



November 2010

THE COURIER

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Portsmouth, Va.



Wilkerson Receives
ASCP Mastership

— Page 11

Exalted Warrior Yoga Program Kicks Off at NMCP on Marine Corps Birthday

By REBECCA A. PERRON
NMCP Public Affairs

Fourteen Marines from the Wounded Warrior Battalion-East at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth were the first to participate in a new yoga program at NMCP that kicked off Nov. 10 – the Marine Corps birthday. The class is sponsored by the Exalted Warrior Foundation, which facilitates a yoga instruction program for wounded warriors in military and veteran hospital facilities.

The idea for starting the program at NMCP began in August, when Marines from NMCP's battalion met re-

tired Rear Adm. Tom Steffens at a Compass retreat in Pennsylvania. The retreat provides Wounded Warriors an intensive yet relaxed atmosphere to learn about topics such as financial management and goal setting as they prepare to separate from the military.

During the retreat, Steffens led two yoga classes, and the Marines, recognizing the benefit, asked Steffens to bring the classes to the medical center. Steffens, who served as a SEAL for 30 years, found yoga relieved pain from injuries that surgery and medication had not provided, which ultimately led to the foundation's creation.

“When I was visiting with an injured SEAL at Walter Reed in 2001, it occurred to me that the core strength and stretching yoga provides would be a good adjunct for the therapy given to wounded warriors,” Steffens said. “I spoke with the Navy's surgeon general at the time and the Exalted Warrior Foundation was developed.”

The foundation is headquartered in Tampa, Fla., where Steffens was stationed at the time. For the past seven years he's lived in Virginia Beach and worked with Ann Richardson, his yoga instructor and the owner of Studio Bamboo, to expand the yoga program to other military medical facilities besides Walter Reed.

Members of NMCP's Fleet Liaison worked with Steffens and Richardson to quickly bring the program into



Photo by FC3 Jovante' L. Washington

Retired Rear Adm. Tom Steffens, front left, participates in the initial session of the new wounded warrior yoga program at NMCP, while Ann Richardson, yoga instructor and owner of Studio Bamboo in Virginia Beach, observes and assists the group with proper form.

— See *YOGA*, page 9

INSIDE:

Great American Smoke Out

NMCP patients and staff kick butt and kick tobacco to the curb. Read more on Page 9.



Therapeutic Garden

NMCP's new therapeutic garden offers alternative therapies for patients. Read how on Page 16.





Fall Research Symposium

The Fall Research Symposium is designed for the novice investigator. Topics covers include: The IRB process, funding, literature reviews, statistics, ethics and CIRD resources. The symposium is set for Thursday, Dec. 16 and repeated on Dec. 17, both days from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, contact Thomas Rieg at 953-5939.

Toys for Tots Volunteers

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth is helping to collect Toys for Tots Dec. 1 through Dec. 22 at Chesapeake Square Mall outside Rack Room Shoes. If you would like to volunteer your time to help collect, contact EN1 Russell at 450-2797 or Paula Jeffries at 953-0247. NMCP will also be collecting toys here at the hospital with unmanned donation boxes at locations throughout the hospital, including in front of Navy Federal Credit Union, Bldg. 3, 2nd Floor.

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
or
757- 953-1973

Volunteers Needed for Olde Towne Holiday Home Tour

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth is helping with the 14th annual Olde Towne Holiday Home Tour are volunteers are needed Dec. 10 and 11.

NMCP had a good number of volunteers last year, and it was greatly appreciated. Twelve to 14 are needed each day, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m on Friday and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday

These are mainly outdoor duties and December can be chilly, so volunteers should dress appropriately for the weather.

For more information, contact Paula Jeffries at 953-0247.

NMCP Staff Member to Appear on BET Haiti Special

HN Christopher Brossard will appear on a special covering the Haiti earthquake almost one year later. The special is due to air Dec. 19.

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CFC Information

The 2010 Combined Federal Campaign season ends Dec. 15, leaving only a few weeks to fill out the pledge form to donate. All federal and military employees are eligible to donate.

CFC is the largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign, with more than 200 CFC campaigns held to help to raise millions of dollars each year. Money raised support eligible non-profit organizations that provide health and human service benefits throughout the world.

To request a charity list and/or pledge form, contact your departmental keyperson or contact HMC(SW/FMF) Garet Watters at 953-9747 or garet.watters@med.navy.mil.

Oakleaf Club Open to New Members

The Oakleaf Club of Tidewater is open to Medical, Dental, Nurse, and Medical Service Corps (active duty and retired) officers and their spouses in the Hampton Roads area. The club is a social and benevolent organization.

We are always happy to welcome new members. For more information on membership, contact Heidi Schmidt at livermoresweetheart@hotmail.com.

THE
COURIER

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Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks

DEPUTY COMMANDER
Capt. Darin K. Via

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
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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.

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

Admiral's Call

Our Navy has many time-tested traditions. Among those is the opportunity for the crew to hear from the Skipper directly, as well as ask him/her questions. I have recently held several Admiral's Calls and am taking this opportunity to recap the main points.

Customer Service: It is our honor and privilege to provide health care to the world's most deserving patients, Sailors and Marines (and other active duty servicemen and women), their family members and retirees and their family members. Our patients judge us from the very first contact they have with our command. That may be at the front gate of NMCP, the reception desk at Dam Neck or when any of us answers the telephone. We must put our best foot forward at all times.

Service to the Fleet: Navy Medicine only exists because of the Fleet. We are here to care for our deploying and sea going brothers and sisters in arms. When one of our patients comes from the fleet, including our Fleet Marines, we know they have special circumstances. They may have a pending deployment, school or other special situation that we in Navy Medicine uniquely understand

and can relate to. That is why we must always be vigilant looking for ways to better serve our Fleet patients.

Readiness: Even while we deliver readiness to our patients, we must maintain our own personal readiness. Last year, 12 percent of our active duty staff deployed. They served our country and Navy as past service members have, with honor, courage and commitment. I am proud of the accomplishments and contributions of those members of our staff who took our motto of "First and Finest" to all corners of the globe.

Quality Health Care: Because we have the privilege of providing health care to the world's most deserving patients, it can only be of the highest quality. Quality, like safety, is not an option; indeed, it is the very foundation of everything that we do.

Professional Education: Naval Medical Center Portsmouth is well known as a center of educational excellence. That training mentality extends to all levels of our organization. Officer, enlisted, civil service and contract employees all must continue to grow in their chosen field. We train corpsmen, dentists, nurses, Medical Service Corps officers and physicians. We have 15 fully accredited residency programs, two fellow-



ships and a multitude of individual courses that are put on every year. Professional education, and training at large, is part of our core culture and existence.

Research: In the current global conflicts, our fighting forces have the highest battlefield survival rate in the history of warfare. In addition to the heroic actions of our deployed health care teams, a large part of that survival is based on continued research. To that end, we currently have more than 200 active research protocols.

Daily, I am delighted by the superb performance of you, the staff of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth. It is a privilege to be your Commander. I look forward to speaking with you personally at future Admiral's Calls.

A. L. Stocks



Photo by MC2 Riza Caparros

Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks, NMCP's commander, addresses E-4 and below staff members during an Admiral's Call in the auditorium on Oct. 15.

More than 1,000 Attend Annual Retiree Seminar

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MICHEAL T. MINK
Commander, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic Public Affairs

Capt. Charles L. Stuppard greeted retirees from Virginia, North Carolina and even South Carolina at this year's annual Retiree Seminar in Rockwell Hall Gym at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story Nov. 6.

"It is our time to take care of you," Stuppard said referring to the retirees. He then announced the guest speaker for the day Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks, commander, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth.

