternative arrangements.

"Cmdr. Marnie Buchanan, head of NHCL's staff education and training (SEAT) initiated the idea of a 'pet haven' subsequent to a previous hurricane," recalled Director of Public Health Glenee Smith. "She volunteered to spearhead the coordination of the

project coordinating with a team of public health staff, facilities and SEAT's I-Division. The ball rolled from there."

In about a week's time, NHCL's pet boarding policy was in place. The policy outlines the guidance for pet owners and under what emergency operating conditions the policy can be enacted. It also notes which types of species will be accepted in the shelter area, the roles and responsibilities of those involved, and what is required and expected from the pet owner.

"Part of my job is to ensure that staff and patients are safe at all times. We took extra precautions to ensure the pet policy was set and executed with the same intent," noted Smith. "Lt. Crystal Dailey, head of Preventive Medicine played an integral role of identifying risks, mitigation strategies and the control and prevention of zoonotic diseases, which are infectious diseases that can be transmitted between humans and animals."

One of the precautions that ensured the success of the boarding area was that NHCL arranged for the Army Veterinarian, Capt. Alberto Bonfiglio, branch chief of the Camp Lejeune Veterinary Treatment Facility and his team to be on board at the Naval Hospital to monitor the pets in the area at all times.

Upon check-in, the owner leashed the pet and brought it to Bonfiglio who triaged each animal to ensure an overall state of good health. The pet's vaccination and health records were reviewed, and when necessary, the veterinarian administered a rabies booster shot for a nominal fee to the owner.

The owner then placed the pet back into the cage, which was taken to the designated staging area in the hospital. Pet owners were responsible for feeding and caring for their pet(s). Veterinary care was available at all times, ensuring the comfort and well-being of each animal.

"Since we knew the Destructive Weather Conditions (DWC) would change throughout the weekend, and there would be times when pet owners could not take their pets outside, we designated an area in the hospital, to care for pets, which was away from direct patient care. This ensured extra precautionary measures of safety and sanitation," explained Dailey

Another contribution to the success of the boarding area was the dedication of SEAT's I-Division, led by Hospitalman Kara Nicoli, who volunteered to assist with the pets in shifts, ensuring the area was manned 24-hours a day.

The feedback NHCL received from patients and staff was exceedingly positive. All pets remained in good health throughout the storm and received superb care.

"NHCL did not put anyone at a higher risk of infection or safety by having pets aboard hospital grounds," explained Bonfiglio. "All of the pets were domesticated animals and generally, domestic pets receive good care. What the NHCL team did, however, was give the essential staff members peace of mind and the ability to focus on their mission, by ensuring all members of their family were safe. Humans and animals alike."

Hospital Provides Calm and Safety

By Anna Hancock
NHCL Public Affairs

“May I have your attention please; Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune is under a tornado warning. For your own safety, please do not venture outside. All doors are secure at this time,” warned Sandy Acosta. Acosta is Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune’s communications supervisor and one of three team members frequently heard over the hospital’s One MC intercom communications system the weekend Hurricane Irene hit NHCL.

About 20 minutes later, NHCL lost power. Facilities Department team members rushed down the halls to start tending to the back-up generators that kicked into high gear.

Hospital staff quickly moved patients away from all doors and windows and instructed family members who were boarding at the hospital to do the same. Minutes later, another message on the One MC was communicated.

“Attention all staff. The Naval Hospital is in a Destructive Weather Condition I Echo. I repeat, the Naval Hospital is now in a Destructive Weather Condition I Echo. Stand clear of all doors. All outer perimeter doors have been secured for your safety.”

To ensure everyone’s safety, lockdown of all staff, patients, family members and pets had officially begun.

Almost immediately, wind speeds increased to 70 – 80 miles per hour with gusts of up to 100 miles per hour. A torrential downpour of rain amplified in intensity and trees began to uproot from the ground. The calm brevity in Acosta’s voice cautioning NHCL staff, families and patients to brace for the impact of a tornado reported in the area, and then the impact Hurricane Irene minutes later set the tone for the overall silence and focus that set amongst all who were sheltering-in-place on hospital grounds.

A few days earlier, a sense of camaraderie amongst each other and urgency to maintain a safe atmosphere, continue quality health care, and continue the high morale that existed within the hospital was clear. Even with the subtle roar of the destructive weather elements beating on hospital walls, the staff kept the pressures of the hurricane from affecting emergency operations.

