



March 2010

# THE COURIER

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Portsmouth, Va.



NMCRS Fund Drive Begins — Page 5

## Last NMCP Personnel Return from Comfort

By REBECCA A. PERRON  
NMCP Public Affairs

USNS Comfort (T-AH-20) pulled into Naval Station Norfolk, March 13, where family members and colleagues greeted the remaining Naval Medical Center Portsmouth personnel who served on board the Navy hospital ship and conducted humanitarian and disaster relief operations, as part of the international mission Operation Unified Response, in the aftermath of a 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti.

Comfort departed Port-au-Prince, March 9, after being anchored off the coast of Haiti for seven weeks. Its rapid deployment provided state-of-the-art and round-the-clock afloat medical care to a nation whose own hospitals and clinics were decimated in the earthquake that struck the island Jan. 12.

More than half of NMCP's staff detailed to the ship had begun to fly home via commercial and Air Mo-

**For more about NMCP staff helping in Haiti, see the FDPMU story on Page 9.**

bility Command flights starting in late February, as Haitian emergency medical needs began to diminish.

Following the quake, more than 130 medical and support personnel departed NMCP and embarked the Comfort bound for Haiti Jan. 16. The ship arrived in Port-au-Prince Jan. 20. An additional contingent of personnel from NMCP medical teams, totaling nearly 200 people, joined the ship after it had arrived on station in Haiti.

Prior to anchoring off Haiti's coast, Comfort received severely injured earthquake survivors via airlift. By the end of the relief effort, nearly 1,400 medical personnel from the U.S. military and various non-governmental organizations embarked, at some point, to treat patients. Through-



Harry Gerwien, Military Newspapers of Virginia

**USNS Comfort emerges from the fog as it approaches the pier at Naval Station Norfolk March 13 after completing a seven-week deployment to participate in Operation Unified Response in Haiti.**

out seven weeks, the ship's doctors, nurses and corpsmen treated 871 patients. At the height of the recovery effort, Comfort received one patient every six to nine minutes.

As the leading chief petty officer of Combat Cargo and Medical Operations and also of the Litter Team, it was HMC(SW/FMF) Brian A. Wood's job to oversee the embarkation and debarkation of those injured,

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**Lunch & Learn**

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## Easter Egg Hunt Set for March 27

Join the family fun day! The Command Egg Hunt will be March 27 at Hospital Point from 2 to 4 p.m.

Visit with the Easter Bunny. Have your face painted, get a balloon creation from BeeBop the Clown or bounce around in the Bouncy Castle. Play Egg-er-rific games.

Food and drinks will be provided at cost by the JEA. Baked goodies will be provided by donation from the Oakleaf Club.

## Military & Overseas Voters

Military and overseas voters, submit your ballot request for the upcoming primaries. These states will hold primary elections in May and June:

May 4: Indiana, North Carolina, Ohio

May 11: Nebraska, West Virginia

May 18: Arkansas, Kentucky, Or-

gon, Pennsylvania

May 25: Idaho

June 1: Alabama, Mississippi, New Mexico

June 8: California, Iowa, Maine, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Virginia

June 22: Utah

The FPCA ballot application and instructions are available at [www.fvap.gov/FPCA](http://www.fvap.gov/FPCA). Request your absentee voting ballot today.

## JEA Easter Baskets for Sale

The Junior Enlisted Association will sell Easter Baskets for \$12 on April 2 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. by the Navy Federal Credit Union on the second floor of Bldg 3. Pre-orders can be made daily from March 29 to April 1 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the same location. Orders will be delivered April 2.

## Busch Gardens Season Passes

The ITT Office now has Military Season Passes for Busch Gardens Williamsburg. ITT now carries 1 Year 1 Park (Busch Gardens) and 1 Year 2 Park (BG + Water Country). For more information, call Katrina at 953-5439 or e-mail [katrina.barnes@med.navy.mil](mailto:katrina.barnes@med.navy.mil).

## 2010 MWR Soccer League

MWR is recruiting for the 2010 Soccer League. Registration is free and open to active duty and dependents 16 & up, reservists, retirees, DoD civilians and contractors with current MWR membership. The league is set to begin on Monday, April 26 and run until late May.

Games will be Mondays through Thursdays at 5:15 and 6:25 p.m. Roster size is unlimited. Submit your team name and roster to Joseph Powers at [joseph.powers2@med.navy.mil](mailto:joseph.powers2@med.navy.mil).

Individual will be placed in the free agent pool. The number of players on the field will be tailored to fit the average roster size. The deadline to register is April 20. Call 953-7108 with questions.

## Save the Date: Oakleaf Club Auction

The Oakleaf Club annual fundraising auction will be held at the Sandbar Club April 30. The theme this year is "Party in Paradise." Mark your calendar, details to come.

Your attendance can help make this event our most successful fundraiser ever. All proceeds benefit command members, locally and deployed, and provide comfort items that enhance the morale and welfare of military patients, their families and those who care for them.

## 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

## The Courier

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.

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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. 311.

## Pommer Becomes Deputy Commander

Capt. Matthew Pommer became the deputy commander for Naval Medical Center Portsmouth March 15.