After updating the retirees regarding the many changes happening at the medical center, Stocks reflected on the importances of the seminar.

"Retiree seminars are very important to us at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth," said Stocks. "Our mission is to provide the best quality health care to active duty, their families and to those who served, our retiree population.

"There are many people in the retired population that we try our best to communicate with, but they are just sometimes hard to find. Bringing everyone together like this, we can get our message out," continued Stocks.

Stocks would like to help the retirees before they get sick.

"If we can get to them (the retirees) before they become ill and do something to prevent that, it is one of our primary missions. Specifically, today, we have the flu shot program," explained Stocks. "We

are giving immunizations to people that might otherwise not get that shot and might end up ill this year."

During the seminar, 262 flu shots or mists were administered to retirees.

The Air Force showed up to the seminar to dispel some myths and offer options for where retirees can get their care.

"Many don't know we are a hospital," said Air Force Col. Claude A. Hawkins, plastic surgeon at Langley Air Force Base Hospital. "That is one of



Ensign Ashley Gooden, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, talks to a retiree about cardiovascular health at the Retiree Fair held on Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story's Rockwell Hall Gym.

the reasons we are at the seminar, to let the retirees know that if they can not get care at the Medical Treatment Facility at Portsmouth (due to space limitations) and they are getting sent to the network, this is an option for them because we are a specialty care, we are open to all military beneficiaries."

Morale, Welfare and Recreation found the seminar to be especially helpful this year.

"I think the Retiree Seminar went extremely well this year due to the willingness of the medical community and the support organizations to take the whole event up a notch from past years," said Mary Lou Williard, Operational Manager Regional Morale, Welfare and Recreation. "The team that produced the event looked for additional ways to bring value to this venue and from the exit polls the attendees were very pleased with the set up and execution of the event. Worthwhile and informative were two words that I heard numerous times throughout the day."



Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story played host to more than 1,000 retirees at Rockwell Hall Gym during the Retiree Seminar Nov. 6.

Via Becomes Deputy Commander

Capt. Darin K. Via became the deputy commander for Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Nov. 15.

“Assuming the duties as the Deputy Commander at Portsmouth is a very humbling honor,” Via said. “To be responsible for the day-to-day operations ensuring that our personnel have the resources needed to perform their duties at the Navy’s largest MTF is somewhat overwhelming.

“Add in that we support the largest fleet concentration in the world and serve in combat and humanitarian operations, it’s a privilege to work with so many great people who embody our motto of ‘first and finest’ in their duties every day,” Via added.

Via enlisted in the Navy Reserve as a hospital corpsman in 1985, and graduated from Milliken University with a Bachelor of Science in Biology in 1987. He entered active duty as an ensign at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences where he obtained his Doctor of Medicine in 1991.

Via was assigned to National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., as a transitional intern and attended the Naval Undersea Medical Institute

in Groton, Conn., and Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center in Panama City, Fla. He was assigned to Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit TWO as department head and diving medical officer, and was assigned to Combat Support Squadron EIGHT.

Via completed his residency in anesthesiology at NNMC in 1998 and fellowship training in trauma anesthesia at the R. Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center, University of Maryland, in 1999.

Other assignments included NNMC as staff anesthesiologist and assistant department head; vice chairman and director of education and simulation, Department of Anesthesiology, Uniformed Services University; USNS Comfort during Operation Noble Eagle following Sept. 11, 2001, and Fleet Hospital THREE, Camp Viper Iraq, during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Via was selected chairman, Anesthesiology Department, NMCP, in 2003, and service line leader, operative support, in 2004. He served as director for Surgical Services from February 2007 until July 2009, when he deployed as commanding officer



of the NATO Role 3 Multinational Medical Unit in Kandahar, Afghanistan, where he established the Navy as the lead nation, lead service of the multinational medical facility. He established and served as the commander of Task Force Medical South, responsible for all U.S. Forces Afghanistan echelon above brigade medical elements in southern Afghanistan. He returned in November to assume duties as deputy commander at NMCP.

The former deputy commander, Capt. Matthew Pommer, is now the deputy chief of staff for Operations and Future Operations at Navy Medicine East.

New NMCP Liaison Helps Improve Access to Care for Fleet Sailors

BY REBECCA A. PERRON
NMCP Public Affairs

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth recently added a new special assistant to the commander – an operational fleet medical liaison – to facilitate providing the best care possible for fleet Sailors. The medical center recognized the importance of working closely with fleet medical personnel to ensure shipboard Sailors receive specialty and surgical appointments that fit their operational schedule.

Through this unique position, as well as a new phone number, fleet doctors and medical center fleet liaison staff can coordinate care with immediate and effective communication. Cmdr. Thomas Craig, who was assigned to the new liaison position, has spent several months speak-

ing directly with fleet medical personnel, ranging from each fleet surgeon to the commanding officers of ships to shipboard medical staff, to explain the new system and the one-phone-number, one-point-of-contact concept.

Doctors assigned to fleet units can call 95-FLEET to speak with fleet liaison staff or Craig to coordinate care or discuss conflicts with care.

“Naval Medical Center Portsmouth is such a large organization, that there are many entry points, from the main TRICARE appointment line and clinic staff to surgeons on call and the quarterdeck,” Craig said. “There are literally 6,000 people working here, which can make it difficult for the right person to be reached.”

Craig said that when staff members receive phone calls

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Marines Celebrate 235th Birthday

BY DEBORAH R. KALLGREN
NMCP Public Affairs Officer

For the 235th birthday of the Marine Corps on Nov. 10, the Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Marine Liaison Office and members of Wounded Warrior Battalion-East held a solemn ceremony to mark the occasion on the seventh floor of Bldg. 3. Capt. Darin Via, acting deputy commander, represented the thousands of NMCP staff members whose work, in some way, aids the Marines who receive care at the medical center.

Marine Liaison Melissa Marshall, a retired Marine gunnery sergeant, said, "This hospital is an amazing facility, and we want for nothing. We thank you for that. It is our honor to share this day with you. We'd like to say 'thank you' to those who help us throughout the year."

Cpl. Wylie Meikel read from a scroll the first birthday message issued in 1921 by Gen. John A. Lejeune, the 13th commandant of the Marine Corps. Meikel also read the birthday message sent from the current commandant, Gen. James F. Amos, who spoke of paying special tribute to the Marines of the Korean War and recognizing their contributions to the Marines enduring legacy.



Photo by Rebecca A. Perron

Staff Sgt. William Loushin, the oldest Marine present, cuts a piece of cake for the guest of honor, Lance Cpl. Christopher Alban, during the ceremony at NMCP marking the 235th birthday of the Marine Corps.

The ceremony culminated with a traditional Marine cake cutting in which the first slice was cut for the guest of honor, Lance Cpl. Christopher Alban. Alban was wounded in Afghanistan and has been recuperating at NMCP since July. At the ceremony, Alban received a new computer from the organization Soldiers' Angels as part of their "Laptops for Wounded Warriors" program.



Photo by Rebecca A. Perron

Sailors of the Year Named

The Sailor of the Year is HM1 Mary Matthews (DMH), the Junior Sailor of the Year is HM3 Owen Shaw (DPC), and the Blue Jacket of the Year is HN Adam Bullard (Command Suite).

They were recognized during a ceremony in the auditorium Oct. 26. Shaw and Bullard were awarded Navy Achievement Medals, while Matthews will go on to compete for the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery SOY.

