



June 2010

# THE COURIER

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Portsmouth, Va.



HM1 mentors in Afghanistan — Page 16

## Memorial Day Observed in Conaway Cemetery

New Medal of Honor grave marker unveiled for Civil War Sailor Hendrick Sharp

By REBECCA A. PERRON  
NMCP Public Affairs

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth held its 24th annual Memorial Day observance May 31 in the historic Captain Theodore H. Conaway Memorial Naval Cemetery, where more than 850 Soldiers, Sailors and Marines are interred. A light breeze fluttered the flags that Boy Scouts had placed at each grave site, identifying the home nation of the person laid to rest.

The ceremony was conducted and co-sponsored by the Tidewater Area Council of the Fleet Reserve Association and Ladies Auxiliary.

Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks, NMCP commander, welcomed the guests to the ceremony and officially unveiled a new grave marker for a Medal of Honor recipient. In late 2009, the Medal of Honor Society determined that Seaman Hendrick Sharp, who died in 1892, had received the MOH for his participation in the Battle of



Photo by MC2 Riza Caparros

**The Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Color Guard posts the colors during the annual Memorial Day ceremony May 31. Boy Scouts, left, placed flags on the more than 850 graves in the cemetery. Featured speakers included, from right, Capt. Sean Mahoney, Coast Guard Fifth District, and Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks, NMCP commander.**

Mobile Bay on board USS Richmond in 1864. The MOHS commissioned a new grave marker that was installed recently to recognize Sharp for his actions.

Stocks read from Sharp's MOH

certificate, saying that he "fought his gun with skill and courage throughout a furious two-hour battle which resulted in the surrender of the rebel

— See **Memorial**, Page 6



Clean the Base Day

Page 4



Command Safety Day

Page 8



Pie in the Face Fundraiser

Page 12



## NMCP Annual Picnic July 1

The NMCP Annual Picnic will be July 1 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Hospital Point. Come out for games, hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken and cake!

Ticket sales are held daily in the Galley in Bldg. 2 and next to Navy Federal Credit Union in Bldg. 3 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tickets are \$3 for individuals and \$5 for a family of four.

For large ticket quantities delivered to work centers, or for those who are unable to purchase tickets during sale hours, email HM3 Amanda Johnson at [amanda.johnson@med.navy.mil](mailto:amanda.johnson@med.navy.mil).

For more information, call MA1 McLean at 953-5221, HM2 Fink at 953-7172 or HM3 Johnson at 953-7700.

## NMCP EAP Review Course

The NMCP Enlisted Advancement Program review course will be held in Staff Education & Training, Bldg. 3, Second Deck in Classroom 3. The scheduled dates:

### NMCP Ombudsman Team Pre-Deployment Brief

The NMCP Command Ombudsman Team is here to help when you are attached to NMCP or any of its outlying clinics and you or a family member are preparing to deploy!

Pre-deployment brief is held at 9:30 a.m. on the 3rd Tuesday of each month in the chapel.

Email us to join our Ombudsman email tree and learn the latest news.

[NMCPombudsman@med.navy.mil](mailto:NMCPombudsman@med.navy.mil)  
or  
757- 953-1973

HM1 Exam: July 26 - 30

HM2 Exam Aug. 9 - 13

HM3 Exam Aug. 23 - 27

To enroll, submit a special request chit and most recent profile sheet, if applicable, through your chain of command. Seats are limited. Contact HMC Venita Johnson at 953-4537 or [venita.johnson@med.navy.mil](mailto:venita.johnson@med.navy.mil) with questions.

## Navy College Exams Temporarily Suspended

All testing at Navy College Office Portsmouth is temporarily suspended. Affected exams are the SAT, ACT, Defense Language Proficiency Test, Oral Proficiency Interviews and proctoring of Distance Learning Exams.

Students can schedule exams at any of the regional college offices. For assistance/information, call Navy College Office Norfolk, 444-7853/53, Oceana, 433-3129, Little Creek, 462-8279 or Dam Neck, 492-6183.

Computer-based CLEP, DSST and Excelsior College Exams are not affected. These exams will continue to be offered every Tuesday at 9 a.m. in the NMCP Library, Bldg 1, 4th floor conference room. Call 489-0969 for additional registration information.

## Right Weigh 4-Week Program begins July 7

This four-session program promotes good nutrition, exercise, and behavior modification. Focus on strategies for

improving health through healthy nutrition and exercise choices. This class is recommended for those who are already in or who want to start the Step-Well Walking Program.

Class dates are: July 7, 14, 21, 28 from 4 to 5 p.m. in the Nutrition classroom, Bldg. 2, 2nd floor. The program is open to active duty, civilian employees and adult family members.

To register, call the Wellness Department at 953-9247. For more info, visit [www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcp/Wellness](http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcp/Wellness).

## Flag Football Sign-ups

MWR is recruiting for the 2010 Portsmouth MWR Flag Football League. The deadline to register is July 7. The season begins July 12. Play is free and open to active duty only. Play is 7 on 7 with a maximum roster size of 15. Games will be at NMCP's ball field. Contact Joseph Powers at 953-7108 or [joseph.powers2@med.navy.mil](mailto:joseph.powers2@med.navy.mil). MWR can also create a team from a free agent pool.

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## THE COURIER

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The Courier is an authorized publication of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, 620 John Paul Jones Circle, Portsmouth, VA 23708, and is published monthly by the Public Affairs Office.

The Courier provides an avenue to circulate all newsworthy information the NMC Portsmouth staff has to offer.