“It is my deepest desire to be a positive influence on the long tradition of excellence here at ‘The First and Finest,’” Pommer said. “Naval Medical Center Portsmouth has the privilege of caring for the world’s most deserving patients. We answer our country’s calling and deploy with our combatant forces, and we train the health care team of tomorrow.”

Commissioned by his uncle, Capt. William A. Kerr Jr., in 1985, Pommer’s first assignment was to the Naval Dental Clinic in Charleston, S.C., as assistant dental officer. He later served on board USS Sierra (AD-18) before returning to Charleston. In 1990, then-Cmdr. Pommer reported to USS Wisconsin (BB-64) where he participated in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. He then served as

the assistant fleet liaison dental officer at Naval Dental Center Norfolk.

Other assignments included the department head of Recruit Restorative Dentistry at the Naval Dental Center, Parris Island, S.C., and the Chief of the Dental Corps’ staff as Head, Metrics and Standards Branch, MED-631, at the Navy’s Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. He served as the Dental Clinic Branch Director at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, and then branch director at Branch Dental Clinic San Diego.

Pommer was the final executive officer of Naval Dental Center Mid-Atlantic before the command was disestablished in 2005. He became NMCP’s Director of Dental Services and officer in charge of Naval Dental Clinic Norfolk until



assuming the position of deputy commander at NMCP.

NMCP’s previous deputy commander, Capt. Craig Bonnema, is scheduled to assume command of U.S. Naval Hospital Naples, Italy, on April 23.

## JEA, Oakleaf Club Prepare for Easter Egg Hunt

PHOTOS BY MC2(SW/AW) WILLIAM HEIMBUCH



HM2 Eduardo Cruz helps members of the Junior Enlisted Society and the Oakleaf Club prepare the Easter eggs March 16 for NMCP’s annual Easter Egg hunt, which will be held March 27.



HM2 Michael Marquette, from the Out-patient Psychiatry Clinic, helps fill more than 4,000 Easter eggs.

# Lunch & Learn Offers Insight into Civilian Personnel Matters

By REBECCA A. PERRON  
NMCP Public Affairs

After facilitating a class about civilian performance appraisal report procedures, Kari Jackson realized many supervisors of civilian staff members at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth could benefit from similar training on civilian personnel topics. Jackson asked for input about what subjects should be included in future lectures, and used the feedback to develop the Lunch and Learn program three months ago.

Classes are given on the second and third Tuesdays of each month from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the communications conference room (classroom 5) behind the auditorium in Bldg. 3.

Classes cover topics such as counseling, evaluation and the mentoring process, while also addressing topics that first-time civilian supervisors or supervisors new to the Navy may need to know. Some classes are geared for supervisors only, while others are open to all civilians.

“Representatives from Human Resources Office and the Human Resources Department facilitate most of the classes while I set up the topics and who will facilitate each class,” explained Jackson, NMCP’s performance appraisal coordinator. “The subject matter expert for each topic really knows what they are talking about, so they should be the ones to give the class.”

“Some of the procedures are similar to active duty staff,” Jackson continued, “but different enough that

some supervisors might not be clear on the different approaches to say, something like counseling or performance evaluations. If they don’t know the rules, it can be difficult.”

Jackson planned many of the classes to address topics every supervisor or civilian employee may need to know.

“Many staff members are new to the process, and may not know how to read their Leave and Earnings

Statement, or may not be familiar with certain policies, such as hiring practices,” Jackson said. “The push is to get the information out to the masses using the best technology possible.”

Classes are facilitated in the video teleconferencing classroom so branch clinic

personnel and those in outlying buildings at NMCP can participate without having to commute or spend the time walking over to the main buildings.

The classes have been a hit with many supervisors.

“I received very useful information about getting a handle on attendance problems and tips on what to do when issues arise,” said Lt. Andrew N. Nyabwari, Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center, who attended his first session in March. “I am a clinic nurse manager and the topics presented provide useful information utilized daily at my workplace while being in a leadership role. I have already recommended the program to three of my supervisors, and I even shared yesterday’s PowerPoint presentation with them.”

Jill Jack, the Clinic Manager for the Gastroenterology Clinic, agreed that the program is useful.

“I have attended two sessions and am scheduled to attend two more so far,” Jack said. “I hope to gain some insight for my civilian employees. It is a lot of information that we can use in our day-to-day management of our clinic.”

For more information about the program, visit the Lunch and Learn on the J drive. The folder contains the schedule, directions to the classroom, procedures for signing up for VTC services and the PowerPoint presentations from previous classes.

## APRIL'S LUNCH & LEARN SCHEDULE

**April 13** – Documenting Counseling (supervisors of civilians only)

**April 20** – Interpreting your LES (all supervisors and civilians)



Photo by MC2(SW/AW) William Heimbuch

**Getting a Handle on Attendance Problems was the topic of the Lunch & Learn class on March 9.**

## NMCRS Kicks Off Annual Drive

# Goal to Get More Sailors, Marines to Donate

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
MC2(SW/AW) WILLIAM HEIMBUCH  
NMCP Public Affairs

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth kicked off its annual Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society fund drive March 1. The kickoff ceremony consisted of comments by NMCP Deputy Commander Capt. Craig Bonnema about the importance of donating to NMCRS and was followed by a cake cutting marking the event.