63 Receive Awards during Command Ceremony

Bravo Zulu to the 63 awardees recognized during the Oct. 29 award ceremony in front of Bldg. 1. Presented during the ceremony was one Legion of Merit, five Meritorious Service medals, five Navy and Marine Corps Achievement medals, one 30-year Government Service award, five Navy Achievement medals, 16 Letters of Commendation, 13 Letters of Appreciation and 17 Good Conduct medals.



Photos by MC2 Riza Caparros



Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks presents Capt. Susan E. Herron with the Legion of Merit during the Oct. 29 command awards ceremony.

Herron Awarded Legion of Merit

Capt. Susan E. Herron was presented the Legion of Merit for outstanding service as the commanding officer of Naval School of Health Sciences in Portsmouth from June 2007 to September 2010. She oversaw the Accelerated Pace Pilot Program, allowing students to complete didactic training with a computer-based facilitated program.

She served as the Navy voting member for the interservice training advisory board, working with Navy Medicine Support Command to meet the Surgeon General's desire for integrated/consolidated training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. She oversaw Navy Medicine's institutional accreditation with the Council on Occupational Education, resulting in Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education and all subordinates receiving a full five-year reaffirmation. Enhancing the training and readiness of the corpsmen, her leadership resulted in benchmark-breaking successes for corpsman C-schools.

Lansangan Earns Rheumatology Course Certificate

STORY AND PHOTO BY MC2 RIZA CAPARROS
NMCP Public Affairs

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth nurse practitioner Fredilynn Lansangan earned a certificate of completion for the Advanced Rheumatology Course from the American College of Rheumatology. She was presented her certificate by Capt. Jeffrey Cole, Internal Medicine Department head, during a ceremony Oct. 4.

The course was first offered in 2008 with interest spanning across the United States and other countries including India and Lebanon. To date, only 280 registrants have earned the certification.

"This certification has given me advanced knowledge so I can better care for my patients with disease diagnosis, lab interpretation and x-ray analysis," Lansangan said. "There is a shortage of rheumatologists in the medical community, so as a nurse practitioner with this certification, I can show patients and



Nurse Practitioner Fredilynn Lansangan, center left, with co-workers Cmdr. Nancy Delaney, left, Rheumatology Nurse Manager Alicia Lyons, center right, and Capt. Walter Downs after receiving her certificate for the Advanced Rheumatology Course.

other providers that I have advanced training, knowledge and skills to work in this specialty."

Fleet — *Continued from page 5*

from fleet personnel, they give the answer they think is the most helpful, but it may not always be the best solution.

“Communication with the fleet has not always been successful,” Craig continued. “And this is what we are trying to fix with this new system.”

There are several reasons why the medical team on board ship may need to contact hospital staff. A ship’s underway schedule may have changed, causing dozens of Sailors to need scheduled appointments changed. Crew members returning from sea may need immediate care once in port, and shipboard docs can call the number and schedule appointments before the ship arrives at the pier. Craig and the fleet liaison staff also help coordinate the transportation and care of incoming wounded warriors medevaced from the battlefield.

“Sailors who need care coordinated in this manner are typically being seen by the orthopedic department, a general surgeon or in psychiatry,” Craig said. “Routine-

ly, we get the call because they need to be seen within 24 to 48 hours, and appointments are already full. I can work with the clinic manager to find a way to rearrange schedules to fit the person in. In this way, the military medical system can better meet civilian standards for access to care.

“We are trained to work for civilian standards, and provide access to care like the civilian system,” Craig added. “But when the fleet has called in the past and said they need an appointment, we haven’t always been able to work that way. We recognize the fleet is who we serve, so we need to be more flexible. And my job it to make sure the fleet knows they have that one single point of contact they can reach out to when they need to get things done.”

While Craig admits that an appointment may not be found within 48 hours 100 percent of the time, his goal is to maximize the number of fleet Sailors quickly receiving the care they need the most – by coordinating urgent care and empowering clinic managers to amend schedules, all while communicating directly with the fleet.

YOGA — *Continued from page 1*

place locally.

“When this was first brought to us, we bent over backwards to get it going, so we kicked it off on the Marine Corps birthday,” said Cmdr. Thomas Craig, operational forces medical liaison. “The brain and

reconnect with themselves and their loved ones. Warriors with amputations and traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries have benefited greatly since the program began. NMCP’s program is intended for a clinical setting, rather than at the gym, so the yoga feels more like therapy and part of the integrated health process.

“Yoga can help them with their rehabilitation in addition to their regular therapy,” Richardson said. “I’m helping them to be ok in their own skin, to be more relaxed, to feel ok to relax. The goal is to get them to be able to use these techniques on their own.”

Richardson was impressed with the group’s first effort.

“Marines really know how to focus on a mission,” Richardson said. “I was very physical with them today, and they really listened and executed. It was amazing to see them have that focus.”

“This is great to have the class here now,” said Cpl. Wylie Meikel, a member of the battalion. “I think we will really benefit from it.”

Richardson leads the once-a-week class on Wednesdays at noon in the Physical Therapy clinic. Options to add classes are being explored, including yoga featuring a gentler approach and slower pace for participants with post-traumatic stress disorders and traumatic brain injuries. Richardson has also suggested classes for NMCP staff members to learn how to facilitate classes for wounded warriors.

For more information about the classes, contact the Operational Forces Fleet Liaison office at 953-7540.



Photo by FC3 Jovante' L. Washington

Ann Richardson assists a Marines from Wounded Warrior Battalion-East with form during the kick-off of the Exalted Warrior Foundation’s yoga program at NMCP on Nov. 10.

body need increased flexibility, especially when dealing with back issues. The weekly class allows for an expansion of integrative health through comprehensive, complementary and alternative therapies.”

Faced with the demands of both a physical and emotional recovery, yoga allows wounded veterans to

Great American Smokeout: Quitters Wanted

BY FC3 JOVANTE' L. WASHINGTON
NMCP Public Affairs

The Great American Smokeout Nov. 18 coincided with the second anniversary that Naval Medical Center Portsmouth became a tobacco-free facility. Staff and patients were encouraged to kick tobacco for the day, with the ultimate goal that they will become lifelong non-smokers.

Capt. Darin Via, acting commander, NMCP, teamed up with Maggie Malson, community health specialist for the Health Promotion/Wellness Department, who was unrecognizable in a cigarette butt costume. Together they cut the cake marking the dual occasion. Via presented the first piece to contract employee Jessica, who accepted the challenge to quit smoking for the day.

Via remarked that fewer and fewer Americans are using tobacco. The bad news is that in the year of the 33rd Great American Smokeout, there are still 46 million Americans who smoke. More than 400,000 deaths are attributed to smoking and secondhand smoke each year in the U.S.

Displays encouraging tobacco cessation were strategically placed throughout the medical center. Fresh fruit and goodie bags – “quit kits” – provided tobacco users ideas and strategies on how to successfully quit tobacco.

Malson, the Smokeout's coordinator, said the day is primarily for awareness.

“Our hope is to encourage people to quit smoking for 24 hours,” Malson said. “We hope that if they do, they'll make the decision to be non-tobacco users permanently.

“We also want everyone to know that there is help available,” Malson continued. “Our hospital provides free classes and support networks set up to give members who have chosen to quit continued support. Members may also contact their primary care physicians for



Photos by Rebecca A. Perron

Capt. Darin Via, acting commander, and event coordinator Maggie Malson, in costume as a butt-head, cut the celebratory cake.

further assistance.”

The day included a cold turkey drawing, which awarded a turkey to someone who quit tobacco for the day and to someone who sponsored a quitter. Norfolk Naval Shipyard commissary donated the turkeys.

