May 2011

THE COURIER

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Portsmouth, Va.

'Derby Days' Oakleaf Club Auction— *Page 13*

26th Annual Navy-wide Research Competition

Winner Shows Drug Reduces Surgical Pain

Story and Photo By MC2 Nikki Smith
NMCP Public Affairs

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth hosted the 26th Annual Navy-Wide Academic Research Competition on May 12 with Cmdr. Greg Nezat, an anesthesiology nurse and department head of nursing research at NMCP, winning first place. He and his team represented Navy Medicine East in the competition.

The six presenters had been chosen through the previous oral and poster phases of the competition in their respective regions: Navy Medicine East, Navy Medicine West and National Capital Area. Three competed on the trainee level and three on the staff level.

Each competitor had 12 minutes to give their presentation to the judges and five minutes to accept questions. Judging was based on how the presenter carried themselves, their PowerPoint slideshow, how well they answered questions and the judges' overall impression of the research presentations.

Rear Adm. Bruce A. Doll, Joint Forces Command surgeon and medical advisor for NATO Allied Command Transformation, was one of the four judges for the competition.

"This was a very motivated bunch," Doll said. "It was such a pleasure to listen to them, and it really came down to very fine hair splitting to judge for first through third place."

After the judges deliberated to place the trainees and staff competitors, Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks, NME and NMCP commander, presented each with their award certificate.

Nezat and his team's research project investigated how lidocaine can reduce pain and inflammation in women undergoing same-day surgical procedures. Nezat did the principal investigation and obtained a grant from the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Research. He has been working on the project for two-and-a-half years and said that seeing the results of his research and generating knowledge among peers has been the best part of the research experience.

Although the use of lidocaine during same-day procedures is a technique some doctors use, Nezat is hoping that his research results promote its usage and more physicians in the military health system will implement the technique. Shedding light on the positive results of the research can advance military physicians in their practices in order to benefit patients.

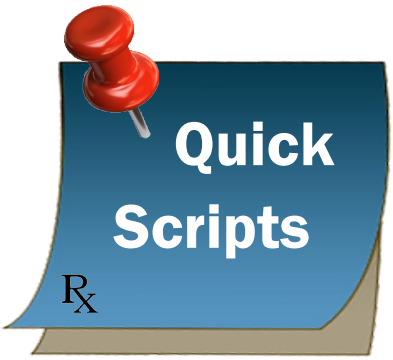
"All practitioners have a different way of treating patients," Nezat said. "This research confirms beliefs about lidocaine and we are hoping that with this research and knowledge in place more practitioners here will use the findings to help their patients."

In order to win the competition, Nezat and his team had to

— *See* **RESEARCH**, *Page 8*

Photo by MC2 Riza Caparros

During NMCP's award ceremony April 14, Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks, NMCP commander, presented 12 Navy and Marine Corps commendations, seven Navy Achievement and 17 Good Conduct medals, three civilian 20-year and three civilian 10-year service awards, three Flag Letters of Commendation, one Letter of Appreciation and one Military Outstanding Volunteer Service medal.



Keep Walking with the StepWell Program

Did you join your colleague for Walk at Lunch Day? Do you wish you had?

Make any day more active! Spending 10 minutes of your lunch break on a brisk walk will burn calories and enhance mental clarity.

For more "everyday fitness" hints and NMCP-specific mileage maps, join NMCP's StepWell program. For more information, contact Alice Fitzpatrick at alice.fitzpatrick@med.navy.mil.

Plan Vacations with ITT

Looking for a place to vacation? Don't know how to start your planning? Come visit NMCP's MWR ITT office. We now do travel! We can offer all major cruise lines, Walt Disney World, Beaches Resorts, Sandals Resorts and more! For more information, call 953-5439 or email Katrina.Barnes@med.navy.mil.

Asian-Pacific American Heritage Celebration

The Diversity Committee is hosting an Asian-Pacific American Heritage Celebration on May 31 at 11 a.m. in the auditorium, featuring speaker Dona Storey, president and CEO of Quality Technical Services, Inc.

Tobacco Cessation Classes

NMCP offers the American Center Society's Tobacco Cessation Program. Each session of the four-week program is 1½ hours. The classes are held in Bldg. 3 in the 2nd floor Education and Training Department. Tobacco cessation medications are provided.

Register for classes through the Hampton Roads Appointment Center at (866) 645-4584. Call for dates and times, as they differ each month.

For more information, call Maggie Malson at 953-9248.

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth is on Facebook and Twitter

facebook

www.facebook.com/NMCPortsmouth

http://twitter.com/NMCP1

Clean the Base Day June 3

NMCP's annual Clean the Base Day is scheduled for June 3 at 1 p.m. and will kick off behind the pool. Departments and tenant commands are encouraged to allow maximum participation of their staff members — military as well as civilian. There is no rain date.

Striped Bass Fishing Tourney

Portsmouth Outdoor Recreation is hosting its first-ever fishing tournament June 3 and 4. The entry fee is $10 per person. Weigh-in is from 3 to 4 p.m. followed by a cookout and awards.

For more information, call 953-5855 or contact Kenny Mulvaney at 953-7109.

Oakleaf Club Open to New Members

The Oakleaf Club of Tidewater is open to medical, dental, nurse, and medical service corps — active 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 membership information, contact Angela Nezat at anezat@yahoo.com.

NMCP Ombudsman Team Pre-Deployment Brief

The NMCP Ombudsman Team is here to help those attached to NMCP or its branch health clinics when you or a family member are preparing to deploy!

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

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

NMCPombudsman@med.navy.mil
or
(757) 953-1973

THE COURIER

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

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

Those who wish 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, with photos submitted separately from the document and in jpeg, bitmap or tiff format.

The Public Affairs Office is located in Bldg. 1, 3rd Deck, Rm. C308.

Commander's Corner

At NMCP, We Innovate and Excel in Medical Education

Over the last few months, I have been providing updates to the strategic vision for Naval Medical Center Portsmouth. As I have noted previously, our strategic direction for Navy Medicine's "First and Finest" is conceptualized in the six strategic pillars. The six pillars are Customer Service, Medical Education, Professional Development, Quality Health Care, Readiness and Research.