“For those of you who are directorate or branch clinic reps, it’s making sure that you get out with the pledge forms and let everyone know that they have that chance to donate,” Bonnema said. “The fund drive lasts until the end of March, but the services that they provide and the need for them goes on throughout the year.”

Every dollar donated through the NMCRS annual fund drive goes directly to Sailors, Marines and their families in need in Hampton Roads. The goal is the same as is years past: contacting 100 percent of service members to ask for donations, while advancing the knowledge of NMCRS programs.

“Our goal is not to get the Sailors and Marines who normally donate to donate more, but to have more Sailors and Marines donate,” explained Sarah Stewart, director of the Portsmouth NMCRS. “If every service

member were to donate just five dollars a month, the campaign could generate more than \$64 million.”

In 2009, NMCRS worldwide received \$16.4 million in donations, \$12.3 million from active duty and retired service members. Its assistance reached more



**NMCP’s Deputy Commander Capt. Craig Bonnema speaks at the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society Fund Drive kickoff ceremony March 1. Last year, NMCRS spent more than \$47 million to aid Sailors and Marines. The fund drive runs until March 31.**

than 16 percent of Sailors and Marines totaling more than \$47 million in interest-free loans and grants. Other NMCRS services included 6,500 layette baby gifts, the running of 28 thrift shops and client services for 14,485 personnel that included counseling, referrals and financial education.

In Hampton Roads, more than \$6.8 million of financial assistance was given to more than 15,000. Within sub area six, of which NMCP is a part, almost 800 loans and grants were given totaling nearly \$400,000, while donations from the sub area were more than \$88,000.

NMCRS is a private, non-profit charitable organization established more than 100 years ago and is headed by active and retired veterans. The society provides financial, educational and other assistance to members of the Navy and Marine Corps, to eligible family members and survivors when in need. Services are offered through loans and grants, including interest-free loans and grants, needs-based scholarships, budget counseling services, visiting nurse services and infant layettes.



**CMDCM(SW/SS) Carl Morgan, command master chief, Sarah Stewart, NMCRS director, and Capt. Craig Bonnema, NMCP’s deputy commander, cut the ceremonial cake during the NMCRS Fund Drive kickoff ceremony.**

# Visiting Nurse Recognized for NMCRS Assistance Program

BY REBECCA A. PERRON  
NMCP Public Affairs

In recognition of Patty Kotora's work to establish the Visiting Nurse Combat Casualty Assistance Program at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, NMCP Commander Rear Adm. William R. Kiser presented Kotora with a Certificate of Appreciation March 2.

The Visiting Nurse CCA Program, part of Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society's nursing component, works with service members who have been wounded in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Arabian Gulf, as well as their families. Visiting nurses identify needs and concerns that affect the entire family and help them adjust to the changes in their lives as a result of their wartime service. The program provides long-term, face-to-face followup anywhere in the country at no cost to the service member.

"The impact (of NMCRS) is immeasurable," Kiser said while awarding the certificate. "It's truly the work of the heart. You make such a difference and you help keep faith strong. People who do it best are those who quietly leave goodness in their wake without a lot of fanfare."

"I am grateful for the recognition," Kotora said, "but I am more grateful to have the program here in Portsmouth, so we can continue to help those injured Sailors and Marines find recovery and a positive future."

Kotora originally began working with the program at Camp Lejeune, N.C., in May 2008.

"The CCA program at Lejeune had been started the previous year, and I worked to expand it," Kotora said. "In July of 2009, my husband received orders to NMCP, and I asked to establish the program here. I currently accept new referrals and follow cases of service members who have relocated to various parts of the country."

The program originated in the Washington, D.C., area in 2006. NMCRS was able to expand the service throughout the country after receiving a three-year grant in 2008 from the California Community Foundation. There are now 11 CCA visiting nurses around the country, including in California, Texas and Washington state. Thirty-six other visiting nurses visit CCA patients in the nurses' immediate area.

"The nurses all have different backgrounds, such as from the Intensive Care Unit, the emergency room and case management, but all are registered nurses," Kotora said. "Each nurse sees a variety of cases depending on their location. I see service members who are mostly physically recovered, but may be recently separated,

while those at Bethesda see the acutely injured cases. Each case has widely varied needs."

The visiting nurses receive referrals from various military and civilian agencies, including the Wounded Warrior Regiment, Marine Liaison, Navy Safe Harbor, DoD nurse case managers, social workers at military treatment facilities and the Veterans Administration, caseworkers within NMCRS and counselors at Military One Source.

The nurses contact service members and families in inpatient, rehabilitation and outpatient facilities, such as Wounded Warrior barracks, Fisher Houses and Wounded Warrior homes. The nurses provide assistance through home visits, phone calls, email and text messaging.



MC2(SW/AW) William Heimbuch

**Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Commander Rear Adm. William R. Kiser presents Patty Kotora with a certificate of appreciation March 2 for her work to establish the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society Visiting Nurse Combat Casualty Assistance Program at NMCP.**

While the patient is in a hospital or rehab setting, the visiting nurse will assist the service member and their family in understanding the service member's injuries, diagnosis, and recovery/rehabilitation process, listen to their concerns and help locate appropriate resources.

Once the patient is home, the visiting nurse works with the patient and family in order to assess their understanding of treatments, medications and restrictions, helps them identify unmet needs and possible resources, serves as an easily accessible contact for when problems or questions arise, and remains an advocate for the patient and family as they adjust to the changes in their lives.