Code Brown

NHCL’s Emergency Operations Plan 3440.1, Code Brown spells out the steps for destructive weather planning. Each year on June 1, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune sets DWC V, which is the official beginning of hurricane season. When a major storm system approaches the area, Destructive Weather Conditions (DWC) are set. Conditions begin a V, Vigilant State of Readiness, then advance to IV, III, II, I, I Caution (IC), I Emergency (IE), based on the timeframe the storm is forecasted to impact the base or the intensity. When the destructive weather system has passed, but storm hazards may

remain, Condition I Recovery (IR) is set. Although the Carolina coast often takes the brunt of destructive weather during hurricane season, the last time NHCL operated under Code Brown DWC IE was on Sept. 4, 2008 when Tropical Storm Hanna struck Eastern North Carolina.

When it all began

A few days earlier on the afternoon of Aug. 23, when the North Carolina winds were calm and skies were sunny, a category three hurricane was rounding Haiti and the Dominican Republic with raging winds of up to 130 miles per hour. Hurricane Irene was headed on a path straight towards the coast of Eastern North Carolina. Meteorologists around the country were predicting Irene to be the largest storm to hit the Carolina coast since Hurricane Charley in Aug. 2004; comparing the potential destruction to Hurricane Katrina, the category three hurricane that slammed the central Gulf Coast states leaving more than \$108 billion in damage in 2005.

While Irene certainly was not cause for panic, it was a clear a testament to the policy, precautions and preparedness that NHCL staff members had been tirelessly working on for days, even months prior.

The level of preparation for a hurricane depends on a variety of factors. It can depend on the physical location the individual will be sheltering, the storm’s strength, or the location of where the storm makes landfall. It can simply be driven by an individual’s personality or leadership style or whether there was 2 gallons of water left on the supermarket shelf, or 20 when purchasing emergency supplies.

For months prior to Irene, proactive decisions to ensure the health, well-being and safety of NHCL’s patients and staff had in fact began as far back as Oct. 2010.

“We decided in Oct. that it was time to update NHCL’s emergency instructions, which include Code Brown, months before Destructive Weather Condition V is set each year on June 1,” explained Mark Starnes, NHCL’s emergency manager. “Staff worked all year to ensure NHCL had adequate supplies. I try to emphasize that people shouldn’t wait to hear Code Brown spoken over the communication system to start preparing for a hurricane.”

Once Irene reared the coast of Haiti, NHCL staff began to fine-tune the procedures and operations that NHCL already had in place, and customize operations to the specific dynamics of the destructive weather condition.

“A few of the major operations we knew needed to be solid and have accompanying back-up plans in preparing for Irene, and Code Brown at anytime, were communications, patient safety, staff well-being, emergency operations and facilities safety and maintenance,” explained Cmdr. Matthew Case, NHCL’s Director For Administration. “The first thing in any military operation or emergency situation that gets criticized is communications. We had confidence in our communications team, as we did all others, and well into DWC IR it was evident that the every team operated flawlessly.”

Safety in the Midst of a Hurricane

Weathering the storm

Starnes and Lt. j.g. Carl Chase, facilities department head, noted that when DWC IE was set Friday night, several teams throughout the hospital overcame challenges that may have impacted the ability to provide patient care or compromise the safety of those sheltering at NHCL.

“When the main power line on base went down, our back-up generator system operated as designed and tested, but the smoke released from one of the units after an exhaust manifold failed forced a Code Red, fire, to be called,” said Chase. “One of my staff members who was not required to report during this storm event, immediately came to the hospital to assist in repairing the unit. His efforts and all of those here during this experience were instrumental in minimizing the impacts to patients, staff, and their families.”

Chase continued to laud the efforts of NHCL’s Fast Action Response Team that played an integral role in temporarily repairing any structural and grounds issues that Irene caused until the Facilities Department could put a permanent fix in place.

Other key areas that were vital to emergency operations for both NHCL and Camp Lejeune were the Branch Clinics’ medical corpsmen designated to support the shelters on base and the Public Health Department’s preventive medicine technicians charged with managing infection control and food safety. Starnes and Chase also recognized the efforts of the Nutrition Department and Security team.

The rest of the preparations, Starnes and Chase furthered explained, were essentially what staff members do every day to support the hospital and Camp Lejeune.

“We conduct regular inspections of the grounds, clinics and facilities; we repair any findings that we encounter as soon as possible; we maintain a clean and sanitary environment; and we adequately plan to have enough food and supplies on hand or the logistics to acquire them if our supplies get depleted,” said Chase.