It is important to understand the pillars are not listed in order of importance or priority since all are equally vital to achieving our mission. This month, I will highlight the "Medical Education" pillar.

The objective of the Medical Education pillar is to innovate and excel in our educational activities. Under this objective are three effects that we will strive for:

-Ensure high quality graduate and technical professional education programs.

-Exceed our obligation to provide outstanding educational experiences to trainees.

-Invest in the professional development of our personnel.

NMCP has a rich tradition of providing high quality medical education. Currently, NMCP sponsors 12 medical residency programs, two graduate dental programs and two fellowships. In addition to our sponsored programs, we host a variety of medical, nursing and allied health trainees.

NMCP is also leading the way by recognizing the importance of investing in our educators by providing formal faculty development training. The quality of our training programs continues to be unrivaled as demonstrated by full accreditation of all our sponsored programs and the outstanding performance of our graduates throughout the Navy. Despite our many successes in medical education, it is critical that we continuously consider ways to improve.

In order for us to continue in our role as a leading organization in medical education, we must have the commitment and support of the entire command. The command-wide rollout for the strategic plan is May 24. Through teamwork, I believe we can achieve our ultimate goal of taking NMCP from being the best in the Navy to being the best in the nation.

A. L. Stocks

VHC Celebrates Seven Years of Vaccine Health

Capt. Dexter A. Hardy, director, Directorate for Public Health Services, along with members of the Vaccine Healthcare Center, hosts a cake-cutting ceremony in Bldg. 2 on April 26 to commemorate the center's seventh year in operation.

The clinic was established to help individuals who may experience adverse reactions after receiving a vaccination.

Photo by
FC3 Jovanté L. Washington

2011 NMCRS Fund Drive Concludes

The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society annual fund drive ended April 15 with Naval Medical Center Portsmouth raising almost $31,000. NMCP is part of Sub Area 6, which raised more than $98,000.

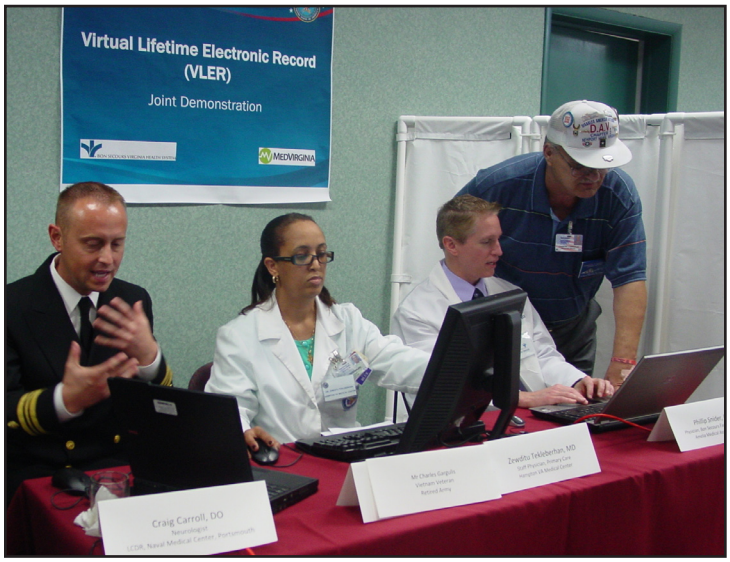
Hampton Roads raised $1.6 million and contacted 93 percent of Navy and Marine Corps personnel in the area. This was a $90,000 increase in contributions and a one percent increase in contact percentage over 2010.

Patients Benefit from Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record

Story and photos by Deborah Kallgren
NMCP Public Affairs

Hampton, Va. – The Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record — VLER, for short — was unveiled to the Veterans Advisory Council at the Hampton VA Medical Center on April 20. The initiative allows medical providers from Department of Defense, the VA and Bon Secours Virginia Health System to see their patients' records from all three systems. Patients must use all three systems to participate.

The medical facilities have been working together to accomplish a seemingly easy task: eliminating medical records on paper and allowing all of a patient's medical providers access to the complete medical record. In 2009, President Barack Obama directed the DoD and the VA to create VLER, "a system that will ultimately contain administrative and medical information from the day an individual enters military service throughout their military career, and after they leave the military."



Doctors from the VLER partners show their patient Charles Gargulis, right, how they are able to access his medical record.

While DoD and the VA have been working together for some time, adding civilian medical systems to the process has not been easy. As medical facilities eliminate paper records, they use different computer programs. Often, patients receive medical care from several different medical groups that use different software to record their patients' records. For providers to see computer records from a different facility, a software "translator" to exchange data is needed that also protects patient privacy and security.

In Virginia, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth and the medical facilities at Joint Base Langley-Eustis are the participating DoD facilities. In 2010, Portsmouth became the second naval medical center to use VLER, building on the lessons learned at the first facilities to implement VLER, Naval Medical Center San Diego and Kaiser Permanente.

The Bon Secours facilities are seven hospitals in Virginia, including DePaul Medical Center in Norfolk, Maryview Medical Center in Portsmouth and Mary Immaculate Hospital in Newport News. The Hampton VAMC is the third partner.

The VA asked patients who use all three systems if they would like to give VLER a try.

Charles Gargulis of Newport News, Va., was one who stepped forward. An Army veteran who served during Vietnam War, he is being treated for 32 ailments including a rare bone marrow disease. He fits the criterion: His treatment spans VLER's participating facilities. Since opting into VLER, his doctors can log on to the computer and see what treatments and prescriptions he receives from other facilities. Gargulis said one of the best parts of VLER is not having to track down paper records and carry them from doctor to doctor.

"I don't have to search for anything. Before, just a little over a year ago, for me to get records, I had to go through hell." Now, Gargulis says, "I don't have to carry nothing to the doctor — I tell'em to hit the (computer) button and it's over."