Currently throughout the program, the visiting nurses

— See **Nurse**, next page

## Diversity through Discovery

# Harnessing the Power of a Diverse Workforce

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
MC2(SW/AW) WILLIAM HEIMBUCH  
NMCP Public Affairs

How do you envision diversity in the workplace? What causes you to perceive things the way you do? Those were two of the questions guest speaker Mauricio Velasquez asked Naval Medical Center Portsmouth and its branch clinics' staff when he presented his annual diversity training in March.

Renowned for his motivational lectures, Velasquez conducts three-hour workshops about topics such as how diversity issues can affect the workplace, the proper way to defuse stereotypes and using communication to solve problems.

The course was provided by the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery's Diversity Office and was required attendance for all hands at the medical center. Even though the Navy Knowledge Online Web site offers many courses for learning about diversity in the military, it is well worth attending Velasquez's workshop, since he takes the training to a higher level through humor and personal experience.

"The workshop is much more interactive, more challenging, more personal, and, in my opinion, much more enjoyable," said Capt. Marvin Jones, BUMED chief diversity officer. "We've worked with Mr. Velasquez to conduct this workshop for over three years now, and it's always a smash hit."

Velasquez asks audience members to reflect on their own thought processes.

"When you look at somebody, do you see the person for who they are, or do you label them into a certain group?" asked Velasquez.

Velasquez brought to light the subconscious judg-

**Nurse** — *Continued from previous page*

have contact with more than 750 service members and families and made more than 9,000 visits in 2009.

The goal for 2010 is to increase the amount of travel to service members and families in order to continue to provide face-to-face contact as they transition from the military to civilian life.

"This has been the best job I have ever had — the most rewarding," Kotora added. "It is extremely rewarding. I'm proud to do it, and I am very happy to bring this program to Portsmouth."



**Mauricio Velasquez's newly added photo slide show shows the importance of not relying on preconceived ideas to judge people.**

ments people may make about each other every day during a newly added photo comparison exercise.

"Careful self reflection leads to better acceptance and appreciation of diversity," Velasquez said. "Before you can understand others, you must first understand yourself."

One exercise asks participants to write down the first thing that came to mind when shown photos of a mixed group of people. Velasquez presented the slide show a second time giving a shocking description of who each individual really was. The result is not usually who the audience thought they were.

"The point of this exercise is to alert people to their own perceptions, allowing them to view the set of lenses through which they view others," Velasquez said.

"The training was an attention grabber that provided insight into what could and should be used in all aspects of life at work and at home," said Anita Lewis, NMCP awards coordinator. "We as people are quick to make judgments without having full knowledge of what made a person the way that he or she is."

Velasquez explained that not recognizing or ignoring this problem only makes it worse.

"To ignore the issue means that you're saying it is okay for the individual to keep treating people that way," Velasquez added.

That, however, is not an option at NMCP. While many obvious stereotypes have faded, subconscious stereotypes and judgments persist. Recognizing that, the U.S. Navy in 2004 established a Diversity Directorate and leaders expanded the traditional focus of diversity beyond race and gender to include creativity, culture, ethnicity, religion, skills and talents.

**Comfort**— *Continued from page 1*  
as well as Sailors and supplies headed to medical sites ashore.

“On the flight deck, we saw more than 700 medical evacuations in the first two weeks. The typical day in the early weeks was chaos in the best of forms,” Wood recalled. “We literally had helos in the air waiting to land one after another with two and three litter patients and three to four ambulatory patients on each helo.

“The most challenging for me and my crew was maintaining the tempo,” Wood continued. “We were working 18 hours days the first couple of weeks with patients coming in from all over Haiti, via our helos – Canadian, French and more.”

In the first ten days, 540 critically injured Haitians were brought to the ship requiring Comfort to run its 10 operating rooms at full capacity for the first time in the ship’s history.

“It was like being in the middle of a battlefield trying to triage so many patients,” said nurse Lt. Cmdr. Tracey R. Giles, “and trying to determine just who to take care of first. Each nurse was caring for 10 to 16 patients. I was glad my medical, surgical and wound care skills kicked into overdrive.”

According to Giles, so many of the patients on board were children that she was moved from the medicine unit to an overflow pediatric unit, serving as the day charge nurse.

“Our team came together flawlessly,” Giles said. “Within three days of opening, our 60-bed unit was more than 60 percent filled. There were patients from one month to 23 years old, with amputated fingers, arms, legs and severe upper and lower extremity fractures, complex

wounds and exposed skulls.

“It was difficult caring for the children and not getting attached, since many were separated from their parents,” Giles continued. “One six-year-old patient cried incessantly the first few days for his parents. Another four-year-old, who had lost her right ear, was in our unit for three



Photo by Harry Gerwien, Military Newspapers of Virginia  
**Sean Sweeney hugs his wife, HM2 Joyce Sweeney, who works in the Sewell’s Point Branch Clinic Pharmacy.**

weeks before she would allow me to perform her wound care without screaming. My most rewarding experience, though, was teaching the mother of a two-year-old how to provide wound care for her child.”

Such events occurred in every unit as medical teams cared for a seemingly endless flow of patients.