“Where all NHCL staff set the bar,” Starnes continued, “Was in their outstanding motivation to work together and get things done thoroughly, quickly and with everyone’s safety and well-being in mind. Regular operations were done with fantastic attitudes. If staff couldn’t execute Plan A, then Plan B or C was promptly carried out.”

Going above and beyond

Given the stressors caused by destructive weather, the leaders of NHCL wanted to exceed the standards of emergency operations that outline the steps required to take care of NHCL staff. When rewriting the instruction, leadership decided to allow the spouses, family members and pets of essential personnel who were required to shelter at the hospital and work throughout the storm to accompany them. This not only increased the level of safety for everyone, but gave staff and

SEE TEAMWORK page 7



Courtesy graphic projecting the path of Hurricane Irene Aug. 25.



NHCL staff helps a family member bring in personal items as staff, family members and patients get ready to shelter-in-place at NHCL throughout Hurricane Irene Aug. 26.



NHCL staff members inspect a pallet of boarding supplies as the hospital prepares to boarders during shelter-in-place at NHCL throughout Hurricane Irene Aug. 26.

Left: View from NHCL’s Quarterdeck during the wake of Hurricane Irene Aug. 26.



NHCL staff and family members in action... "We Build Strength Through Caring"



U.S. Navy photos

Response Team Makes a Difference with Irene

By Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Leonardo Benitez
External Fast Action Response Team Leader



On Aug. 26, the command began its final preparation phase of batting down the hatches as Hurricane Irene sped up the coast on her way to Camp Lejeune for an uninvited visit.

As the leading petty officer in the Facilities Management Department, I led a team of 14 Program Student Input (PSIs), sailors awaiting further assignment to their duty station that Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune leadership appointed as NHCL's External Fast Action Response

Team (E.F.A.R.T.).

The intent was to mirror the damage control team on a ship and enact a first response team to mitigate potential safety hazards, leaks and destructive objects resulting from Hurricane Irene during the Code Brown, Destructive Weather Conditions.

As a seasoned petty officer, I quickly took charge and divided the sailors into four teams. I was told I could be heard loud and clear as I shouted orders and explained to the sailors that there was a definitive plan in place. I stressed how everyone must know the plan and what must be done, and most importantly, how bad a

situation could get if each and every one of the sailors did not pitch in.

Hours before the storm came; the team quickly moved throughout the hospital grounds looking for gear adrift and secured or removed equipment that may have been a potential safety hazard. We removed items such as garbage cans, tables, chairs and anything else that was capable of becoming a missile from high winds and rain.

Our next task was to distribute, and in some cases set up approximately 150 sleeping cots in office spaces, locker rooms and other designated places inside the hospital. Approximately 400 staff members were declared essential personnel. They abandoned all of the comforts of home and for many, left their family members at another safe location, and slept on the cots during the two and half day ordeal.

When the storm hit, the teams continued to work hard and braved the rain and wind to patch up leaks with sandbags. No task was too large or too small and these guys responded every single time we were called to address a problem area. I can tell you that all of us lacked sleep because of our strong dedication and some were understandably growing tired, but I can honestly tell you that no one quit. Everyone stayed focus on their job to ensure the high quality, safety and standard of care, while taking care of each other.

I could not be more proud of these hard charging sailors who gave it their all during Hurricane Irene!

TEAMWORK from page 5

family members peace of mind and the ability to focus on providing great Navy Medical care. Leadership also decided to proactively approach all expecting mothers who were 38 weeks or more, and afford the expecting mother and her family the option to take shelter at the hospital vice Lejeune High School, as had been the standard in the past.

Additionally, leadership established a Family Care Team that hosted movies, games and provided reading materials to those boarded at NHCL until the storm passed.

"It is important that we not only maintain our high quality, safety and standard of care at all times, but that we take care of each other and ensure our ability to perform," stated Capt. Daniel Zinder, NHCL's commanding officer. "From the feedback we received after the storm subsided, it was evident that patients, staff and family members knew we care about everyone equally and we did everything we could to provide, even with the challenges Irene brought to the table."

The calm after the storm

DWC I Recovery (IR) was set by the MCBCL commanding officer late Saturday evening, Aug. 27. Winds and rains subsided, but the impact of Irene remained. More than 90% of Onslow County was without electricity, and power lines were downed throughout the area. Areas of debris and flooding were prevalent throughout the region and several roads were blocked by trees and debris until emergency crews arrived. NHCL staff members

were advised to continue to shelter-in-place. Recognizing how DWC IR lifts all restrictions on personal travel, Capt. Zinder left the option to return home to the staff members and department supervisors.