Anyone who wishes to submit an article or news information for publishing should contact the Public Affairs Office by calling 953-7986, by fax at 953-5118, or by emailing the PAO, Deborah Kallgren, at [deborah.kallgren@med.navy.mil](mailto:deborah.kallgren@med.navy.mil).

Submissions should be in Word format. Photos should be a separate submission from the document and in jpeg, bitmap or tiff format.

The Public Affairs Office is located in Building One, Third Deck, Rm. 308.

# COMMANDER'S CORNER

Staff, families and friends of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth,

It has been one month since I took command and every day since, I have witnessed the dedication, professionalism and the care our staff delivers as we fulfill our commitment to provide the highest quality medical care to our beneficiaries. I have also observed the many well-orchestrated front lines and "behind the scenes" components that ensure our patients (and staff) receive the best that Navy Medicine has to offer. You continue to superbly manage our complex medical center. Thus, it comes as no surprise that NMCP is a leader in health care quality, access, medical education, research and customer satisfaction.

I would like to mention a couple recent examples that highlight our medical center's successes and commitment to excellence. Recently, NMCP hosted the leadership of 18 local area hospitals to highlight our Emergency Operating Center and provide training in Chemical, Bio-

logical, Radiological and Nuclear disaster management. LCDR Todd Parker and LCDR Miguel Gutierrez of the Emergency Medicine Department each received national recognition from the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine. Our Dental Department has maintained a greater than 94 percent Operational Dental Readiness (ODR) rate for the 14th month in a row! These are just a few highlights of what you do every day that make me proud to be your Commanding Officer.

Today I welcomed a new class of Interns to the medical center. It was only 24 short years ago that I sat in the auditorium as an intern at then the Naval Hospital Portsmouth and was welcomed by the Commanding Officer, CAPT Hodges. Certainly much has changed since those days. But what hasn't changed, is the desire these new physicians possess to honorably serve those most deserving. To provide the best health care there is to offer to the men and women who defend and have defended the cause of freedom and the United



States of America. Please join me in welcoming these young men and women to our team.

In closing, I remind you that we are now at day 30 of our 96 for 96 campaign and day 12 of the Critical Safety Days of Summer without a safety incident. Keep up the great team effort as we strive to reach our goals of a safe summer and zero DUIs.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. L. Stocks".

A. L. Stocks

## Safety Manager Recognized for 50 Years of Service



Photo by Rebecca A. Perron

Arthur Vogel, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's safety manager, received a 50-year Career Service Award from Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks, NMCP commander, June 4.

Vogel entered the Air Force in 1958 and became a firefighter. He served at seven stateside bases, including Langley Air Force Base. Overseas assignments included North Africa, England, Guam, Germany, Alaska and two tours in Vietnam.

From 1976 until retirement, he served as fire chief at several bases and Fire Department IG Inspector throughout Europe. He retired as a chief master sergeant with 31 years of service Oct. 1, 1989.

In May 1991, he became a fire inspector with the Norfolk Naval Shipyard Fire Department, transferred to the NMCP Safety Department in April 1993 and became the safety manager in August 2001.



Photo by Nell Wall

# Clean the Base Day Collects Four Tons of Debris

By DEBORAH KALLGREN  
 NMCP Public Affairs Officer

More than 200 volunteers endured the heat and humidity June 4 as they scoured the Naval Medical Center Portsmouth shoreline for “Clean the Base” Day. As an annual adjunct to the “Clean the Bay” Day, the medical center staff removed trash that had washed onto the base’s beach and rocks.

Volunteers met behind the pool where they donned gloves and grabbed garbage bags. NMCP Commander Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks and Deputy Commander Capt. Matthew Pommer came out to thank them for setting an example and pitching in to clean up.

Approximately four tons of debris was removed from one-half mile of shoreline, according to Bob Wall, NMCP Environmental and Natural Resources manager. Because there were so many volunteers, the clean up took less than an hour.

He said the most unusual items removed were a 25-foot, heavy-duty floating oil boom, a creosote telephone pole and several very heavy pier sections and piles. Wall was also encouraged that the event attracted more volunteers than ever before. In 2009, about 150 staff members participated.

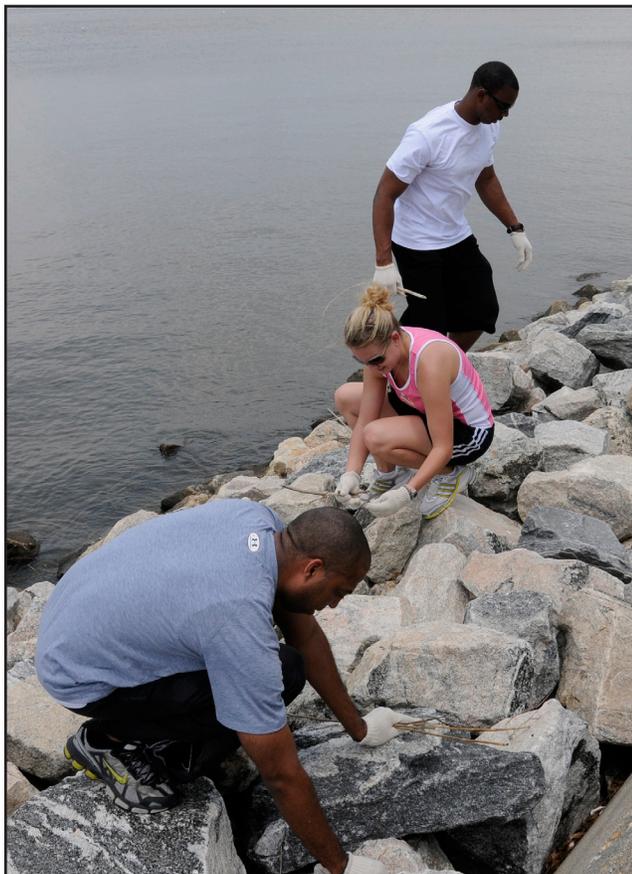


Photo by Rebecca A. Perron

**Above: Naval Medical Center Portsmouth staff members pitch in to clean more than a half mile of shoreline during Clean the Base Day June 4.**