Laura Mitchell, a quitter and relative of an NMCP staff member won one of the birds. “I had been thinking about quitting for a long time.” She plans to use a Tobacco Cessation Program to improve her odds of success. “Through the help of NMCP and events like today's, I feel I will be able to reach my goal.

“In fact, (the event) was so good, that when I arrived home, I passed a brochure along to a friend, encouraging her participation in next year's occasion,” she added.

“I think the program is great,” said Shelley Griffith-McHugh, TRICARE flight medical care manager and turkey winner for sponsoring a quitter. “I'd recommend it to anyone who is serious about quitting the habit for good. The event gave a lot of valuable knowledge that encouraged me to sponsor my husband who decided to quit.”

Via encouraged all staff member who use tobacco to quit. We are in the health care business, and it is incumbent upon us to set a healthful example to our patients. Quitting tobacco products and living a healthy lifestyle reflects well on us all, he said.



Capt. Darin Via, acting commander, stopped by one of the tobacco cessation tables to check out what materials were being handed out.

NEPMU-2 Opens New Building in Norfolk

STORY AND PHOTO BY MCSA ANNA WADE
Navy Public Affairs Support Element East

Navy Environmental and Preventive Medicine Unit Two officially opened its new building on Naval Station Norfolk during a ribbon-cutting ceremony Nov. 8. The new building has more space for every department and is 10,000 square feet larger than the old facility.

NEPMU-2's mission has grown over the past 40 years to include new fields of medicine and disease prevention and it has become more difficult to provide space for everyone in the NEPMU-2 community.

"This facility is twice the size of our old facility and it has much more laboratory capabilities than the old facility," said Cmdr. Todd Wagner, officer in charge.

With more space and better technology, NEPMU-2 will be able to better serve the Navy community in fields such as medical entomology, environmental health, health promotion, industrial hygiene and preventive medicine.

"This is a very exciting day for NEPMU-2 – it signifies the culmination of nearly three years of planning, design, construction and the joys of moving," said Wagner.

With the new laboratory capabilities, NEPMU-2 per-

sonnel will have more opportunities to serve their customers and the fleet community.

Wagner said although they are all used to moving, as military members, change is never easy, but the attitude of NEPMU-2 personnel has been optimistic and full of can-do spirit. Everyone was willing to lend a hand and make the move into the facility smooth and easy.

Wagner also added, with the future ahead of NEPMU-2, the personnel look forward to using their new space and technology to their greatest advantage.



NEPMU-2 ribbon cutting held at its new building on Naval Station Norfolk Nov. 8.

Set Holiday Health Goals: Maintain, Don't Gain

BY ALICE FITZPATRICK, RN
Wellness Health Promotion Department

The holiday feasting season has arrived – starting with Halloween candy and ending with Valentine sweets. So much celebrating can easily derail the best fitness habits and cause unwanted weight gain. The key to avoiding holiday weight gain is balance and moderation – balancing calories in with calories out. Everyone can still enjoy themselves without the weight gain and guilt by setting realistic goals.

Many factors increase the urge to overeat and not exercise enough during this time of year, including food focused celebrations, stress, exhaustion, emotional eating, and cold weather. Here are a few strategies to keep the calorie intake under control.

- Eat a nutritious breakfast and eat regularly.
- Eat before the holiday gathering to avoid bingeing.
- When traveling, pack healthy portable snacks to keep metabolism up and cravings down

- Indulge and have your favorite foods, but practice portion control and drink enough water and if needed, add a few more minutes of physical activity.

- Limit high calories drinks, such as eggnog and alcoholic beverages.

- Take a brisk walk after a holiday meal. Five minutes is better than none.

- Plan family activities that involve dancing, skating, walking, hiking or anything else that is fun and active.

- Commit to a New Year's plan to be active now.

- Cut back on TV and sitting time.

- Get a walking/exercise partner to help keep each other motivated.

Sign up for classes such as Shipshape or the Step-Well Walking Program, which includes Right Weigh classes and self paced walking program, or consult MWR Fitness for group classes, trainers and on-going challenges and contests.

The bottom line is to maintain a healthy lifestyle before, during and after the holidays, and to keep in mind that celebrations are about family and friends – not food. Happy Holidays from the Wellness Health Promotion Department at NMCP.

Wilkerson first in Navy to be awarded ASCP Mastership

BY DEBORAH R. KALLGREN
NMCP Public Affairs Officer

Cmdr. Cynthia Wilkerson became the first in the Navy to be awarded the American Society of Clinical Pathologists Mastership when she accepted the honor Oct. 28 in San Francisco.

Wilkerson is Director of Clinical Support Services at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, and she also serves as the Navy's specialty leader for the medical technologist community. She supervises and directs Navy Medicine's 82 medical technologists to locations worldwide, including Iraq and Afghanistan. She enjoys working with med techs, especially being able to guide and mentor them.

It was one of the lab folks at Naval Hospital Bremerton, Wash., who nominated Wilkerson to receive one of the 12 masterships ASCP awarded this year.

"The Naval Laboratory community would still exist without her guidance, but we would be a pale shadow of the professional corps that she has helped us to become," said Lt. Cmdr. Todd J. Tetreault, Laboratory Department head at Bremerton. "It really is a singular honor, and through it, she motivates the rest of us to represent our community well.

"I feel strongly that her actions have fully supported the mission espoused by the ASCP – education, certification and advocacy. She has encouraged certification at both the (micro lab tech) and (med tech) level, has worked to improve the professionalism of the Navy Laboratory community – through education and mentoring – to both the benefit of our patients and the community itself," Tetreault added.

Bette A. Jamieson, a member of the ASCP awards committee, agreed. "ASCP acknowledges the importance of (Wilkerson's) contributions to our profession by her commitment to training, teaching, and serving as a role model to our young men and women in the military service."

Throughout her 24-year naval career, Wilkerson has trained thousands of Navy medical laboratory scientists, sharing with them the passion for the field she loves.

A self-professed Air Force brat, Wilkerson first contemplated a career in medical technology as an eighth-grader at Mission Junior High in Bellevue, Neb. "I loved physical science class. You'd be in the lab, and you'd have beakers of things boiling, and distillation going on ... and I just loved it."

Wilkerson went to her science teacher to learn whether her fun in the lab could lead to a career. His suggestions included working in a hospital lab.

Wilkerson reminisced, "Well, then, what's what I want to do. I never changed my mind. When I finally went into that first hospital lab when I was a junior in college, it was kind of like I knew I was finally 'home.'"

Wilkerson went on to earn her bachelor's degree in medical technology and her master's degree in laboratory management.

"I truly love being a medical technologist. Because of the love and passion that I feel for my job, I do the absolute best that I can," Wilkerson said.

According to ASCP, the Mastership award is exceedingly rare. Out of more than 700,000 certified laboratory professionals, fewer than 35 have received Masterships. The ASCP Mastership designation honors ASCP members who have made significant contributions to the field



Photo courtesy American Society for Clinical Pathology.

Dr. Mark H. Stoler, president of the American Society for Clinical Pathology, presents Cmdr. Cynthia Wilkerson with her ASCP Mastership plaque at the society's meeting in San Francisco Oct. 28. Wilkerson is the first in the U.S. Navy to be awarded the honor.

of pathology and laboratory medicine and to the society. Eligibility is based on significant career accomplishments and contributions to the society and to the profession.

Wilkerson has served as president of the Society of Armed Forces Medical Laboratory Scientists and was named the society's Tri-service Senior Laboratory Officer of the Year in 2009 and Distinguished Service Award in 2006.

Wilkerson plans to get involved in promoting Medical Technology (now called Medical Laboratory Scientist) as a career. She's also looking forward to her next tour at the Center for Clinical Laboratory Medicine in Washington, D.C., which is responsible for the accreditation/license of laboratories from all three branches of the armed services.