Even though Irene was downgraded to a category I hurricane by the time it made landfall, NHCL staff flawlessly worked through the brunt of impact from Irene while bracing for a potential tornado touchdown, mitigating a Code Red alarm, working on back-up generator power, tending to the staff pet boarding area and taking care of each other.

The hospital core facility sustained minimal damage and NHCL staff members were 100% accounted for within hours of the setting of the recovery phase.

According to interim Director of Medical Services and general surgeon, Cmdr. Julie Green, the Emergency Department treated more than 120 patients; inpatient units cared for more than 30 patients; and, the OB ward delivered 8 babies throughout the weekend. The hospital's Nurse Advice Line fielded calls as well.

The numbers were comparable to NHCL's average patient intake, but given the circumstances, Green noted how the medical staff maintained an 'amazing' attitude while continuing to provide great medical care.

"The goal in emergency management is to always think three steps ahead," said Starnes. "Irene tested our overall plan and showed us that it is solid, and as with everything, it can be fine-tuned. The staff came together as a team. The neat thing is how everyone understands that's just what we do!"

Hospital's Devotion to Expectant Moms Soothes Anxiety

By Raymond Applewhite
NHCL Public Affairs

Educating and taking care of expectant mothers is top priority for the Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune Obstetrics and Gynecology staff.



Courtesy photo by Lt. Cmdr. Steven Dundas

Expecting mothers sheltering-in-place pose for a photo during their weekend boarded on hospital grounds from Hurricane Irene Aug. 26.

The staff takes the responsibility very seriously and dedicates more time when the mother is in her 38th week, particularly when a hurricane is churning a few hundred miles away in the Atlantic Ocean barreling down on the East Coast.

Once meteorologists forecasted that Hurricane Irene had her sights set on visiting the Eastern North Carolina coast, the hospital notified OB patients who were 38 weeks or more and boarded patients and their families in the hospital.

“We do this as a precaution and began planning a week prior to the storm arriving to make sure that our patients and their family members were taken care of in the event of a hurricane. A checklist was placed on the hospital’s website listing recommended items for mothers to bring to the hospital with them as well as additional ‘Nice to Know Information,’” said Lt. Cmdr. Scott Staup, division officer, Labor and Delivery (L&D).

Concerns of L&D staff also included the uncommon occurrence of induced labor caused from the pressure of a hurricane. Or any weather-related destruction blocking a patient’s ability to travel to the hospital if the patient was ready for delivery or having pregnancy-related complications.

By boarding these patients early (providing them with a hospital room), patients were assured that they were in a safe environment as the torrential rain and high winds swept into the local area.

The hospital had essential personnel onboard strategically placed throughout the hospital to maintain hospital functions and handle emergencies should they arise. A full complement of 21 registered nurses, one midwife, one Obstetrician, and one Family Medicine resident were on hand to take care of OB patients.

Family members and friends expressed numerous compliments that medical teams were standing by on the labor deck, wards and emergency room to address their medical needs, and in many instances, their personal needs.

On average, 160 babies are born at Naval Hospital on a monthly basis. During the course of Hurricane Irene’s two-day visit to the Carolinas, a total of eight babies were born. None of the babies born were named Irene; however, one of the babies was given the middle name “Irene.”

“Thank you to the NHCL staff!” commented Karyn Laidlaw on NHCL’s command Facebook page in response to a post about hospital operations continuing throughout the storm. “My daughter and son-in-law became new parents at 2:38 a.m. [Aug. 27]!”

After Irene: A Reflection by the Command Chaplain

By Lt. Cmdr. Steven Dundas
Pastoral Care Department

We made it through Hurricane Irene and thankfully she lost some of her groove and didn’t get it back by the time she hit us.

Even so, Irene was a big event. Many of our shipmates were effected, some worse than others. Many of us are used to hurricanes, but for many, Irene was the first hurricane.

Hurricanes, like all major natural disasters, shake us up. They show that we have less control of our lives than we like to think. Hurricanes often produce great anxiety, especially for those already struggling or that have a loved one deployed. They

break carefully crafted routines, disrupt communications, leave us without power, damage our homes, impact us financially and sometimes cause physical injuries or death in the communities that we live. They can be terrifying.

Since we cannot control that mother nature, we need to find ways to mitigate the effects of unwelcome visitors like Irene. We make physical preparations, but often forget the spiritual and emotional preparations. Our spiritual and emotional resiliency helps us endure and recover from crisis. Remember: faith, family and the Navy and Marine Corps communities are pillars of such preparation. Chaplains, churches and mental health professionals can help also when events overwhelm our ability to cope with them.

I pray that we all recover well.