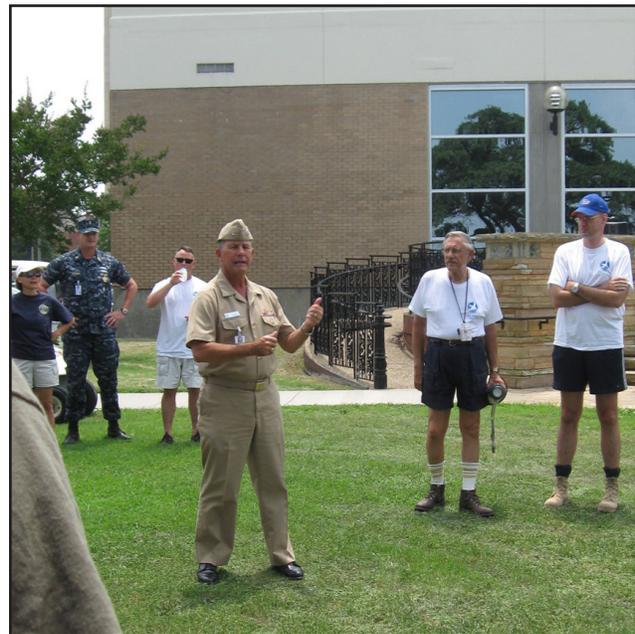


Photo by Nell Wall

**Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks thanks the more than 200 volunteers who showed up to help clean NMCP’s shoreline during annual Clean the Base Day June 4.**

# Nurse Corps Association Celebrates Nurses' Week, 102nd Nurse Corps Birthday

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MC2 RIZA CAPARROS  
NMCP Public Affairs

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's Nurse Corps Association celebrated National Nurses' Week May 10-14 and the 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday of the Navy Nurse Corps. Multiple events during the week honored the 1,050 nurses at NMCP, with each event celebrating the dedication and efforts nurses provide to their patients and co-workers.



**Capt. John Cherry and Ensign Erin Folstad, oldest and youngest members of NMCP's Nurse Corps, cut the cake during the Navy Nurse Corps 102nd birthday celebration May 13. The celebration included a 45-minute video capturing the history of Navy nurses at NMCP and in the fleet.**

With the theme "Nurses: Caring Today for a Healthier Tomorrow", the week kicked off with a progressive breakfast at various nursing units. Posters decorated the hallways, showcasing nurses serving in the medical facility. Nurses who deployed to Haiti in support of Operation Unified Response used the auditorium to show photos and discuss their work.

National Nurses' Week is celebrated annually across the country from May 6 through May 12, with May 12 observed as National Nurses' Day, in conjunction with the birthday of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing.

The birthday celebration for the Navy Nurse Corps was held May 13, and included the oldest and youngest active-duty nurses present participating in a cake cutting and video presentation. During the cake cutting, Capt. Matthew Pommer, NMCP deputy commander, extolled the service nurses provide at the medical center.

"They have been force multipliers for the delivery of quality medical care throughout the hospital and throughout the world in outlying medical facilities and combat zones," Pommer said.

"It's the collaboration and support we provide each other and the quality of care to our beneficiaries," continued Capt. Denise Johnson, director for Nursing Services. "We support not only our wounded and injured that are coming back from the war, but here in our population, those who are supporting the warfighter."

Johnson said it is the traditions of the work ethic of the Navy and the Navy Nurse Corps that she wants recognized during the week. She then extended a special thanks to the civilian nurses who help make the quality of nursing care so great.

"The collaborative effort it takes to function in any military installation cannot be forgotten," she said. "Our nurse staff is comprised of 30 percent military, so we have a large complement of civilian staff members. We must remember that they are a strong part of that backbone that nurses provide when thinking about the care our beneficiaries receive."

The commemorative week concluded with awards recognizing the recipients of the 2010 Nurse Excellence Awards for Registered Nurse and Licensed Practical Nurse (civilian) of the Year. RN James Drewiske of NMCP's Ambulatory Surgery Center and LPN Aimee Johnson from Branch Health Clinic Adm. Joel T. Boone at Joint Expeditionary Base-Little Creek were the award recipients. NMCP commander, Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks, presented the awards.

"Where there is quality care, there is a nurse there making sure it is being provided," Stocks said. "I am proud to work beside them every day, because they help to provide the excellent quality health care that we are famous for."



**Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks, NMCP commander, speaks during the Navy Nurse Corps' 102nd birthday celebration May 13. Stocks thanked them for their service and said Navy nurses "are everything about patient care."**

**Memorial** — *Continued from page 1*  
 ram Tennessee and in the damaging and destruction of the batteries at Fort Morgan.” Not much else is known about Sharp, other than that he was born in Spain in 1815, claimed New York as his home and died in 1892.

In addition to the four known MOH recipients, the MOHS believes that as many as 13 others buried in the cemetery received the award, and the society is searching naval records to confirm.

The ceremony’s featured speaker was Capt. Sean Mahoney, Incident Management branch chief for the Coast Guard’s Fifth District. Mahoney recognized the sacrifice of service members across the generations who paid the ultimate price and told the stories of three Coast Guard members killed in action during three different wars.

“When I speak about these three heroes,” Mahoney said, “I hope you will reflect on all of the Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen from all of the services who didn’t make it home.”