“I could not have imagined that I would be using such a wide array of nursing skills and pulling so much from within to accomplish this mission,” Giles added.

“The most rewarding part to me is that I physically saw every patient that came in and off the ship,” Wood added. “Later in the mission, I was able to go out to a medical site and saw a lady who we both remembered each other from the flight deck of the Comfort, and she was so happy she had to hug me. It was a very nice moment!”

By the time the Comfort weighed anchor to return home, helicopters ferrying patients and passengers had touched down on the ship’s flight deck 2,124 times. Surgical teams had delivered lifesaving care. They performed 843 surgeries, amputated 37 limbs and repaired countless broken bones and crush injuries. Nine babies were delivered, including twins.

Some of the patients treated on board the ship were U.S. and international military personnel transferred to the ship by physicians on the ground for surgical and non-surgical care. As relief efforts increased and medical treatment facilities ashore expanded and regained their ability to treat more patients and provide greater care, the volume of people who needed lifesaving trauma care aboard the ship began to ease. Doctors discharged Comfort’s last patients Feb. 27, leaving the ship empty, except for its 993 remaining crew members. The decision to bring the ship home was made shortly thereafter.

After several days at sea, Comfort emerged from the haze and released its Portsmouth crew into the welcoming arms of family, friends and colleagues – and a staff member’s new baby.

NMCP Commander Rear Adm. William R. Kiser was on the pier to greet staff members returning from Haiti. “The selfless dedication of our staff, both those who deployed to Haiti on a moment’s notice as well as those who stayed behind to keep our mission going here, reflects the very best of what we do at NMC Portsmouth.

“I have never been prouder to be counted among this crew than I am now,” Kiser added.

# FDPMU: Protecting Service Members' Health in Haiti

By LT. BENJAMIN ESPINOSA

Navy Environmental and Preventive Medicine Unit-2

The Forward Deployable Preventive Medicine Unit returned March 19 after seven weeks in Haiti supporting the disaster relief efforts of Operation Unified Response. The Norfolk-based unit of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth deployed to assess, prevent and control public health threats to operational forces already in place.

The 13-member team consisted of experts in preventive medicine, microbiology, chemistry, entomology, and environmental and industrial health. Relief efforts had just begun when they arrived two weeks after Haiti's massive Jan. 12 earthquake. The \$2 million worth of state-of-the-art equipment they brought proved invaluable.

"We hit the ground running," said Lt. Cmdr. (Dr.) Natalie Wells, team officer in charge. "Even before we could set up our laboratories and berthing tents, we were flooded with requests for our services."

The Haiti mission was extremely challenging compared to locations where FDPMU had previously deployed.

"When we arrived, there were no contractors on the ground and initially no support network in place," explained Hospital Corpsman 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Jovan Robinson, the preventive medicine technician for the unit's vector component. "Camp setup and missions are completed solely by the personnel attached to the team. But the mission is the same – to ensure the health and safety of DoD assets on the ground and to prevent the spread of disease."

Controlling infectious diseases protects service members' health and allows them to complete their mission. Health care, living conditions and sanitation were already poor in Haiti before the quake, and worsened afterwards. FDPMU sprang into action.

"Protecting our people from disease vectors, (such as mosquitoes, ticks and flies), rodents and other pests that can spread disease and degrade mission capability was critical," said Lt. Anthony Hanley, FDPMU entomologist. "We conducted daily missions at over 20 Coalition camps to protect our forces from serious diseases."

In Haiti, potential deadly infections like malaria and dengue fever are ever-present, so the FDPMU started by empowering the service members.

"A large part of our activities included educating forces on methods of personal protection," Hanley said. "This training included education on proper use

of DEET, mosquito netting, policing camps of trash and structures where mosquitoes can breed, and strict adherence to anti-malaria prophylaxis.

"I felt good knowing that at the end of the day, our collective efforts allowed other missions to function and that DoD personnel were safer from vector-borne threats than if we were not here," Hanley added.

The unit's robust microbiology lab rapidly diagnosed many of the diseases endemic to Haiti. Upon arriving in country, FDPMU personnel responded to a gastrointestinal disease outbreak at one of the forward operating bases in Port-au-Prince. They also addressed air and water quality issues.

"We have also been out in the city helping directly with the clean-up effort, and working with logistics support to supply clean drinking water to the local population," said Lt. j.g. Greg Wolfley, FDPMU's industrial



Photo by HM1 Ryan Predum

**Lt. j.g. Greg Wolfley uses the multiRAE photoionization detector to monitor hydrogen sulfide, methane, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide levels emitted by power generators near relief worker encampments.**

hygiene officer.

"The country still has a long way to go though, especially with regard to health, sanitation and infrastructure issues unrelated to the natural disaster," Hanley added.

For the unit's personnel, the experience has been life-changing.

"I'm proud to have been part of a humanitarian mission in a country that desperately needs a helping hand," said Hospital Corpsman 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Kegan Miller, FDPMU's logistics technician. "Slowly, every day, I could see aspects of the communities around us that were starting to clean up and rebuild."

# Corpsman Dedicated to Sports Despite Injury

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MC3 JESSICA POUNDS  
NMCP Public Affairs

After a long day of investigating communicable diseases, conducting habitability inspections and conducting food service sanitation training, Hospital Corpsman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Samson Oluwole is just getting started.