Halloween Safety Day

STORY AND PHOTOS
By FC3 JOVANTE' L. WASHINGTON
NMCP Public Affairs

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's Safety Department hosted the seventh annual Halloween Safety Day Oct. 27 to promote safety for trick-or-treaters and their parents. Twenty-nine departments from NMCP and its branch health clinics decorated tables with information parents could use to their child safe for Halloween.

Each department selected a different theme. As many as 450 staff and patients attended the safety day, taking with them a lesson from each display.

Sewells Point Dental Department, not surprisingly, focused on teeth. "Don't Let Halloween Ruin Your Treat" encouraged good dental hygiene after eating sweets.

"Our hope is that parents take away the importance of helping their kids keep a clean, bright and healthy smile," said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Christy Harrison, a member of the Dental Services Directorate.

The Internal Medicine Department's theme was "Follow the



Naval Medical Center Portsmouth and its branch clinics go all out for Halloween Oct. 28. Nearly 30 departments created displays to help parents keep their kids spooky holiday.

Well Lit Road." They dressed as Wizard of Oz characters and compared the visibility of bright colors and lights. Their message: finding well-lit areas to guide the way for nighttime trick-or-treaters.

Their display encouraged children not to talk to strangers and stay close to friends and family members while trick-or-treating. It also included a video of "The Wizard of Oz" to entertain the younger audiences while parents learned helpful tips.



Capt. Eugene DeLara, Pharmacy Department, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, visits a display during facility's Halloween Safety Day. The Oct. 28 event was geared to helping parents keep their ghosts and goblins safe.

"It is always a good idea to be reminded to keep a close eye on your kids and not take them to scary houses," family member Soraya Howell said. "Parents and military members should not drink and drive, and they should watch out for open or suspicious candies. I was excited that one of the tables is handing out reflectors for the kids to wear."

"This year's event was one of the best we've had in years," said Art Vogel, NMCP's safety manager. "All of the departments did a great job. It really shows how important safety is not only to trick-or-treaters, but to all the hospital staff as well."

Awards were given for best display, topic knowledge and message. Sewells





Safety Day safe for the

Right: Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Adrian S. Michel (aka Spiderwoman), Laboratory Department, presents information about Halloween safety during Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's seventh annual Halloween Safety Day on Oct. 28.



Point Dental Department took home third place for "BMC Sewells' Line: A Train of Hazards." The Mother-Baby Unit won second place with "Seven Tips from Seven Dwarves." First Place went to the Internal Medicine Department for "Follow the Well Lit Road."

The event included a pumpkin-carving contest. Lt. Christopher Jackson from the Nuclear Medicine Clinic received first place and Hospitalman Michael Bick of the Ambulatory Infusion Center placed second.



Above: Members of the Internal Medicine Department celebrate their second place victory for best overall effort during the medical center's annual Halloween Safety Day on Oct. 28. The team dressed as Snow White and the Seven Dwarves for their theme, "7 Safety Tips from 7 Dwarves."



Left: A child grabs some candy during Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's seventh annual Halloween Safety Day on Oct. 28. Between 400 and 450 staff and family members attended the event.

Robotic Refills Aim to Reduce Wait Times at Area Pharmacies

STORY AND PHOTOS BY REBECCA A. PERRON
NMCP Public Affairs

In an effort to reduce the wait times at area Navy medical facility pharmacies and increase accuracy, a new robotic refill center was recently installed at the Scott Center Annex Pharmacy in Portsmouth. The robotic refill center is capable of filling up to 4,500 refills per day and, by centralizing where the refills are processed, this permits pharmacy technicians and pharmacists in the outlying Navy Pharmacies to focus on new prescriptions only. Pharmacy managers and clinic leaders are already seeing significant reductions in waiting times and patient complaints.

The new robotic refill is similar to a mail order system, can handle high volume and holds 300 different medications in pill form. The Composite Health Care System communicates with the robot as each refill is placed in the system and sends the prescription information to be filled in batches by pharmacy. All of the refills placed at a particular pharmacy in a particular day will be filled at the same time.

“From the patient perspective, there is very little difference, and the process is basically invisible,” said Cmdr. Jody Dreyer, assistant pharmacy department head at NMCP. “The patient will still call their refill into the pharmacy where they want to pick it up. So that process has not changed. The real difference is for those who are having new prescriptions filled. The wait time for them will be less, because the



A bottle is positioned under one of the filling stations of the Optifill II, which uses a light curtain to count the pills as they fall from each bin.

pharmacy staff is now filling new prescriptions only.”

To install the robot, the Scott Center Pharmacy underwent renovation that doubled its space. The pharmacy also received a new drive-thru window for patients choosing that location to pick up their refill.

The machine, an Optifill II, has two hoppers that hold different-sized vials. As the robot receives a prescription order, a robotic arm grabs a bottle and prints and affix-



The refill system can process up to 4,500 prescriptions per day and hold 300 different medications in pill form.

es the appropriate label to the bottle. The bottle is then placed under a funnel to start the filling process.

“The medication passes through a light curtain as it fills the bottle, so the pills are counted as they fall into the bottle,” Dreyer explained. “The bottle is then capped and placed into a tote that is bar coded by patient. Each bin receives a bar code that is assigned to a single patient.”

The barcode system improves efficiency, accuracy and inventory management.

After all of the medications that can be bottled by the refill robot have been filled, the tote travels on a conveyor belt to other stations where pharmacy technicians can add other types of prescriptions, such as creams, liquid medications, refrigerated items and prepackaged unit of use items. Prepackaged unit-of-use items are common prescriptions in common amounts, such as 100 tablets of aspirin that would require a lot of space if filled through the refill robot.

After refills for a particular pharmacy are complete, the entire batch is then driven to that pharmacy to be

— See **Pharmacy**, next page

New Child Development Center Nears Completion

STORY AND PHOTO
BY FC3 JOVANTE' L. WASHINGTON
NMCP Public Affairs

Construction crews are hard at work finishing the new Child Development Center at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, located between the parking garage and the Fisher House.

The CDC is designed to provide high-quality educational and recreational programs for children who are not yet school-aged. The 24 hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week program is specifically designed and operated to meet the unique needs of NMCP staff members who do not work during traditional working hours.

“The 24/7 program services are available to all active duty personnel and civilian service personnel, such as watch standers and shift workers, who do not work normal working hours, which are from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.,” said Cmdr. Connie L. Scott, Combined Food Operations department head.

“The project is now making good progress after a slow start,” said Michael Waro, director of engineering in Fa-

cilities Management. “Contractors have installed the appliances, playground equipment and have completed the landscaping and fencing. On the inside, they are in the closing stages of painting the walls and installing cabinets and other fixtures. They must also test the mechanical systems such as water, heating, and ventilation.”

The building still requires the roofing to be installed,



exterior to be painted and wrap up of the installation of several supporting electronic features of the facility. Once these installations are complete, final touch ups will be performed followed by an extensive clean up.

Estimated completion is in December. The center plans to open in January.

Pharmacy — *Continued from previous page*
picked up by the patient.

“Ultimately the idea here is speed by consolidating all of the refills in one place,” Dreyer said. “Safety is also increased overall with this process because there is less chance for human error.”

The new system is receiving positive feedback at area branch health clinics.

“The feedback I have received is that this initiative has reduced patient waiting times for new prescriptions, and it has reduced the space requirement in the Pharmacy to process refills,” said Cmdr. Martin W. Kerr, officer in charge of Oceana Branch Health Clinic, Dam Neck Branch Health Clinic and TRICARE Prime Clinic Virginia Beach. “For most patients, the transition has been seamless. So, I consider this to be a win-win. We continue to provide outstanding and timely service for our beneficiaries, and we made life a little easier for the Pharmacy staff.”