Mahoney told about the heroic actions of Petty Officer Douglas Munro, who served as a landing

craft operator on Guadalcanal during World War II, helicopter pilot Lt. Jack Rittichier, who flew rescue missions in Vietnam, and Petty Officer Nathan Bruckenthal, who served with one of the Coast Guard’s Tactical Law Enforcement Teams in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

As he concluded his remarks, Mahoney said, “The nature of the threats to liberty and our nation have changed throughout our history, but our service members across the generations have always risen to the challenge of defending our nation.”

At the end of the ceremony, William and Carolyn Combs of the Fleet Reserve Association and the Ladies Auxiliary placed a wreath on the cairn surmounted by a stone pillar and urn honoring the men lost during the Hampton Roads’ battle between USS Cumberland, USS Congress and the ironclad CSS Vir-

ginia’s maiden voyage.

The cemetery is the final resting place of those who served bravely during our nation’s major conflicts and wars, including more than 850 fallen Soldiers, Sailors and Marines from seven countries, as well as Union and Confederate service members. Also laid to rest are victims of the yellow fever epidemic that swept Hampton Roads in 1855.



Photo by Rebecca A. Perron

**Ret. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Jeff Christman plays Amazing Grace during the Memorial Day ceremony. Christman stands behind the newly installed Medal of Honor marker identifying Hendricks Sharp’s actions during the Civil War. The marker was officially unveiled during the ceremony.**



**Boy Scouts volunteered to place flags on each of the more than 850 graves in the Captain Theodore H. Conaway Memorial Naval Cemetery at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth for the annual Memorial Day ceremony May 31.**

PHOTOS BY  
 MC2 RIZA CAPARROS



## THE STORY OF THREE COAST GUARD HEROES

**Douglas Munro** joined the Coast Guard in 1939, and as a 20-year-old petty officer, he operated a landing craft that, on Sept. 27, 1942, took Marines to Point Cruz, Guadalcanal. Cut off with no hope of reinforcement or support, they were ordered to fight their way down to the beach. Munro immediately volunteered to lead five boats back to the beach to bring them out of their trap.

As Munro maneuvered his boat between the nearest enemy position and the other landing craft, he was killed by enemy fire just as the last boat left the beach. His last words were "Did they all get off?" Munro was awarded the Medal of Honor, and today, a Coast Guard High Endurance Cutter bears his name.

Another hero is **Jack Rittichier** who entered the Coast Guard in 1963 and flew for five years as a rescue helicopter pilot. In 1968, he

asked to serve with the Air Force as an exchange pilot with a rescue squadron in Vietnam. There he flew the H-3 "Jolly Green Giant" combat rescue helicopter.

Just 21 days after arriving in Vietnam, Rittichier was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for flying into hostile fire to rescue four Airmen who had been shot down over the jungle. Over the next three weeks, he would be decorated twice more for braving heavy anti-aircraft fire on day and night rescue missions.

Ten weeks after arriving in Vietnam, Rittichier would make his last rescue attempt. On June 9, 1968, after three failed tries by another pilot, his Jolly Green Giant would make the fourth and fifth attempt to recover a Marine who had been shot down. It was during his second try that the H-3 was shot down. All four aircrew perished and the Marine pilot was never recovered.

Originally listed as Killed in Action, an investigation team located the crash site in 2002 and re-

covered their remains. They were laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery in 2003. Rittichier was awarded the Silver Star.

The third hero is **Nathan Bruckenthal** who enlisted in the Coast Guard in 1998. After the attacks of Sep. 11, he requested to be transferred to one of the Coast Guard's Tactical Law Enforcement Teams, which conducts security boardings from Navy ships overseas. After deploying to Southwest Asia in 2003 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, he returned for a second deployment in 2004.

On April 24, 2004, Bruckenthal was on patrol with another Coast Guardsman and five Sailors. The team intercepted the boat, which was laden with explosives. As the team came alongside, the vessel exploded. Bruckenthal and two of the Sailors were killed. He was awarded the Bronze Star with Combat V and the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal and was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.



Photo by MC2 Riza Caparros

A Fleet Reserve Association member tolls the bell in memory of fallen service members buried at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth during the 24th annual Memorial Day ceremony.



Photo by Rebecca A. Perron

Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks welcomes those in attendance to the annual Memorial Day ceremony. Stocks officially unveiled the new Medal of Honor grave marker for MOH recipient Hendrick Sharp.

# Safety Day Kicks Off Critical Days of Summer Campaign Early

STORY AND PHOTOS BY REBECCA A. PERRON  
NMCP Public Affairs

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth launched its “Critical Days of Summer” campaign with the 7th annual Summer Safety Kickoff May 14. The theme was Encouraging Safety at Home, Work and Play.

Vice Adm. Harry Harris, Commander, U.S. 6th Fleet, kicked off the day with a speech that underlined the importance of safety from an operational perspective and was given to a full house in the auditorium. Harris said the theme for safety is the same no matter where we are in our military careers.

“Whether one is stationed overseas, deployed on ships or working on a staff in the United States,” Harris said, “safety works best when we’re all helping each other. Helping each other means ensuring we’re there for our shipmates and that we keep the buddy system active either while deployed or working ashore.”

After Harris’ remarks, Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks, commander, NMCP, announced the winners of the safety exhibit contest and gave out awards to the recipients.

The command’s safety day helps staff prepare for a season where the incidence of accidents and injuries typically increases. The Critical Days of Summer campaign is aimed at reducing off-duty fatalities.

NMCP’s Safety Department organized the day, which included displays and interactive safety-related activities from 47 different NMCP departments and local community organizations.