Since reporting to Naval Medical Center Portsmouth in August 2007, Oluwole, a native of Olathe, Kan., has become an athlete well known to the command's Morale, Welfare and Recreation program.

As a member of NMCP's indoor soccer team, "The Hot Spot," Oluwole helped his team win 11 games so far this season. He also competed in MWR's volleyball league, participated in ping-pong tournaments and played as a running back during the command's last flag football season.

This is a tremendous success for Oluwole, because in 2003 while stationed in Okinawa, Japan, he sustained a broken tibia and fibia during a command soccer tournament.

His goal of trying out for the all-Navy soccer team was dashed. Doctors had to insert a six-inch titanium rod and six screws to help correct and heal his leg. He endured painful physical therapy and was unable to play any sport for more than a year.

In 2005, he spotted a group of college kids playing kickball, and they invited him to join in.

"I had gained some weight during my recovery and wanted to become involved in sports again to shed some pounds," Oluwole said. "I joined this group of



kids in their kickball game, and that's all it took to motivate me to become active again."

Aside from playing sports at NMCP, Oluwole volunteers his free time to officiate games for MWR.

"HM2 Oluwole has on several evenings helped MWR by officiating indoor soccer

matches when our normal referees were absent," said Joseph Powers, MWR's athletic director. "Sailors like him are the reason we are able to offer fun and exciting intramural sporting programs at NMCP."

"I volunteer to help with games because it gives me



**HM2 Samson Oluwole scuffles for possession of the soccer ball during practice for the indoor soccer tournament sponsored by the Morale, Welfare and Recreation program. Oluwole has helped his team, "The Hot Spot," achieve 11 wins so far this season.**

an opportunity to see the game from the official's eyes and to see a different perspective of things," Oluwole said. "It also gives me the chance to give back to MWR for putting all of these games and recreational activities together for us to enjoy."

As an assistant command fitness leader for his department, Oluwole encourages other staff members to take advantage of what MWR has to offer.

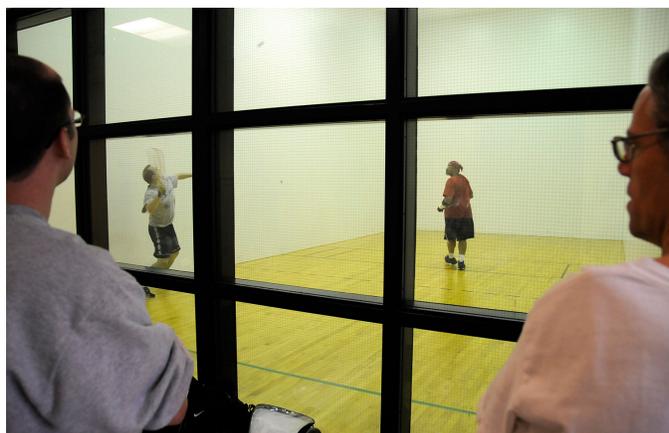
"It is important to stay active and play sports, because it keeps you young and smart and you are able to function better while you are healthy," Oluwole explained. "Staying active decreases stress and makes the running portion of the bi-annual physical readiness test much easier."

Hospital Corpsman 1<sup>st</sup> Class (FMF) Dustin Menezes, leading petty officer of the Preventative Medicine Clinic, says Oluwole is a positive role model for junior Sailors and for those recovering from an injury.

"HM2 shows eagerness and willingness to learn, and has a bright future ahead of him," Menezes said. "He is a consummate team player - no job is too big or too small for him."

Sustaining an injury and unable to play for an all-Navy team has not discouraged Oluwole's love of sports. He plans to continue to participate and volunteer with NMCP's outdoor soccer league.

# MWR Hosts 2010 Racquetball Tournament



Lt. Cmdr. Timothy Powell from NMCP's Urology Clinic draws back his racquet preparing for the shot in a game against Demetrius Taylor from NMCP's Deployment Health Center during the Morale, Welfare and Recreation-sponsored racquetball tournament March 8, as Joseph Powers from MWR and Dennis Harley from Forces Surveillance Support Center of Naval Support Activity, Northwest Annex Chesapeake watch.

PHOTOS BY

MC2(SW/AW) WILLIAM HEIMBUCH

Right: Dennis Harley digs for the shot while facing off against Demetrius Taylor in the game that determined the first and second place winners.

## 1st Place

DENNIS HARLEY

Forces Surveillance Support Center

## 2nd Place

DEMETRIUS TAYLOR

Deployment Health Center



## Volleyball Challenge: FCPOA VS. CPOA

Below: LSC(SW/AW) Reynold Thomas of the Supply Department sets up HMC(SW/AW) Richard Laxa to launch the ball back at the First Class Petty Officer Association during a volleyball game between the Chief Petty Officers Association and the FCPOA Feb. 2. The game was in a response to the FCPOA's challenge to the CPOA. Of the five games played, the FCPOA won three, making them the overall winners.



HMC(SW/AW) Ivan Rivas, command DAPA, leaps to bat the ball back to the opposing side.