“The Pharmacy benefit is one of the most utilized health care benefits, but as a result of this popularity, costs have soared over the past 10 years,” said Capt. Eugene M. de Lara, head of the Pharmacy at NMCP. “Leaders in Washington, D.C., are working diligently to ensure we are good stewards of the taxpayers’ dollars.

“By investing in technologies such as robotic automation and implementing policies and procedures that centralizes key work streams, such as prescription refills, we are able maximize our efficiency,” de Lara continued. “Ultimately, the goal is to recapture prescriptions that are being filled in the Retail Pharmacy Network, which is significantly more costly to the Department of Defense, rather than having the prescription filled at a military treatment facility pharmacy. The success of this project is just one step in the right direction, and you will see



Several hoppers hold bottles of various sizes so each prescription can be filled using an appropriately sized bottle.

New Garden Provides Therapy for Patients

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY MC2 RIZA CAPARROS
NMCP Public Affairs

Culinary Specialist Seaman Jonathan Drake attended an occupational therapy appointment at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Oct. 29 to help in his rehabilitation following a car accident in July. But the appointment was not in the medical center. This morning, Drake's appointment was outside -- in the new therapeutic garden, across the base and next to the Fisher House.

The 900-square foot garden was completed Oct. 21 after many months of planning and overcoming challenges. Funded by the Surgical Services Directorate, the garden was established to help patients reach specific therapeutic or rehabilitative goals. It maximizes social, cognitive, physical and psychological functioning, helping patients recover from physical and mental injury in a different setting.

"The garden stimulates all the senses -- smell, touch, taste, sight and hearing," said therapeutic garden lead occupational therapist Charles Olson. "The patient is out in nature, listening to the wind,

the cars going by, the sun warming their skin, and the smell of the flowers, soil, the wood and the trees. All of their senses come together in a healthy environment."

The idea for the garden was presented a year ago. Legal issues, time constraints, weather and decisions



Another view of the garden in its completed state. The Fisher House, NMCP's "home away from home" for family members of patients hospitalized for an illness, disease or injury, is located to the left.

for allocation of funds all had to be worked out. In the meantime, "horticultural therapy" remained in the occupational therapy clinic, with patients planting and caring for seedlings in pots that would later be transferred to the garden.

Two local Lowes Home Improvement stores provided a team of 25 who spent eight hours working on the garden Oct. 21. The team planted more than 100 flowers, plants and vegetables; installed a bird bath, trellis and garden benches; and laid down landscaping rock that forms a walking path around the entire site. All materials were donated by Lowes, including the tools, buckets and garden hoses needed to maintain the garden.

"Our team put a lot of time and effort into this project," said Sabrina Pierce, "Lowes Heroes" team leader. "The garden turned out beautifully and those of us

— See **Garden**, next page



"Team Lowes Heroes" sent 25 volunteers from two local Lowes Home Improvement stores to complete the therapeutic garden at NMCP on Oct. 21. Besides the team of workers, the organization also donated plants, flowers, tools and other materials needed to complete and maintain the garden.

Garden — *Continued from previous page*

who were part of the effort are all very proud and honored to give back to our military and veterans.”

Patients have helped out since day one. Pastor Morla Jr. was an occupational therapy patient who helped lay down weed block after the garden’s April 16 ground-breaking.

“I have trouble with balance and using my arms and legs, and here in the garden I practice using those muscles,” said Morla. “I already planted vegetable seeds inside the clinic for therapy and hopefully I will be able to cook those vegetables when they are ready to eat.”

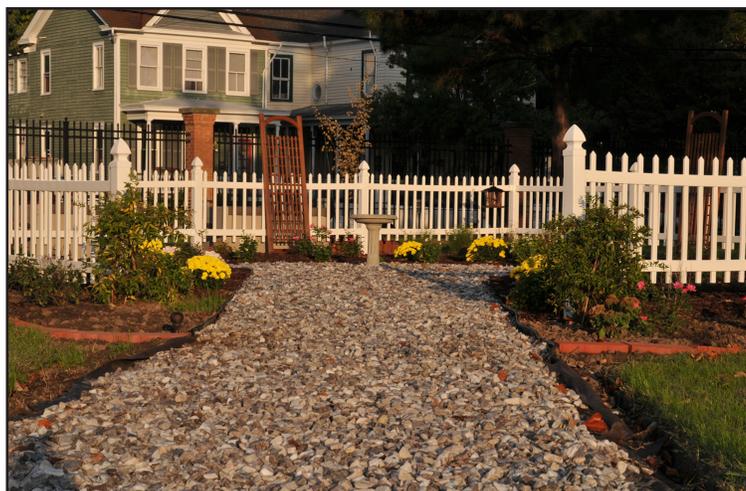
“These are all benefits gained from horticultural therapy,” Olson said. “Whether our patients are actually outside getting their hands dirty, or they are sitting in their room enjoying the beauty of an arrangement they made from flowers grown in the garden, or preparing the fresh vegetables in the kitchen for a meal, they are all benefiting from the garden’s existence.”

The American Horticultural Therapy Association says horticultural therapy helps patients improve memory and physical wellness by retraining muscles and improving coordination, balance and strength. It also helps them learn to work independently, solve problems and follow directions.

Drake was diagnosed with traumatic brain injury and suffers with significant memory loss, slurred speech and stuttering. He has spent four occupational therapy sessions using horticultural therapy methods, and already he’s noticed the benefits.

“Working in the garden helps me to relax,” Drake said. “It is very peaceful there, and I like that I can focus better on what I am doing. I also liked creating an arrangement with clippings from one of the plants. That required I follow directions and focus on each step, and the end result turned out really nice.”

Olson said the garden is also being used for treat-



NMCP’s therapeutic garden, in its completed state. After many months of planning and delays, the garden was open to patients Oct. 22. More than 100 plants and flowers were planted in the garden, as well as a bird bath, trellis, bird feeder, garden benches and walkway.

ment by mental health patients, substance abuse patients and those in psychiatric intensive outpatient treatment are also using the garden.

With the winter weather approaching, the garden will soon go dormant. Patients will help winterize the garden by raking leaves, weeding, cutting back perennials and pulling up annuals that cannot survive the frost.



Culinary Specialist Seaman Jonathan Drake, left, works with his orthopedic therapist Charles Olson as he follows the step-by-step process to replant the cuttings from one plant to grow into another. After winter, the plant will be moved to the garden.

Patients are already anticipating the garden’s re-birth. Seedlings growing in small pots in the occupational clinic are destined to be planted in the garden in the spring.

Staff Assists Patients during Steam Pipe Construction

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY FC3 JOVANTE' L. WASHINGTON
NMCP Public Affairs

While Naval Medical Center Portsmouth replaces steam lines in the traffic circle in front of Bldg. 2, members of the Quarterdeck are helping patients navigate the detour and transporting them from the temporary drop-off to the main hospital entrance.

Because of the repairs, the circle is closed to traffic, and the drop-off point for patients is about 75 yards away from the main entrance to the building. Three watch standers are on site from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with wheelchairs and golf carts to help patients who are unable to make the walk to and from the building.

Seven departments have stepped up to assist hospital visitors, patients and staff while the steam pipes are being replaced. They help with on-site traffic management, driving seatbelt-equipped golf carts, and have constructed a massive 228 foot by 10 foot structure built to keep passengers dry and sheltered from bad weather.

Staff members at NMCP understand the importance of patients and their safety.