Community partners for the event included Portsmouth

Sheriff’s department, Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, Department of Motor Vehicles, Virginia Department of Transportation, Portsmouth’s Safety Town, Virginia Substance Abuse Program and the Defense and Veteran Brain Injury Center.

“This is the most participation we’ve had in over five years,” said Art Vogel, NMCP’s Safety Manager. “The goal is always zero mishaps, so we kicked off early because we wanted to get the topic in everyone’s mind as they plan their vacations.”

Four winners were recognized for their efforts in putting together a terrific safety exhibit. First place was awarded to Family Practice for their Weather Safety display, while second place went to Adm. Joel T. Boone Branch Health Clinic with Grilling Safety. The Allergy/Rheumatology Clinic took third place for their Fire Safety display, and Fleet & Family Support Center received honorable mention for their New Parent Support Program exhibit.

Between Memorial Day and Labor Day 2009, the Navy lost 24 Sailors and the Marines lost 15 lives. NMCP experienced zero fatalities. NMCP experienced one traffic fatality in 2004, where the military member was not at fault. It was the only traffic fatality in the past 20 years.

The command has experienced a decrease in mishaps with 174 occurring in 2006 and only 154 in 2009. With 6,564 personnel, there has been a subsequent drop in lost workdays.



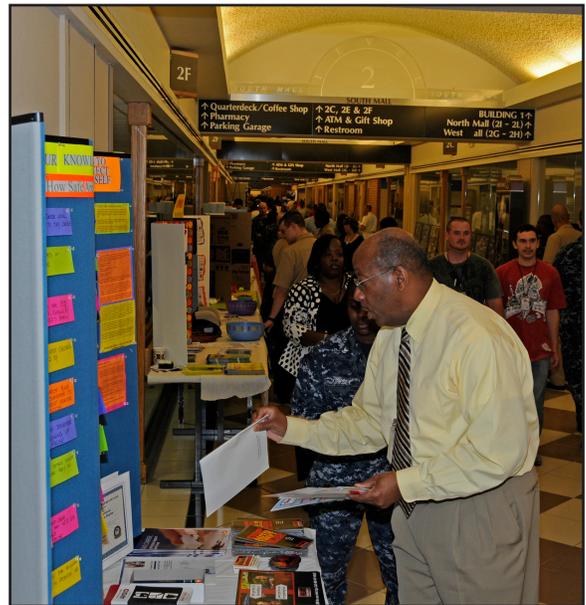
HM3 Nicholas Chuck, left, and HN Abin Elamthottam of DMS/Internal Medicine show off their Bicycle Safety exhibit.





Left: Master-at-Arms 2nd Class (EXW/SW) Jerry M. Bonham of the Security Department discusses Security's Drunk Driving Awareness display with Vice Adm. Harry Harris, Commander, U.S. 6th Fleet, during the 7th annual Summer Safety campaign at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth May 14.

Right: Patients, visitors and staff members enjoy the safety displays and interactive safety-related activities from 47 NMCP departments and local community organizations.



Adm. Alton L. Stocks, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth commander, listens to a member of the Laboratory talk about the department's Car Seat Safety display during the 7th annual Summer Safety campaign.



Above right: HM2 Scott Behrje strikes a pose on Catherine Czanowski's motorcycle for Critical Care's Motorcycle Safety display.

Left: Adm. Joel T. Boone Branch Health Clinic took second place with its Grilling Safety display.

Right: Lt. Lacy Gee discusses her display with NMCP staff member Sarah Crawford.



# Staff, Patients Walk, Raise Money for ‘Relay’

STORY AND PHOTO  
BY MC2 RIZA CAPARROS  
NMCP Public Affairs

Excitement was in the air on the evening of May 14, the night of the 10th annual Relay for Life Elizabeth River. Naval Medical Center Portsmouth military and civilian staff and patients were part of the overnight event at Tidewater Community College’s Portsmouth campus.

Relay for Life is an American Cancer Society event that celebrates the lives of people who have battled cancer, remembers those who lost their battle to the disease and pro-

vides a way to raise money for research to discover cures. At the relay, teams camp out at a local high school, park or fairground and take turns walking or running around a track or path. Each team is asked to have a representative on the track at all times during the event. Because cancer never sleeps, relays are overnight events up to 24 hours long.

there are so many more that come in the spirit of camaraderie and desire to do what they can to help us find a cure for cancer.

“Cancer never sleeps, and these people are staying up throughout the night to fight back,” Caldwell continued. “It’s an absolutely beautiful thing looking out there and seeing the survivors, caretakers, friends and family of those affected by cancer all walking for the same cause.”

The Radiation/Oncology department had a team of 10 at the event led by clinic manager Debbie Smith. The “Zappers” raised \$680 before the relay. Smith’s goal was to raise

with thyroid cancer in 2002 and, after eight years, discovered the cancer has spread to her brain. Branhan and her family recently moved to Hampton Roads and put together a team for the Elizabeth River Relay for Life.

“This means a more this time,” said Branhan. “I was just released from the hospital after undergoing tests before I came here tonight. It’s a sobering process, but I have the love and support from my family and friends tonight and always. That helps me get through it all.”

Because of her personal fight with cancer, Branham strives to continue to raise money and awareness for the cause.

“Relay for Life means a lot to me, in so many ways. My husband and I were married at a Relay for Life event in front of 300 strangers and friends,” she added with a smile. “We were married at 9:45 at night; the ceremony was lit by glow stick. And my team raised \$6,500 that year.”

Although her illness interfered with her ability to raise more, this year her team raised \$1,500.

This year’s goal for the Elizabeth River relay is \$130,000.