Gargulis also takes multiple prescription drugs, and VLER is designed to ensure doctors can view what others are prescribing to avert drug interactions.

"I think that it's going to really help cut down on costs and also help us keep from sending patients to get duplicate services done and just putting them through more work than they need to be," said Dr. Phillip Snider of Bon Secours.

Tim Cromwell, a VA employee, described how his father-in-law, a Korean War veteran, has to schlep a cardboard box full of medical records among his appointments at the VA and other civilian providers. He called the process outdated and the solution challenging.

But the VLER partners are overcoming the odds, creating a comprehensive medical record template that providers and patients will want to use.

Department of Defense VLER Manager Mark Hiner said, "It's standardizing the information so it can be shared. We are building on technology so that the default decision is for providers to participate."

VLER continues to add data elements, so that providers can see more and more of the care a patient is receiving across the three participating medical entities. Currently, content is available to see the names of the health care providers, allergy and drug sensitivity, condition, medications, immunizations, vital signs, lab and test results, a list of encounters and procedures, and personal and other information. Every six months, the VLER partners add additional data elements to make the electronic record more complete.

With the health data exchange capability, when a veteran

— *See* **VLER**, *next page*

Nurse Week Celebrated

Photo by MC1 Elizabeth St John

Ens. Samuel Sours, the junior nurse at NMCP, and Capt. Elizabeth Savage, the senior nurse, cut the celebratory cake for the 103rd birthday of the Nurse Corps in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit atrium May 13. Every year, nurses around the globe celebrate National Nurses Week from May 6 to 12, which includes the birthday of the Navy Nurse Corps and of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing.

PNA Holds Silent Auction

Photo by MC1 Elizabeth St John

Rachel Vasquez, the Directorate for Clinic Support Services secretary, decides which basket to bid on during the Portsmouth Nurse's Association Silent Auction held near NMCP's Food Court April 28. The auction raised $2,048, and the money will fund future PNA events. The Portsmouth Nurses' Association is a non-profit, Tidewater-area organization that brings military and civilian nurses together while preserving the traditions and history of nursing at NMCP.

VLER— *Continued from previous page*

visits a private health care clinician, prior medical history data is available instantly to help guide the best possible treatment in any locations that participates in VLER. Before, patients frequently consented to sharing their medical information, but it could take weeks or months to receive paper documents. Now the information can be transmitted electronically, within minutes. VLER ensures 24/7 access to critical health information.

"Being able to access the information from those different facilities, I think, is an amazing accomplishment and something from a medical standpoint, it's been very necessary," said Lt. Cmdr. Craig Carroll, a neurologist at NMCP.

When a provider accesses a patient's VLER record, they can input their medical findings, but have read-only access to information from partner facilities. Tracking programs monitor the security by tracking who has accessed the patient's record.

Dr. Katherine Gianola of the Richmond VA said, "It's long overdue and patients have been asking for this for ages." She said other southeastern Virginia health systems have expressed an interest in VLER.

As the Virginia VLER initiative matures, the lessons learned benefit medical treatment facilities that join the program. It's expanding throughout the nation to VA facilities in Richmond, Va., Spokane, Wash., Indianapolis, and Asheville, N.C., in conjunction with DoD and civilian partners in those communities.

Cmdr. Donald Shenenberger, a dermatologist at NMCP, shows VLER participant Richard Bone, an Army retiree and Vietnam veteran, his medical record.

Gargulis said more patients like him should participate. "Any veteran that doesn't sign up for this, well, it's the only way to fly. Now these (doctors) all have access. And they're the ones I want to have access, because they're the ones keeping me alive."

CP-11: USNS Comfort Visits Jamaica, Peru

Comfort Crew Treats Thousands in Jamaica

USNS Comfort departed Jamaica April 23, completing the ship's first stop during Continuing Promise 2011, a the five-month humanitarian assistance mission to Central and South America and the Caribbean.

During 10-day stay in Jamaica, staff provided medical, dental and veterinary care, engineering support and subject matter expert exchanges. The crew performed 126 surgeries, treated 560 physical therapy patients, dispensed 3,161 pairs of eye glasses and aided 1,186 dental patients during its mission.

Patients were treated on the ship and ashore, with medical sites set up at the National Sports Arena and the Windward Health Centre, both in Kingston, Jamaica. Community service projects were also performed at schools, churches and children's homes.

Photo by MC2 Eric C. Tretter

Lt. Cmdr. Brian Feldman, an NMCP pediatrician, examines a patient at the National Sports Arena in Kingston, Jamaica, on April 14 during Continuing Promise 2011.

Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Alesia D. Goosic

HM2 Melecia Reid, an NMCP X-ray technician, gives a tour of USNS Comfort to her father, Peter Edwards, a Jamaican resident, on April 19 during the ship's visit to Jamaica.

Comfort Leaves Its Mark on Peru

After transiting the Panama Canal on April 27, USNS Comfort arrived in Paita, Peru, for her second stop of Continuing Promise 2011 on April 30. Now in a different country, continent and hemisphere, the ship's crew faced more diverse conditions and a language barrier. A team of 12 Air Force and Navy linguists helped bridge the language barrier between staff and patients, and will do so for the last eight countries of the mission.

— *See* **PERU**, *next page*

Photo by MC2 Eric Tretter

Capt. Mark Honig is one of about 150 NMCP staff participating in Continuing Promise 2011. Here, he prepares to perform plastic surgery to fix a child's cleft lip on board USNS Comfort in Paita, Peru.

Peds Celebrates Month of the Military Child

By FC3 Jovanté L. Washington
NMCP Public Affairs

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 49 hosted a lemonade social in Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's Pediatrics Inpatient Ward dayroom on April 18 for pediatric patients and their families to celebrate the Month of the Military Child.

The group cheered up children by setting up a table with cookies, chips and lemonade. They delivered some of the goodies to those children who could not leave their rooms. They also donated pool sticks, game controllers and other equipment for use in the ward's dayroom and waiting area.