"It's awesome to be able to help those who are in need," said Electricians Mate 3rd Class Paige Orgass of Facilities Management. "It feels good to hear everyone say how much they appreciate it and let us know that what we are doing really does contribute."

Patient Nancy Ortiz appreciates the customer service.

"All of the military members have been very helpful and always provide service with a smile."

Even those assigned to stand the watch are enjoying the new assignment.

"It makes me feel good to know we're doing our part and to see how happy the patients are for our help," said



NMCP patient Nancy Ortiz receives assistance from watch standers MA3 Adelpha Gray and EM3 Paige Orgass at the temporary drop off point in front of Bldg. 2. The traffic circle in front of the building is closed due to steam line construction that is expected to be completed in December.

Hospitalman Robert Williams, who normally stands watch at the Quarterdeck, "We get a lot of people saying 'thank you, sir' and 'thank you, ma'am.'"

"You can tell that they really appreciate it," said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Jeffrey Archie of the Security Department.

The watch standers and the temporary covered walkway will be in place until the steam pipe repairs are completed in December.

A temporary covered walkway has been installed for the duration of the steam line repair in front of Bldg 2. Using a golf cart and wheel chairs, watch standers assist patients with the extra 75-yard walk to Bldg. 2's entrance while the traffic circle is closed.



VLER Bridges Electronic Medical Information

BY MC2 RIZA CAPARROS
NMCP Public Affairs

The seamless electronic transfer of patient information, treatment plans and medical records among military and civilian facilities is occurring with Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's participation in an initiative between the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs.

The Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record, or VLER (pronounced VEE-ler), was announced in April 2009 and is still considered to be in its infancy. In the Tidewater pilot phase, NMCP joined the VA Medical Center in Hampton and MedVirginia in improving the continuity of care for service members. The goal: facilitating electronic medical records to transition with patients no matter where they receive their medical care.

The Tidewater pilot began Sept. 15 and is phase two. It involves testing the exchange of small amounts of medical data of patients who are receiving care at military, veteran and civilian medical facilities in Hampton Roads. Software "bridges" allow each entity's computers to talk to each other. Lessons learned from the first VLER pilot involving Naval Medical Center San Diego and Kaiser Permanente have been incorporated; the two organizations exchanged only test data because they had a different patient population. The Tidewater phase electronically exchanges data from real patients.

Some data that exchanged during the pilots included personal patient information, such as allergies, medications, problem list and emergency information. Exchange of hematology laboratory results was added to the Tidewater phase.

NMCP's Cardiology and Internal Medicine Departments were selected to participate in the second pilot

phase, beginning the "live" electronic exchange of information Sept. 15.

"After 'going live', NMCP was able to exchange medical information with the Department of Veterans Affairs," said Joelle McCarthy, DoD VLER Support Manager. "The information shared between NMCP and the VA included allergies, problems/conditions, medications, lab results and immunizations."

Dominique David, medical assistant for NMCP's Internal Medicine Clinic, said VLER is a welcome addition to the practice.

"I see positive changes now that the system is in place," said David. "Because Internal Medicine sees a great deal of geriatric patients who often go to civilian providers, our ability to see their treatment path streamlines the overall process to making them better."

However, there are challenges, David added.

"Not all records are available," she explained. "So if our patient is seen at one facility that does not participate in VLER, we have to rely on other means to get those health records, and that slows down our treatment plan."

Ironing out the kinks will take time, but the results will be worth it, said McCarthy.

"Having access to all information will expedite the time used for our patients to reach better health," she said.

As was done following phase one, lessons learned from the Tidewater project will be incorporated into future VLER projects.

The next VLER pilot is scheduled to be phased in by the end of the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2011. It will feature collaboration in the Spokane, Wash., area among Fairchild Air Force Base, VA Medical Center Spokane and Inland Northwest Health Services.



Photo by Deborah R. Kallgren

AIRLANT Spouses Visit NMCP for Tour

On Nov. 10, spouses of the principles attending the Commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic Commanders' Conference visited NMCP. They toured various areas including the Wounded Warrior Patriots' Inn, Simulation Center and the Fisher House. Before the tour, the group paused on the steps of historic Bldg. 1 for a photo with Joyce Stocks (center front), spouse of the commander; acting commander Capt. Matthew Pommer, left; and acting deputy commander, Capt. Darin Via.

Truman Mom Keeps Wounded Warriors in Stitches

STORY & PHOTOS BY DEBORAH R. KALLGREN
 NMCP Public Affairs

Two members of USS Harry S Truman's Family Readiness Group came to Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Oct. 27 bearing gifts of denim.

Angela Pearce and Andrea Trelles were there on behalf of Jean Hoyt, the mother of a Sailor serving on board the Norfolk-based aircraft carrier. Hoyt stitched eight quilts from blue jeans to give to Wounded Warriors and residents of the Patriots' Inn who are receiving care at the medical center.

She had to return to Texas before delivering the patchwork quilts to their intended recipients, and asked Pearce and Trelles to present the quilts. The Sailors and Marines who received them were thrilled.

Hoyt, a registered nurse, said in an email, "The pleasure was entirely mine. All the men and woman serving give so much. A little sewing time is a drop in the bucket in comparison."

The jeans were donated by the Information Technology staff of Health Corporation of America, North Texas Division, in Dallas, where Hoyt works.



Above: Angela Pearce of USS Harry S. Truman's Family Readiness Group presents a denim patchwork quilt to Marine Cpl. Gary Muniot at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth.



Left: Angela Pearce, right, and Andrea Trelles, left, of the Truman's Family Readiness Group, present quilts made by Jean Hoyt to wounded warriors staying at the Patriots' Inn. Hoyt's son is stationed on board USS Harry S. Truman.

Deadline for NWU Wear Date Set for Dec. 31



Dec. 31 remains the deadline for Sailors to have all required Navy Working Uniform items. For E1 to E9, the requirement is four sets of the uniform. Full uniform component requirements are:

- Four NWU blouses and trousers
- One pair of NWU boots
- Two eight-point utility caps
- Five 100 percent blue cotton T-shirts

- Five pairs of boot socks
- One mock turtle neck sweater
- one fleece liner
- One Gortex parka

Recent uniform inventory indicates the average uniforms purchased is well below the required four per person. Commands should verify by Dec. 31 that their personnel have the appropriate components in their seabag.

**BRAVO
ZULU**



Photos by FC3 Jovante' L. Washington

CIVILIAN OF THE QUARTER CATEGORY I

Brenda Butler, lead medical records technician at Dam Neck Branch Health Clinic, collects and tracks customer surveys, and schedules and coordinates staff customer service training. She also trains and supervises front desk personnel in the medical and dental departments who are responsible for more than 2,000 patients per month. Her training increased the accuracy of appointment booking from 85 to 100 percent.

Butler also serves as an Exceptional Family Member Program coordinator and is in charge of Population Health educational displays.

She enrolls about 300 students per month into TRICARE and takes the lead in ensuring a closed record system is enforced, protecting patient privacy. Butler was also proactive in reclaiming records that had not been returned to the clinic, decreasing the number of overdue records from 431 to 36 within a few weeks.

"I volunteer my services; I make myself available, and am always striving to be a positive force for the patients," Butler said. "I feel proud as well as honored to receive such an important award."

CIVILIAN OF THE QUARTER CATEGORY II

Carol Y. Mitchell, head of Medical Boards, expertly led her team during the establishment and successful deployment of the Disability Evaluation System pilot at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth. She was critical in integrating a Veterans Affairs office into the command. Her outstanding leadership led to the facilitation of the first-ever joint venture cooperation between the Navy, VA and other civil services.