“I am certain we will make our goal this year, but we are not done. This is our 10th year, but we are going to keep on going until there is a cure,” Caldwell said.

Relay began in 1985 when Dr. Gordy Klatt, a colorectal surgeon in Tacoma, Wash., ran and walked around a track for 24 hours to raise money for the ACS. Since then, Relay has grown from a single man’s passion to fight cancer into the world’s largest movement to end the disease. Each year, more than 3.5 million people take part in local events across the country and raise funds and awareness to save lives from cancer.



**Debbie Smith, Cathy Washburn, Michele Rucker, Ronnie Rucker and Michael Smith of Team Zappers walks during the 10th annual Relay for Life Elizabeth River May 14 at Tidewater Community College’s Portsmouth campus.**

vides a way to raise money for research to discover cures. At the relay, teams camp out at a local high school, park or fairground and take turns walking or running around a track or path. Each team is asked to have a representative on the track at all times during the event. Because cancer never sleeps, relays are overnight events up to 24 hours long.

“As of right before the kickoff of the first lap, we had 648 registered participants,” event chairperson Fitzgerald Caldwell said. “But

\$1,000 by the end of the night. The team’s total came in just over \$800.

“This is the first year the department has put together a team,” Smith said, “but the idea has brought us together in camaraderie. We all realize the importance of the event and the reasons for it. We are all happy to support each other during the walk and support the community affected by cancer.”

NMCP cancer patient Sarah Branhan was there for her seventh Relay for Life. She was first diagnosed

# Asian, Pacific Islander Culture Celebrated at NMCP

STORY AND PHOTO BY MC2 RIZA CAPARROS  
NMCP Public Affairs

Attendees of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's Asian-Pacific heritage celebration were treated to Indian and Filipino foods, Polynesian dance and the cultures of Asia and the eastern Pacific.

May is nationally recognized as Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month and the Command Diversity Committee hosted a ceremony May 21 in the auditorium.

Cheryl Tan was the guest speaker. Most know her as the anchor and reporter at WAVY-TV and FOX43, but here, she spoke personally to the audience about the pride she feels as an Asian-American.

"It is quite an honor to be here, representing those of Asian-Pacific heritage," said Tan. "I am extremely proud of my heritage. It has made me strive for success, and I certainly hope I can inspire young and old of Asian descent to also reach for their dreams."

The ceremony included a performance of a traditional Polynesian dance and concluded with a sampling of Asian foods – including pancit from the Philippines and traditional dishes from India.

"Our program will entertain and educate all our guests," said Hospital Corpsman 1<sup>st</sup> Class (FMF) Lasonya McDonald, chairperson for the event. "We are privileged to have Ms. Tan here, giving us her perspective of being an Asian in a mostly Caucasian society and work force.

"The command diversity committee understands the importance of recognizing the different cultures which make up our diverse military," MacDonald added.

Ensign Angelita Kisena, a registered nurse in NMCP's Post-Anesthesia Care Unit, was one of the dancers who entertained the guests of the ceremony with a traditional Polynesian dance.

"I have been performing for audiences for eight years, and I am proud to spread awareness of the cultural practices of the Polynesian, and I enjoy teaching about my Pacific-Islander heritage," Kisena said. "I also enjoy learning about other cultures throughout the world."

Congress passed a Congressional Resolution in 1978 to commemorate Asian American Heritage Week during the first week of May. In 1990, Congress voted to expand it from a week to a monthlong celebration and, in May 1992, May was permanently designated as Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month.



**From left, Lt. j.g. Kimberly Polk of Labor and Delivery, Lt. j.g. Amanda Scott of the Progressive Care Unit and Ensign Angelita Kisena of the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit perform a Polynesian dance during the Asian-Pacific heritage celebration May 21.**

## Facebook, Twitter Can Help You Keep Up with NMCP Info

BY DEBORAH KALLGREN  
NMCP Public Affairs Officer

Facebook friend? Twitter tweeter? Follow the latest buzz from Naval Medical Center Portsmouth on both social media sites.

The NMCP pages debuted in 2009, and Facebook now has more than 2,100 fans who range from staff, spouses, parents, and others who are interested in the medical center.

Facebook accommodates photos, photo albums and reader responses to postings. Photos include the change of command, Bravo Zulus,

events and historical photos.

Twitter and Facebook are also an avenue to communicate when inclement weather is forecast. Both sites provided detailed information on closings and delays when Hampton Roads was hit with snow this winter. The sites allow NMCP to give staff and patients more information than the TV stations' crawls.

The Facebook page is at [www.facebook.com/NMCPPortsmouth](http://www.facebook.com/NMCPPortsmouth).

Anyone can look at the page, but you must be a member of Facebook to interact with and post on the page.

You can follow the command on

<http://twitter.com/NMCP1> without being a member, but to receive text updates on your cell phone, you must sign up and follow NMCP1.

Twitter messages are limited to 143 characters, and many members receive text messages when pages they follow are updated.

Staff who have information that would be of interest to the command's Facebook and Twitter follower should to contact Public Affairs to have their events and accomplishments highlighted. Contact Deborah Kallgren, Public Affairs Officer, for more information.



# Hungry for Pie?

The 2010 Hospital Corps Ball Chief Pie in the Face fundraiser brought in about \$2,000 June 4 at Hospital Point. Command chiefs collected votes via donations, with HMCN Spencer from the Department of Surgical Services raising the most with \$600.

The 10 chiefs with the most votes lined up from least to greatest money raised for their turn in the hot seat.

Pies were auctioned to the highest bidders. Winning bids ranged from \$5 to \$25.