"We like to come out to help the kids who have to stay in the hospital feel better during their stay," said Suzzann S. Pittman, treasurer of the auxiliary unit. "We know it can be difficult for the children who have extended stays here, and our goal is to make their stay as comfortable as possible."

"It's so nice to have them here to visit," said Fire Controlman 1st Class(SW) Steven Elmore, father of inpatient Zachary Elmore. "Their thoughtful giving and just coming out to spend time with my son has really made his stay here a lot less stressful. We are very thankful."

Members of the unit have been visiting children at NMCP at this time of year for more than eight years and, according to their members, they plan to continue doing so for a long time.

There are 1.7 million American children under 18 who have a parent who serves in the military. Of those children, about 900,000 have a parent who has deployed multiple times.

April is designated in the United States as the Month of the Military Child as an opportunity to recognize military children and youth for their heroism, character, courage, sacrifices and continued resilience.

Members of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 49 share a moment with Zachary Elmore and parents Steven and Kathie while hosting a lemonade social in the pediatrics dayroom for pediatric patients and their families to help celebrate Month of the Military Child Monday on April 18.

Photo by MC1 Brian A. Goyak

Sheryl Flanary, left, and Lt. j.g. Sara Edmondson, an NMCP Labor and Delivery nurse, teach a patient to play Cats Cradle at a Continuing Promise 2011 medical clinic set up in Peru.

PERU — *Continued from previous page*

As expected, the stop in Peru presented regional and area-specific ailments, such as chronic skin disease, mild malnutrition, and infection, diseases and respiratory ailments, as well as pterygium, an eye condition common among those living near the equator.

During the stop, 7,358 patients were treated on the ship and ashore, including medical, dental, physical therapy, optometry and pediatric patients. One hundred six surgeries were conducted, while ways to improve health and hygiene were discussed with nearly 1,000 parents and children.

Subject Matter Expert Exchanges were conducted with about 400 professionals and students. More than 12,000 bags of water were given out. Water is a critical resource in this area of Peru that only gets about two inches of rainfall a year.

The Comfort team set up a temporary medical clinic adjacent to a school where they conducted CP11 medical community service projects.

Comfort departed Peru on May 11 to head to its next stop in Manta, Equador.

Ramos Remembered

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class(SW) Joel B. Ramos, who had been assigned to Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's Infectious Disease Clinic since October, passed away April 10. He was remembered by co-workers as someone who would go out of his way to help anyone in need, and a corpsman who was very devoted to his job and loved the Navy.

"He was just a sweetheart," said Paula Spears-Addison, a co-worker of Ramos. "He always put other people's needs before his own. Ramos was so funny and was always full of laughter, no matter what he was going through or what was happening. He was a great person to work with, and we miss him."

Ramos joined the Navy in 1997, later deciding to become a hospital corpsman because of his interest in the medical field. He graduated from Naval Hospital Corps School in May 2000 and graduated from Field Medical Service School at Camp Johnson, N.C., in October 2000.

He first served with the 2nd Marine Division, 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment at Camp Lejeune, N.C., deploying aboard USS Shreveport in 2001. Ramos' next duty stations included the Naval Ambulatory Care Center Newport, R. I., and the Newport Marine Corps Unit Department. He was also stationed at the Navy Operational Support Center in Miami, and then the NOSC in Syracuse, N. Y., where he remained until he transferred to NMCP.

RESEARCH — *Continued from page 1*

compete in the poster competition which attracted more than 100 other researchers throughout the east region. Nezat then went on to compete at NMCP in the oral competition against other NME poster competition winners. This is Nezat's third year to compete; he placed first in the poster competition his first two years, but did not make it to the finals.

"It feels really great to win this here at Portsmouth on home turf," Nezat said. "Portsmouth hasn't taken first place in a few years, and I'm really proud that I could compete as a representative of Portsmouth and win."

Thomas Rieg, research director for the Clinical Investigation and Research Department at NMCP, has been organizing the event since 2003, and said he was very pleased with the caliber of the competition this year.

Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks (far left) and Capt. John O'Boyle (far right) with the six competitors who were presented the Bureau of Navy Medicine and Surgery winner's plaque.

"All of the competitors this year were all great and very polished," Rieg said. "I found all the research very interesting and the candidates did a good job on their projects. The judges took longer than scheduled to deliberate because all of the research was so well done."

Capt. Ben Balough, deputy director for Clinical Research and Development Center, was invited to observe and show his support for the program.

"The competition has doubled in participants in the last three years," Balough said. "This growth in research helped to promote the Surgeon General's two main priorities, which are education and research. This competition and the work everyone put in has benefitted the Surgeon General's strategic goals and mission."

This year's competition was unique for a number of reasons. There was larger participation and more diversity in the competitors; the nurse corps and the medical corps were both well represented, and there were small military treatment facilities that participated along with large medical centers. It was also relevant to today's warfighters: many of the presentations were directly related to the Navy's operations and the needs of the fleet.

"We all want more people involved in research," Nezat said. NMCP "is a teaching hospital, and we can't have a good academic program without research. By winning this competition we have promoted Adm. Stocks' research pillar and represented the hospital in an excellent way."

Lt. Cmdr. Ruben Acosta from the National Naval Medical Center was awarded second place in the staff presenter category with his research presentation on the study of the seroconversion of helicobacter pylori infection among U.S. military members deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Third place was awarded to Lt. James Prahl who represented Navy Medicine West with his presentation about lung inflammation and altered pulmonary functions following blast exposure.

Finalists will present their research projects at the 2nd annual Navy Medicine Research Conference in June at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Md.

TBIRD Mobile Assessment Unit Debuts at NMCP

Story and photos
by MC1 Elizabeth St John
NMCP Public Affairs

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth and military installations within Navy Medicine East have a new asset for active-duty service members who suffer from traumatic brain injuries. The Traumatic Brain Injury and Related Disorders Mobile Assessment Unit, also known as TBIRD, is unique because it travels to where the patients are, rather than the patient traveling to NMCP.