The new DES program resulted in a more efficient system, reducing patient wait times by 35 percent. NMCP is outperforming all other Navy medical assets using the program by 50 percent. Mitchell's efforts led the Medical Boards Department to receive the fourth consecutive Pipeline Movers Award from the Navy Personnel Command.

"The Pipeline Movers Award is given by an inspection team that checks on the processes involved with transient personnel," Mitchell said. "We have been earning these



for almost two decades, but with this new program, we have really been able to become more efficient and be recognized more frequently for our efforts.

"I am honored to be recognized by the pipeline awards, and by the civilian of the quarter award as well," Mitchell added.

Historical Foundation Tours NMCP's Bldg. 1

BY FC3 JOVANTE' WASHINGTON
NMCP Public Affairs

Members of the Hampton Roads Naval Historical Foundation visited Naval Medical Center Portsmouth to tour Bldg. 1 on Oct. 26 as part of their annual tour of a local historical site. The group of 29 received an overview of the history of the 180-year-old building, as well as a tour from the first floor dungeon to the fifth floor surgical ward.

The foundation supports the Hampton Roads Naval Museum in Norfolk and helps collect and preserve antiquities relating to the U.S. Navy. The foundation's executive director, Tom Smith, coordinates two trips a year for their members, one locally and one out of the area.

"What I do to make it worthwhile in our organization, is to take members to places to get a historical experience and to reward and encourage their membership within the foundation," Smith said. "We plan a trip every six months, traveling along the East Coast for one trip a year, and these are usually overnight."



Photo by Rebecca A. Perron

Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks, right, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's commander, greets members of the Naval Historical Foundation in the dungeon of Bldg. 1, where he welcomed them to the medical center for their tour and gave them background on the medical center's transformation over the years, including the evolution of the three buildings that make up the main hospital complex.

The tour began in the dungeon, where Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks, NMCP commander, greeted them. He gave them some background on the medical center's transformation over the years, including the evo-

lution of the three buildings that make up the main hospital complex.

"We are proud to have provided our country with 180 years of continuous service," Stocks said. "When I worked here as a pediatrician years ago, and I would pass by the XO's and CO's houses, I never dreamed one day I would be living in one of them. It is our privilege to be in such a historical setting and serving America's troops."

The tour continued with Peter Kopacz, NMCP's executive director, as guide. After taking them through the dungeon, Kopacz led the group to the fifth floor, and they worked their way down the remaining floors. They got a first-hand glimpse of Navy Medicine throughout the years, viewing pictures in the building's passageways that have been taken over the last hundred years. Although the building is currently undergoing an extensive renovation, participants in the tour found the experience to be educational and, according to one member, delightful.

One of the group's members, Katherine Renfrew, the registrar, was born in Bldg. 1 when it was the main hospital.

"My father served in the Coast Guard, and I have memories while growing up that I would come here for appointments in Bldg. 3," Renfrew said. "And I remember waiting to see dad when he was a patient here years ago."

"My favorite part of the tour was seeing the beautiful architecture," Renfrew continued. "I am glad to see the windows are being restored properly. I also enjoyed seeing the library and the original stone from Fort Nelson."

Renfrew was not the only one to have ties to the hospital. Two other members gave birth to children in Bldg. 1, which used to house the maternity ward.

By the end of the tour, the group had gained an appreciation of the building's history and several members expressed an interest in taking it further. They believe they can help the medical center get the dungeon and the fifth floor designated as a gallery museum, and they intend to assist in pursuing funding and gathering artifacts to achieve that designation.

The foundation currently oversees museums at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story and Norfolk Naval Station.

NOVEMBER AWARDS

LEGION OF MERIT

Capt. Susan Herron

MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL

Capt. James Hosack

Cmdr. Scott Hines

LSCM Sheila Wooden

HN Randal Boyd

NAVY & MARINE CORPS COMMENDATION MEDAL

Capt. Melvin Ford

Cmdr. Terry McGuirk

Cmdr. David Tait

Lt. Cmdr Robert O. Holmes Jr.

Lt. Cmdr. Susan Tillmon

Lt. Cmdr. Tracy Vincent

Lt. Eugene Smith Jr.

Lt. j.g. Natalie Oakes

BMC(SW/AW) Deena Abt

MAC(SW) Danel Harrison

HM1(SW) Valarie Boyd

HM1 Seana Gauger

NAVY & MARINE CORPS ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

Lt. j.g. Alawah Davis

Lt. j.g. Jenny Paul

Lt. j.g. Rebeca Rodriguez

CS1(SW) Lakeshia Austin

MA1(SW) Alejandro Alvarez

LN1 Shahnaz Askins

LS1(SW) Gary Bly

LS1(SW/AW) Catherine Butler

HM1(FMF) Christopher Kopf

LS1(SW/AW) Carrie Robertson

HM2 Teresa Arnold

HM2(FMF) Harvey Canto

HM2(FMF) Raul Cervantes

HM2 Yeisha Hopkins

HM2(SW/AW) Ebony Summersett

LS2(SW/AW) Damario Webster

MA2(AW) Terrance Woodson

HM3 Erik Antonio

HM3 Emery lyle ann Carino

HM3 Angelica Hernandez

HM3(FMF) Andrew Nagy

HM3 Delgado Newkirk

HM3 Owen Shaw

HN Adam Bullard

MILITARY OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD

HMC(SW/FMF) Belinda Daniels

Operation Jingle Application Deadline Set for Dec. 14

All Hampton Roads area active duty service members are invited to participate in the 18th Annual Operation Jingle, sponsored by the Hotel/Motel Associations and Convention and Visitors Bureaus from Norfolk and Virginia Beach.

The annual holiday program provides a complimentary hotel room from Dec. 23 to 26 to the visiting families of locally stationed service members who are unable to go home for the holidays.

The service members must be stationed or live aboard ships or reside in a local barrack. Commands must verify that the rooms will be used for families traveling to and from the Hampton Roads area to spend the holidays with their ser-

vice member. Room availability is limited and are reserved first come, first-served.

To participate, commands must designate a representative as the command's single point of contact to coordinate the delivery of applications and confirmation information with the Norfolk Navy Marine Corps Relief Society.

Deadline for submission is Dec. 14. Commands may request registration forms from Loretta Russell, Norfolk Navy Marine Corps Relief Society, at 322-1175 or Loretta.russell@nmcrs.org.

All incidental expenses incurred during the hotel stay – phone calls, laundry services, movies, room service and other meals – are the responsibility of the service member reserving the room.

SHIPMATE OF THE MONTH



Photo by FC3 Jovante' L. Washington

HN SIMON CHOI
PSSN MARTIN MAKULA
HN RONALD P. LAVALLE
HM2 TERESA G. ARNOLD
HN CHRISTOPHER R. BROSSARD
HN DAVID J. CARDOZA

HN DANIELLE A. HALL
HM2 ERIN A. DUNN
HM3 EVAN W. MARSH
HM2 PAOLA J. FOXHOVEN
HM2 MARCIA E. CORREIA

Fisher House Hosts Wounded Warriors for Holiday Dinner



Members of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's Wounded Warrior Battalion-East were invited to an early Thanksgiving dinner at the

members of the Patient Administration did the cooking.

Capt. Darin Via, acting NMCP commander, and Capt. Rick Freed-



Photos by Rebecca A. Perron

Fisher House Nov. 17. The Oakleaf Club purchased the food while mem-

ber, acting deputy commander, spoke with members the wounded warriors while they were waiting for dinner to begin. Via and Freedman asked each member about their reason for staying at the hospital.

The event was part of Warrior Care Month.