Photos by Rebecca A. Perron



# ARC Volunteers Recognized

STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY REBECCA A. PERRON  
NMCP Public Affairs

The American Red Cross Portsmouth Station held its annual Volunteer Recognition ceremony June 8 to recognize Naval Medical Center Portsmouth volunteers for their service during the past year. During the ceremony, 55 volunteers were acknowledged, including the volunteer of the year and 20 for multiple years of service. Four were recognized for more than 10 years of service.

Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks, NMCP commander, spoke at the beginning of the ceremony about the profound impact the volunteers have on the medical center's patients.

"I'm sure there are over 100,000 hours of service among you, and when you work with the patients, you show them exceptional care,"

Stocks said. "After the patients leave, they remember the wonderful care they received from you."

The first award was given to Cynthia Dandridge, who received the Exceptional Volunteer Service Award (volunteer of the year) for spending about 40 hours per week in the Ambulatory Procedures Unit. After the ceremony, Dandridge explained that she recently became a medical assistant.

"Right now, I am working in the APU, and have also worked in Surgical Waiting," Dandridge said. "I check medical records to make sure they are up to date, draw blood, perform EKGs and help patients fill out the appropriate forms when they come



at the information desk. Previously, he spent 21 years in the Neurosurgery Clinic after four years in Personal Services. He said he was

inspired to volunteer after spending so much time as a patient at NMCP.

"I have spent so many, many months here as a patient – actually about five years over the past 45 years – because of spine and neck injuries," Spizzirri said. "The Red Cross volunteers impressed me, some bringing around the craft cart for my son and me to work on models together. I wanted to give back to the hospital and show my appreciation for the Red Cross volunteers who helped keep me afloat all those years."

Spizzirri hopes to serve 30 years, adding that he "enjoys volunteering at the finest medical facility bar none."



up for surgery."

The next award recipient was Michael Spizzirri who received a Special Recognition Award for 25 years of service. Spizzirri works four to five hours, two days a week, most recently

<p><b>EXCEPTIONAL VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD</b> CYNTHIA DANDRIDGE</p>	<p><b>MULTIPLE YEARS OF SERVICE AWARDS</b> MELVIN TWINE - 8 LANA NEIBERT - 7 MEADE FOWLKES - 6 CHARLOTTE BEARD - 5 KENNETH BEARD - 5 JOSEPH MARESCO - 5 SISTER GRACE (CHRISTIANA MALONZO) - 5</p>	<p>MICHAEL POWERS - 5 VERNON SELLERS - 5 VERNICE GLENNON - 4 GWENN HARTMAN - 4 WILLIAM TROUTMAN - 4 JOHN WATSON - 4 GEORGE (JIMMY) GORE - 3 SHIRLEY PAPAN - 2 MAUREEN SIGMUND - 2</p>
<p><b>SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS</b> MICHAEL SPIZZIRRI - 25 YEARS MARTHA SUSKI - 17 YEARS MARGARET GLYNN - 14 YEARS ALLEN CUTCHIN - 12 YEARS</p>		

## SAILOR OF THE QUARTER

HM2 LILLIAN A. RAMIREZ

Directorate for Clinical Support Services

As an advance medical laboratory technician, HM2 Lillian Ramirez provided excellent oversight and guidance to more than 700 health care providers and reviewed and certified more than 100,000 Point of Care Testing procedures. She ensured all guidelines and procedures were followed, resulting in a 100 percent pass rate of all College of American Pathologists inspections.

A member of the Command Retention Team and de-

partmental Command Career Counselor, she participated in 30 career development boards and two E1-E5 Success Workshops. Her leadership resulted in four reenlistments and five personnel choosing follow-on orders. She facilitated three Petty Officer Indoctrination programs and facilitated seven enlisted advancement program classes to assist 71 personnel with the March exam cycle.

## JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE QUARTER

HM3(FMF/SCW) SEAN D. HAYMON

Directorate for Primary Care



Selected as the temporary assistant leading petty officer, HM3(FMF/SCW) Sean D. Haymon provided leadership to 30 civilian and military staff members who assist 15 providers who treat more than 3,000 patients each month.

A calm and collected leader during medical emergencies, he assumed the appropriate role as needed to assist the provider. He uses every opportunity to continuously train six junior corpsmen, five fellow petty officers and 20 civilian co-workers.

PHOTOS BY REBECCA A. PERRON

## BLUE JACKET OF THE QUARTER

HN BLAKE A. HITE

Directorate for Nursing Services

HN Blake A. Hite is a proficient Critical Care Floor corpsman who worked independently in a multi-service care unit that provides care to more than 1,200 patients annually. He independently monitored patients for pre- and post-cardiac catheterization, coronary artery bypass graphs and vascular bypass, as well as Internal Medicine patients.

While deployed on board USNS Comfort during Operation Unified Response, he worked in a multifunctional intensive care ward and educated and trained other corpsmen to effectively function in a high-pace environment. He was directly responsible for the care of up to three patients at a time with little to no supervision.