The unit debuted at NMCP May 2 and spent the week evaluating patients stationed in Hampton Roads. As a satellite clinic of NMCP's Psychology Department, its primary function will be to assess active-duty service members with TBIs. TBIRD can travel to see patients at any military installation along the East Coast, Gulf Coast and Great Lakes.

"TBI has been described as the 'signature wound' of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan," said Capt. David E. Jones, special assistant on Wounded, Ill and Injured Care for Traumatic Brain Injury and Psychological Health, Navy Medicine East. "After nearly 10 years of conflict, an estimated 10 to 20 percent of combat veterans may have sustained some level of TBI from mild to severe injuries from IEDs and/or bullet wounds."

An interdisciplinary team of professionals including those from Mental Health, Neurology, Occupational Therapy and Recreational Therapy started meeting in October 2008 to discuss plans for the mobile unit.

"The Mobile Assessment Unit is one part of that coordinated effort that will allow us to bring neuropsychological testing services to areas and bases where we need to augment what's available through the command or community to ensure troops get better access to needed services," Jones said.

The assessment will measure cognitive function, verbal and visuospatial abilities, attention span, memory, emotional status and problem-solving skills.

"We're bringing the space to them, increasing access to care and providing better care," said Lt. Cmdr. David W. Hess, division head of Neuropsychology Service and clinical director of TBI Assessment and Rehabilitation. "We're reaching out trying to take services to where the people are."

According to Hess, most MTFs have limited capability to conduct this type of assessment.

Lt. Cmdr. David W. Hess, division head, Neuropsychology Service, and clinical director of TBI Assessment and Rehabilitation, demonstrates one of the tests used to help assess patients with traumatic brain injuries.

The testing is more thorough because of neuropsychology, which is the study of brain function. Neuroradiology looks at structural changes after a brain injury. Neuropsychology identifies the functional, cognitive and emotional changes after an injury.

Neuropsychometrists, technicians who administer and score the more comprehensive tests, will travel with the mobile assessment unit. The unit will provide something that is much needed and sometimes hard to find — a quiet, clean, temperature-controlled space where patients can concentrate without distractions during the assessment, which can last from one to eight hours depending on the situation.

"It gives us access where there is such a limited resource; this unit brings a critical service," said Tom Newmann, one of the neuropsychometrists who will be traveling with the unit.

Neuropsychologists will not travel with the unit, but will use video-teleconferencing capabilities to interview the patients prior to the mobile assessment vehicle being sent to the command. Results will be available to patients approximately one week after the assessment.

TBIs are not strictly war-related injuries. According to the Centers for Disease Control, an estimated 1.5 million Americans survive a TBI each year from motor vehicle accidents or training and sports injuries.

TBIRD's next stop is Camp Lejeune, N.C., where the team will assess those who have suffered blast injuries on the battlefield. Visits to Fort Eustis and Fort Lee are also planned.

The TBIRD Mobile Assessment Unit sports its new logo while parked in front of NMCP.

Recycling Center Makes Positive Environmental Impact

Story and photos
by MC1 Elizabeth St John
NMCP Public Affairs

April 22 was the 41st anniversary of Earth Day, a worldwide movement calling for people to make positive environmental changes in their communities. Naval Medical Center Portsmouth has been making a positive impact on the environment through its Recycling Center since 1997.

The center has recycled 118 tons of material so far this fiscal year. It is expected to recycle more than 250 tons of material in 2011. This is material that would otherwise end up in a landfill.

"The size of NMCP being what it is and the nature of what we do create much recyclable material," said Chief Machinist Mate James Rush, leading chief petty officer, NMCP Base Operations Medical Installations. "To allow these materials to fill our landfills is a discredit to our command, the city of Portsmouth and the environment as a whole."

The center recycles paper, aluminum cans, cardboard, empty toner cartridges and even wooden pallets. The recycling program not only benefits the environment, but it is also financially sound since it costs money to send trash to landfills and the recyclables provide money for the command.

ABH3 Timothy Jones crawls deep inside a cardboard recycle trailer to remove the boxes for compression.

So far this fiscal year, $13,392 has been generated in revenue. After covering the costs of operating the program, proceeds are used for environmental projects, pollution abatement and pollution prevention. Some examples include rain barrels and constructed wetlands. Any additional funds are donated to NMCP's Morale, Welfare and Recreation program.

"The Recycling Center allows the entire command the opportunity to do their part by discarding their recyclable material in the proper containers — this in turn creates a win-win situation for NMCP and the environment," Rush said.

Sailors who work in Self Help assist the Recycling Center by collecting empty toner cartridges every two to three weeks. The weight of the cartridges averages about 260 pounds each collection.

"Our hardworking Sailors develop a sense of pride knowing their efforts are having a positive effect not only for the command, but to the environment as well," Rush said.

Recycling is not only the right thing to do, but it is also instructed by the government.

"There are Presidential Executive Orders that require government personnel to recycle non-hazardous waste," said Bob Wall, environmental and natural resources manager at NMCP. "Also, there are various public laws and regulations that stress minimizing waste by maximizing recycling."

ETSN Jesus Cano loads shredded paper into a compression machine.

Recycling is easy and convenient at NMCP

White paper can be placed in the blue, 96-gallon containers located throughout the facility. There are also receptacles for aluminum cans in various locations.

Cardboard collection trailers are located between the Bldg. 2 loading dock and Bldg. 20, Bldg. 3 next to the loading dock, between Bldg. 2 and 3 on Lenah Higbee St. and between Bldg. 256 (NEX) and Bldg. 252 (Pool).

Toner cartridges can be dropped off at Bldg. 249, which is to the right of the TRICARE office.

Wooden pallets may be placed next to any cardboard recycling trailer or droped off at the Recycling Center in Bldg. 289.

For more information regarding recycling, call the Recycling Center at 953-5625 or 953-5404.

Team Communication Key to Essential Electrical System Tests, Maintenance

By Rebecca A. Perron
NMCP Public Affairs

Operation Reliable Power is now over, and, as planned, most people didn't notice.

Over a three-week period in April, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth tested and performed preventative maintenance for the electrical and back-up generator systems for the Charette Healthcare Center. The north half was tested the first week, the south half the second and the back-up generator system the third.