PHOTOS BY

MC2(SW/AW) WILLIAM HEIMBUCH

# GI Clinic Raises Awareness about Colorectal Cancer

BY MC2(SW/AW) WILLIAM HEIMBUCH  
NMCP Public Affairs

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's Gastroenterology Clinic wants staff and patients to really learn how to prevent colorectal cancer. This is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month and it's the clinic's fourth annual colorectal cancer awareness campaign.

The clinic will set up an information booth in the medical center's main passageway near the gift shop on March 24, which is National Gastroenterology Nurses Day.

The display will include pamphlets on the importance of screenings and how to prevent and deal with colon cancer, along with models of the stomach, colon and rectum. One model will show what a polyp looks like, which is a nodular growth of tissue that can develop in the lining of the colon or rectum and can be benign or malignant.

It takes polyps about 10 years to develop into cancer. Regular screening can, in many cases, prevent colorectal cancer. Despite its high incidence, colorectal cancer is one of the most detectable and, when discovered early, most treatable form of cancer.

This is because some polyps can be found and removed before they have the chance to turn into cancer. With the widespread adoption of screening practices, as many as 30,000 lives could be saved each year.

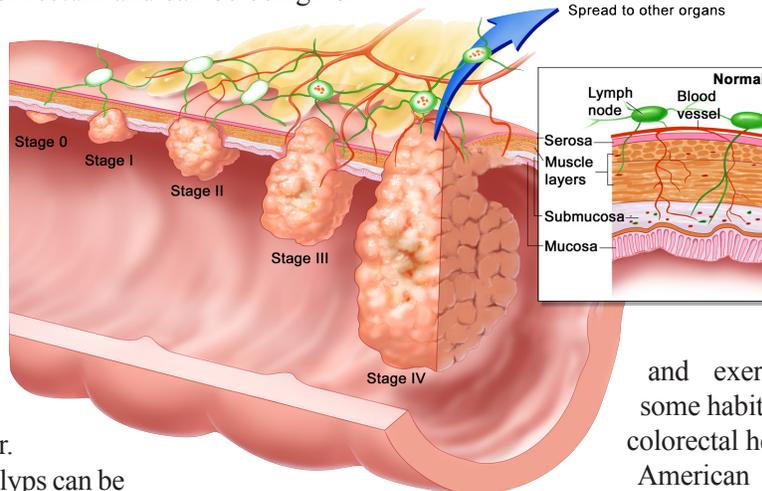
"Most cancers in the colon begin as polyps," said Lt. Cmdr. (Dr.) Catherine Tsai, a Staff Gastroenterologist who serves as the Clinical Champion director of Colorectal Cancer Prevention at NMCP. "During routine colonoscopy, polyps can be seen and removed so they never develop into cancer. In 2009, there were 150,000 new cases of colon cancer. A third of those diagnosed will die of their disease. In the early stages, colorectal cancer often has no symptoms and can only be caught with regular screening."

According to the American Cancer Society, colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer affecting men and women. One out of every 19 people in the United States will potentially suffer from this disease in their lifetime.

Gastroenterology clinic manager and registered nurse Jill Jack said, "Screening is very important. Medical screening exams are commonly performed to search for potential problems before they can be serious."

In 2009 alone, NMCP's GI clinic examined nearly 12,000 patients. Most cases of colorectal cancer occur in people over 50, so it is recommended that this age group be checked regularly. However, those with a family history of colorectal cancer or have had polyps removed in the past should seek medical advice from their doctor sooner.

"A colonoscopy starting at age 50 for average risk patients is the gold standard and the preferred colorectal cancer prevention test," Tsai said. "It is the only method that combines both screening and prevention of colorectal cancer."



In addition to regular checkups, other precautions reduce the risk of colorectal cancer. Eating healthfully, limiting the amount of red and processed meats, maintaining a healthy weight and exercising regularly are some habits that can lead to good colorectal health.

American Cancer Society says long-term smokers are more likely to develop and die from colorectal cancer than non-smokers. Also, heavy consumption of alcohol has been linked to colorectal cancer.

The GI clinic is also dedicated to raising awareness among staff members and patients about topics including a healthy diet, celiac disease, pre- and post-liver transplant care, chronic inflammatory bowel disease, chronic hepatitis and many other GI conditions.

Look for information on colorectal cancer on the NMCP Web site, the Plan of the Day, and placing colorectal cancer awareness posters in Bldg. 3 near the food court.

For more information on colorectal cancer or other gastroenterological conditions, contact Zenaida Limon at 953-2003 or visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

ZENAIDA LIMON OF THE GASTROENTEROLOGY CLINIC CONTRIBUTED TO THIS ARTICLE.

# March Deployers Recognized during Group Farewell



Capt. Matthew Pommer, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth acting commander, gave words of encouragement to the 10 staff members scheduled to deploy in March during the monthly farewell ceremony on Feb. 24. Pommer then shook hands and spoke individually with each deployer. Their deployment destinations are Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

During the farewell ceremony, HM3 Jazmin Brandt of Plans, Operations and Medical Intelligence handed deploying Sailors care packages and books for their use during their upcoming deployment.