# JUNE AWARDS

## **MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL**

Cmdr. Walter Brafford  
Cmdr. Lawrence LeClair  
Cmdr. Alison Lefebvre  
Cmdr. Julie McNally  
Lt. Cmdr. David R. Koch  
Lt. Cmdr. Charles White

## **NAVY & MARINE CORPS COMMENDATION MEDAL**

Capt. Abhik Biswas  
Cmdr. Julia King  
Cmdr. Richard Lalonde  
Cmdr. Catherine McDonald  
Lt. Cmdr. Rollin Clayton  
Lt. Cmdr. Sylvia Crum  
Lt. Cmdr. John McLaughlin  
Lt. Cmdr. Quentin Ray  
Lt. Cmdr. Zhengshi Song  
Lt. Cmdr. Tynah West  
Lt. James Buchanan  
Lt. Lance Calhoun  
Lt. U'Landers Craig  
Lt. Vince Deguzman  
Lt. Larrah Lease  
Lt. Mark Long  
Lt. Jonathan Shea  
HMC(SW/FMF) Brian Wood  
HM1(SW/FMF/AW) Rochelle Reyes  
HM1 Ladonna Taylor

## **NAVY & MARINE CORPS ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL**

Lt. Cmdr. Julie Drinkwine  
Lt. Cmdr. Mandy Johnson

Lt. Cmdr. Christian Pronk  
Lt. Travis Carr  
Lt. Nelson Cody  
Lt. Philip Gaudreau  
Lt. Anthony Hanley  
Lt. Patricia Horn  
Lt. Cmdr. Sharon House  
Lt. David Myers  
Lt. William Strayhorn  
Lt. Margaret Tremblay  
Lt. j.g. Taiko Lester  
Lt. j.g. Christopher Sutherland  
HM1 Timeca Mincey  
HM1 Vladimir Pierre-Charles  
OS1(SW) Nichole White  
HM2(SW) Andrea Dantzler  
HM2(FMF) George Hall  
HM2 Katherine Makuchowski  
HM2 Ryan R. Sanders  
HM2 Judith Whitt  
HM3 Ginger Barlow  
HM3 Gabriel Carranza  
HM3 Heather Fields  
CS3 Robert Garcia  
HM3 Sarah Thielen  
HM3 Glenville Thomas  
HM3 Kenneth Yearout

## **NAVY MERITORIOUS CIVILIAN SERVICE AWARD**

Carol Andrews  
Diane Bunting  
Aida Mateo  
Corazon Miranda

# SHIPMATE OF THE MONTH

HN JACOB R. ROBERTS, DSS  
HM2 NICOLE D. ROTH, DFA  
HM3 CHAD E. CASH, DDS  
HA CHARLES L. CARROLL, DCSS  
HM3 JOLY A. MAKANDA, DNS

HN ROMARO KEITH, DMH  
HA MATTHEW D. SHEELEY, DMS  
HM2 EDWIN P. CRAWFORD, DPHS  
HM3 CODY D. HUTCHISON, DPE  
HM3 JEAN P. DOMINGO, DPC

# NMCP Corpsman Brings New Capability to Afghan Hospital

BY AIR FORCE MASTER SGT. CHRISTOPHER DEWITT  
RC North Public Affairs Advisory Team Mentor

MAZAR-E-SHARIF, Afghanistan – Making something out of nothing is a daunting task on its own, but turning Afghan National Army soldiers into biomedical engineers is an entirely different matter, and as it turns out, the perfect job for one particular Sailor.

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Sean Buckley, a biomedical engineering mentor with the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan, is mentoring a three-man biomedical engineering shop at the ANA Camp Shaheen regional hospital. Buckley, a member of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, is part of a U.S. and Coalition effort to create a self-sustaining Afghan Army through mentoring teams across the country who advise their ANA partners.

Mentors in Afghanistan typically advise and make suggestions to soldiers who have previously been trained in their field of expertise, but Buckley was faced with training from the ground up.

“I wanted to take the skills he already had and utilize them to troubleshoot hospital equipment,” Buckley said about making progress with his Afghan counterpart. “He understood basic electronic theory and that was helpful because he has a professional knowledge of schematics and circuits, which usually takes the longest to learn.”

Biomedical engineers play a life or death role in the daily operations at the ANA hospital.

“Our job is very important because if equipment fails, doctors cannot treat patients, or patients could die,” said ANA Lt. Fazil Haq, Biomedical Engineering Department head. “We are kind of like doctors, because we take care of the machines like they treat patients.”

“Doctors know the equipment works because we tell them it works - that is an incredible amount of trust,” Buckley added. “Among hospital staff, engineers are just as respected as the doctors in the hospital.”

“His knowledge and skills have made an untrained,

aviation electronics mechanic able to repair hospital equipment,” said Chief Petty Officer Brandon Ellison, leading chief. “He is a strong, positive influence.”

During one recent experience, an operating room sterilizer malfunctioned.

“We had the equipment fixed within 24 hours, just as the operating room was down to five sets of sterile instruments for surgeries,” Buckley said. “I stressed the importance and benefits of working as a team during the troubleshooting process. It worked out well.”

A part of the second wave of mentors, Buckley’s task was made easier by the prior team. That team established required protocols, which allowed him to focus on teaching preventative maintenance and maintenance skills.

Buckley emphasizes the importance of preventative maintenance and often accompanies the team on daily rounds to verify the status of equipment.



Photo by Master Sgt. Christopher DeWitt

**HM1 Sean Buckley, NATO Training Mission Afghanistan biomedical engineering mentor, and two of the three-person Afghan team he mentors, stand in the biomedical engineering shop at Afghan National Army Camp Shaheen regional hospital. Buckley is responsible for training and advising the soldiers during his seven-month deployment.**

“We check each area of the hospital, such as the emergency and patient rooms, dentist, physical therapy, optometry, etc., to check on the equipment and find out if anyone is having issues,” Buckley said. “Additionally, I sometimes have to train the hospital staff on proper use to prevent injury to patients or damage to equipment.”

Facing challenges is an everyday experience for the petty officer who has risen to the call and played a pivotal role. Spending such a considerable amount of time with ANA soldiers has had a significant impact on Buckley.

“When I first came here I didn’t think I was going to be as big an influence as I have been,” said Buckley. “But I feel rewarded, like I made a positive impact here.”