The completion of Operation Reliable Power ensured NMCP complies with Joint Commission accreditation and National Electric Code requirements. To minimize interruption to patient care, testing was done after outpatient clinic hours — from 6 p.m. to 4 a.m. Electricity was cut to some portion of the building for a short period each night for three weeks. Careful planning and coordination was required so that the work did not impact the medical center's surgical and inpatient wards.

Constant communication between medical staff and the engineers during the testing hours proved to be the key to the project's success.

"We walked the wards and made sure everyone knew what was going on," said Lt. Cmdr. Sam Werschky, Facilities Department head. "We pushed the pre- and post-maintenance checklist at every ward and made sure the operating rooms let us know when any affected rooms were clear of patients. We would delay testing on the breakers that affected the ORs that were in use."

"The communication was fantastic at every level," said Lt. Amy Zaycek, action officer for the project. "And teamwork was important since there were so many moving parts."

The directorates that were affected most were the directorates of nursing services, medical services, surgical services, clinical support services and administration.

"I coordinated with the directorates, from the leadership level down, to develop mitigation strategies and ensure the facilities staff understood how patients care could be affected during each step," Zaycek said. "We focused on how to keep the power up so not to impact patient care."

The focus on uninterrupted care led to developing a plan to treat cardiac patients during the week the Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory was affected. Maryview Medical Center in Portsmouth agreed to treat cardiac patients at its heart center if the need arose. It did on the last day of the project.

"We had an ambulance on deck during the week and did a dry run to make sure the process was streamlined," Zaycek said. "We did have one patient who had a heart attack and had to be transported there."

Other precautions were made, such as moving Neonatal Intensive Care Unit patients to the Labor and Delivery Post-Anesthesia Care Unit while the breakers that affected the NICU were tested. During the testing, each breaker was removed from the system, hooked up to a test bench and the electrical current level was tested.

"Through their dedication and team work, they did this with minimal patient disruption and a complete assurance of maintaining patient safety."

— Capt. Darin Via, deputy commander, NMCP

"Each breaker is rated at 800 amps and up and had to withstand that much current," said Steve Crockett, an electric engineer in the Facilities Department. "Each breaker took about two hours to test. There were more than 70 to do, so we could do about five to seven per night, depending on how much maintenance they needed."

Some breakers required cleaning of their contacts and lubrication or had some components replaced to ensure the circuit connected correctly. In all, seven units were completely replaced. Data gathered from the testing and maintenance will be presented during the next Joint Commission accreditation.

"We can't afford to have the electricity go down," Werschky said. "The success of this evolution really brought out the command's 'First and Finest' motto."

"To successfully accomplish this took a true team effort from our clinicians, clinical support staff, facilities and administrative personnel," said Capt. Darin Via, deputy commander, NMCP. "Through their dedication and team work, they did this with minimal patient disruption and a complete assurance of maintaining patient safety."

May is Asthma Awareness Month

Every day in America, 40,000 people miss school or work due to asthma, 30,000 people have an asthma attack, 5,000 people visit the emergency room due to asthma, 1,000 people are admitted to the hospital due to asthma and 11 people die from asthma.

Although there is no cure for asthma, asthma can be managed with proper prevention and treatment.

For information on the Population Health Asthma Management program, a list of resources and information about taking control of asthma, visit https://intranet.mar.med.navy.mil/PopHealth/asthmamgmt.asp.

Paint Your Heart Out

Staff Offers Services for Portsmouth ComRel

Story and photos by MC2 Nikki Smith
NMCP Public Affairs

Sailors from Naval Medical Center Portsmouth volunteered their time to the Paint Your Heart Out community relations project April 30 in Portsmouth to help families in need of home repairs.

Paint Your Heart Out is an annual event the Rotary Club of Portsmouth has hosted for the last 15 years. Each April, the Rotary Club takes applications from home owners and chooses the homes that need help the most. Many of the owners are elderly, disabled or low income and unable to do the repairs themselves. The volunteers help paint, garden and performed general renovations to the exteriors of the homes.

"The biggest thing that brought me out was the fact that I could give back to the community," said Chief Hospital Corpsman Fealofani Peau, leading chief petty officer of Indoctrination Division. "There are so many things going on all over the world, we are fighting wars and dealing with natural disasters, so it's just so great to see the military and the community coming together as one team to help out someone who is less fortunate than them."

One of the homes chosen this year is owned by Rosco and Louise Bowser. Both are physically disabled and have not been able to get up on ladders to paint or do any landscaping.

"My wife and I were so excited to be selected for the program," Bowser said. "Our house has needed this work done for some time now. We both have health problems and can't do it ourselves anymore. This just means a whole lot to us. It feels really good to have people come out on their own time just to help us."

Paint Your Heart Out volunteers worked on seven houses this year and more than 150 homes in the last 15 years. In addition to NMCP and the Rotary Club, volunteers came from the Portsmouth Police Department, Portsmouth Fire Department, Pinecrest Baptist Church and Norfolk Naval Shipyard. In total, there were more than 200 volunteers from the Portsmouth area and more than eight sponsors who paid for materials and donated food for the volunteers.

NMCP staff with homeowner Rosco Bowser during the Paint Your Heart Out community relations project in Portsmouth on April 30.

"I will absolutely come back next year," Peau said. "This was such an awesome opportunity to make a real difference in people's lives, and I can't pass that kind of opportunity up."

Portsmouth Mayor Kenneth Wright visited each homeowner chosen this year and the Portsmouth City Council presented them with plants for their newly renovated homes.

For more information about the Portsmouth City Rotary Club's Paint Your Heart Out project, visit www.portsmouthva-rotary.org/PYHO.html.

HN Kimberly Whitfield, from the Obstetrics/Gynecology Clinic, touches up the paint around the windows on Rosco and Louise Bowser's house.

HMC Fealofani Peau, leading chief petty officer of Indoctrination Division, paints the roof trim during Paint Your Heart Out on April 30.