PHOTOS BY  
MC2(SW/AW) WILLIAM HEIMBUCH

## MARCH AWARDS

### MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL

Capt. Alan Philippi  
Capt. Darin Via

### NAVY & MARINE CORPS COMMENDATION MEDAL

Capt. Kimberly M. McNeil  
Cmdr. Valerie Stanley  
Lt. Cmdr. Santiago Camano  
Lt. Cmdr. Florencio Dictado III  
Lt. Cmdr. John Weatherwax  
Lt. James T. Buchanan  
HM1 Shamekia Dillard  
HM2 Holly Batts

### NAVY & MARINE CORPS ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

Lt. Stephen Foti Jr.  
Lt. j.g. Ricky McCallister  
HMC(SW/AW/FMF) Paul Kinder  
HM1(FMF) George Hernandez  
HM2 Jennie Gaines  
HM2 Natasha Riccio  
CS2(SW/AW) Jason Ward  
HM3 Tanya Carr  
HM3 Ashley Kelly  
HM3 Danielle N. Moore  
AOAN Cynara Taggart

# National Campaign Illuminates Patient Safety

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
MC2(SW/AW) WILLIAM HEIMBUCH  
NMCP Public Affairs

Staff members and visitors learned about patient safety via displays from various Naval Medical Center Portsmouth departments during the Patient Safety Fair held March 10 to commemorate National Patient Safety Week.

The weeklong observance, held March 7 to 13, is a national education and awareness-building campaign to improve patient safety. Hospitals and health care organizations across the country participate by holding events to promote patient safety within their organizations.

“Educational activities are centered on educating patients on how to become involved in their own health care, as well as working with hospital staff members to continuously be working to improve patient safety within the organization,” said Capt. Elizabeth Savage, NMCP’s command patient safety representative

The fair consisted of 18 educational displays that offered medical information and safety tips. The hand hygiene table showed proper handwashing techniques



**Rebecca Music (right), from the Main Operating Room, explains her Surgical Safety Checklist display to Maxine Butler of the Case Management Department.**

with a luminescent lotion and a black light. Visitors applied the lotion and washed their hands. The black light illuminated any lotion still on their hands to show how well (or how poorly) the person washed their hands. A teddy bear hospital was “staffed” by members of NMCP’s operating room who helped children guide a teddy bear through surgical procedures. The children got to keep the bears; one patient said the experience “made my daughter’s day.”

The tables were judged for first through third place March 2010 - The Courier



**Ens. Jamie York from the Newborn Care Clinic demonstrates her hand hygiene module where she spoke about the importance of proper washing techniques.**

winners. Judges were NMCP Deputy Commander Capt. Craig Bonnema, Capt. Rick Freedman, director for Primary Care, and Capt. Rochelle Owens, associate director for Professional Education. Displays were scored on how well they communicated the patient safety message.

First place was awarded to Ens. Jamie York of the Newborn Care Clinic with her hand hygiene display. Second was awarded to HM3 Nicholas Chuck of the



**Chris Brogan, a child life specialist, helps Isabella Paul, 4, give a shot to her teddy bear with a plastic needle to anesthetize him for surgery at the Teddy Bear Hospital interactive display.**

Internal Medicine Clinic for his universal protocol display, while Paula Jeffries of the pharmacy received third place for her medication safety display.

— See **Safety**, next page

# Returning Warriors Share Experiences during Breakfast



HMC(SW/AW) Cody Carter of the Materiel Management Department speaks about his seven-month deployment to Herat, Afghanistan.

PHOTOS BY  
MC2(SW/AW) WILLIAM HEIMBUCH

Deployers who returned during February gathered in Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's galley for a returning warrior's breakfast Feb. 26.

Below: Capt. Wendy Boruszewski of Dental Services speaks during the Returning Warrior's Breakfast on Feb. 26 about her deployment to Afghanistan and how it affected her. A returning warrior's breakfast is held on the last Friday of every other month to honor returning deployers.



## Safety — Continued from previous page

"I was surprised and honored," York said. "I had a lot of fun with the demonstration. It was a big hit! So many people actually wanted to participate, and I must have had over 100 people get involved at my station."

"Patient Safety Week is important because it allows us to bring extra attention to patient safety, patient

safety goals, and patient safety initiatives," Savage said. "Patient safety is a serious business; however, staff made it lots of fun at the fair in the hospital.

"Staff, patients and visitors were entertained, educated and, most importantly, recognized the need to focus on the basic patient safety goals involved in providing safe patient care," Savage added.

# Fleet Forces Band Woodwind Quintet Entertains

PHOTOS BY  
MC2(SW/AW)  
WILLIAM HEIMBUCH  
NMCP Public Affairs

The U. S. Fleet Forces Band Woodwind Quintet visited Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Feb. 24 to play for patients waiting for their prescriptions to be filled. The ensemble combines the unique sounds of flute, clarinet, bassoon, and French horn to create a repertoire that ranges from Mozart, Rossini and Joplin to modern works by a variety of American composers.

The ensemble routinely performs at dinners, receptions and public concerts, as well as during elementary school educational concerts, master classes and clinics for high school and college students. The visit to NMCP was part of the Fleet Forces band's typical participation in more than 750 engagements annually.

**Top: MU2 Amanda Leslie (right) entertains patients and staff members with the flute, while MU2 Krista Coester plays the bassoon and MU3 Maxwell Burdick plays the French horn.**



**MU1 Christina Shellhammer plays the oboe and MU3 Josh Keller plays the clarinet while MU3 Maxwell Burdick plays the French horn.**