Oakleaf Club's 'Derby Days' Auction Benefits NMCP

Story and photos
by FC3 Jovanté L. Washington
NMCP Public Affairs

Good fun and laughs — that was the atmosphere during the Oakleaf Club of Hampton Roads' "Derby Days" Auction, held April 29 at the Sandbar Club at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth.

Approximately $5,000 was raised from ticket sales and the live and silent auctions. One hundred percent of that money will benefit the Benevolence Fund, which is used to buy items that cannot be purchased with government funds. Those items are then used to improve patient care and the work environment for the staff, whether they are serving locally or deployed abroad.

Hosts Capt. Matthew Pommer, deputy chief of staff for Operations and Future Operations at Navy Medicine East, and Capt. Rick Freedman, director for Primary Care, make their grand entrance during the Oakleaf Club of Hampton Roads' "Derby Days" Auction April 29 at the Sandbar Club at NMCP.

Hosts Capt. Matthew Pommer, deputy chief of staff for Operations and Future Operations at Navy Medicine East, and Capt. Rick Freedman, director for Primary Care, entertained an audience of 62 guests during the event. Pommer and Freedman served as auctioneers for the second year and spent the night perfecting their derby auction hijinks.

"This night is a particularly special night for club members," Pommer said. "All of the members and donors who came together to make this event a successful one deserve to be applauded. The monies gathered from tonight will go to help many of the staff, patients and their families at NMCP."

More than 50 local businesses, hospital directorates and individual members of the Oakleaf Club donated the items that were packaged into 48 themed baskets for the auction. The auction included silent and live items to bid on, ranging from a weekend getaway to the Outer Banks and a quilt hand made by Oakleaf members to an original watercolor painting by Tom Dutemann and passes for Ocean Breeze Waterpark and the Hampton Roads Naval Museum. There were also gift certificates for hotels, restaurants, golf courses and movie theaters.

"The Oakleaf Club of Hampton Roads is made of members who generously donate their time, energy, and creativity to activities that enhance the quality of life at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth," said former president, Angela Nezat.

"This year we had a great turnout," said club member Shari Craig. "It's good to see our members having such a good time, and I'm sure the money raised will go to a good cause."

The club is open to spouses, active duty officers and warrant officers attached to naval medical commands in Hampton Roads, as well as retired naval medical department officers and their spouses.

Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks, NMCP commander, center, and Cmdr. James Hancock, director for Medical Services, center left, were two of the four Oakleaf Club members to participate in a horse racing trivia game while the hosts, foreground, asked the questions.

A member of the Oakleaf Club makes a bid during the silent auction portion of the event.

Skin Cancer Screening Rodeo Looks to Educate, Lower Risks

Story and photo by MC2 Riza Caparros
NMCP Public Affairs

The month of May is Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month, when attention is focused on the various forms of skin cancer. Fittingly, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's Dermatology Department held a weeklong Skin Cancer Screening Rodeo from May 2 to 6 to educate patients of the risks involved with soaking up too much sun.

According to Lt. Esther Rogers, Dermatology division officer, 263 appointments were booked, and by the end of the week, 116 patient biopsies were conducted to rule out cancerous lesions.

"With swimsuit season and summer just around the corner, plus the heightened use of tanning beds, our department is responding by offering these screenings as a way to protect and inform our patients," Rogers said.

Skin cancer is the uncontrolled growth of abnormal skin cells. If left unchecked, these cancer cells can spread from the skin into other tissues and organs throughout the body. There are different types of skin cancer, with basal cell carcinoma as the most common. Melanoma is less common, but is more dangerous.

Retired Master Chief Machinist Mate(SS) Bill Fox is a melanoma cancer survivor who came to the rodeo as part of his ongoing cancer screening program.

"I was diagnosed with melanoma after unusual spots were discovered on the side of my temple in 2005," Fox said. "They removed those small masses and also took out a few lymph nodes to make sure the cancer wouldn't spread."

Because he is a skin cancer survivor, Fox must have a full body screening every six months as a preventative measure. He is also diligent about using sunscreen when exposed to the sun, something the American Academy of Dermatology recommends.

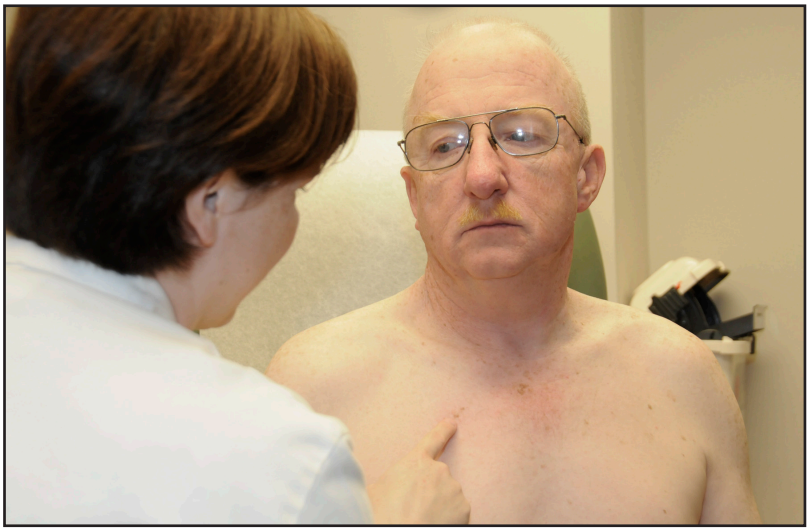
"We don't take the thought of cancer lightly. Before Bill's experience, we had no idea how deadly melanoma is or can be. Now that we are informed, we will do everything we can to protect ourselves from that scare."

— Linda Fox, cancer survivor

Fox's wife, Linda, a thyroid cancer survivor, said because of her and her husband's scares with cancer, they both actively educate friends and family about taking care of their own bodies and those they love.

"We don't take the thought of cancer lightly," Linda said. "Before Bill's experience, we had no idea how deadly melanoma is or can be. Now that we are informed, we will do everything we can to protect ourselves from that scare."

Melanoma is the most common form of cancer for young adults 25 to 29 years old and the second most common cancer in those 15 to 29 years old. Advanced melanoma can cause death as it spreads to lymph nodes and internal organs. Approximately 75 percent of all skin cancer deaths are from this form of cancer.



Lt. Cmdr. Michele J. Gonzalez, staff dermatologist, examines retired MMCM(SS) Bill Fox for unusual discolorations or areas of concern on May 4 during the weeklong Skin Cancer Screening Rodeo held by the Dermatology Department. Fox is a melanoma skin cancer survivor, after doctors discovered malignant tumors on his temple in 2005 during a skin cancer screening that year.

According to the AAD, more than two million people are diagnosed with skin cancer annually, making it the most common form of cancer in the United States.

"The statistics are depressing; however, we also want our patients to know that it is also the most preventable type of cancer out there," Rogers added.

To reduce the risk of skin cancer, the AAD recommends:

- Generously apply a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or more to all exposed skin. Reapply every two hours, even on cloudy days, and after swimming or sweating.
- Wear protective clothing such as a long-sleeved shirt, pants, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses when possible.
- Seek shade when appropriate. Remember that the sun's rays are strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

MWR Portsmouth Hosts 2nd Annual Command Challenge

By FC3 Jovanté L. Washington
NMCP Public Affairs

Portsmouth Morale, Warfare and Recreation hosted the second annual Command Challenge at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Norfolk Naval Shipyard, the Sewells Point Golf Course, and the Joint Forces Staff College from April 28 to May 5.

Seven commands participated including NMCP, Naval Support Activity Norfolk, NNSY, Maritime Expeditionary Security Squadron Six, USS Harry S. Truman, St Julian's Creek and Commander, Submarine Force Atlantic. From these commands, 19 teams took part in the nine events.

The events took place over five days with the help of about 30 MWR employees who made the event a success.

"It really is great to see so much command participation," said Chelsea Smith, a fitness representative and River's Edge Liberty Program manager. "All of the competitors ending up leaving with smiling faces and asking when then next challenge is going to be held."

Events included golf, disc golf, a Segway obstacle course, wine obstacle course, Cal Ripken hitting challenge, canopy building, kayak relay race, bowling nine pin no tap and soccer kick off.

"This was a blast," said ET1 Shredreka Cooper of the Calibration Lab at NNSY. "I think it's good having events like these, because they allow members to come out and break away from the normal hustle and bustle of things and relax a little. Not to mention it's a lot of fun!"

At the end of the challenge, MWR treated the participants to a BBQ and an awards ceremony where trophies and plaques were presented to the first through third place winners.

The challenge came down to the soccer kick off, which was the last event, and ended with a tie between NSA Norfolk's "Give Me a Reason" and COMSUBLANT's "Team Sub Ops" who had 24 points. The tiebreaker came down to the number of events each team participated in — "Give me a Reason" took first place leaving "Team Sub Ops" to take second while NNSY's "Petty Officer Haze Grey" finished third.

"Events like these are a lot of fun for our competitors and our staff," said Skip Foy, athletic director, Portsmouth Fitness and Sports. "We couldn't have asked for a greater turnout. In the future, our plan is to begin doing events like these not just annually, but hopefully up to two or three times a year."

MWR plans to hold the next challenge in the fall.

HRSD Gives NMCP Gold Award

Photo by Lt. Cmdr. Steven Aboona

For the 15th time in 18 years, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth received an environmental award from the Hampton Roads Sanitation District for outstanding environmental compliance, receiving a 2010 "Gold Award."

HRSD presented the award during a ceremony at the Renaissance Hotel in Portsmouth on May 5 to Lt. Cmdr. Samuel Werschky, Base Operations Medical Installations - Facilities Department head, Bob Wall, Environmental and Natural Resources manager, and R. Lanette Donegan, the Wastewater Program manager.

Just like all businesses and residents hooked into the sewer system, water flushed or washed down the drain at NMCP goes into the sewer and is treated at HRSD's wastewater plant. The hospital's industrial discharge permit requires monitoring and analysis of the wastewater for 37 components — 10 monthly and 27 semi-annually — ranging from arsenic to zinc to pH levels.

NMCP also received an award in recognition of overall significant pollution prevention achievements over the last few years.

'Lost' Actor Stops by NMCP to Visit Wounded Warriors

Photo by FC3 Jovanté Washington

Actor Terry O'Quinn, best known as "John Locke" from the hit TV series "Lost," dropped by NMCP to visit Wounded Warriors on May 4. O'Quinn chatted with the warriors about their experiences and he shared stories about his work before posing for a few photos.

Annual Safety Day Educates, Provides Entertain

Story and Photos by MC2 Riza Caparros
NMCP Public Affairs

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's 8th annual Safety Day was kicked off May 11 with a cake- cutting ceremony, followed by nine judges fanning out to meet with each of the participants who had created displays. They represented 41 departments throughout the medical center and outlying branch clinics.

Safety Day is held each May in advance of the 101 Critical Days of Summer, the period from Memorial Day to Labor Day when summertime activities and unsafe practices can mix, frequently resulting in an increase in injuries and deaths. Safety Day emphasizes thinking about safety while at work and at play and to raise awareness of how to stay safe during the summer months.

This year's theme, "Your Safety Is Our Business," sent the message that NMCP's Safety Office is proactive when it comes to the safety of the medical center's staff, patients and visitors. Art Vogel, NMCP's safety manager, and Lusi Moore, the assistant safety manager, said the event took months of planning and coordination, but proved worth the time and effort.

"Each display had a valuable lesson to teach," Moore said. "The participants showed a lot of enthusiasm to discuss their topic of choice and really emphasize safe practices to those who stopped by their table."

The displays covered an array of topics, from sun and home electrical safety to swimming pool and water safety.

One colorful and interactive table was created by Adm. Joel T. Boone Branch Health Clinic staff, whose topic was Alcohol-Related Car Accidents.

"We chose to cover this topic for a number of reasons," said Lt. Cmdr. Richard Myers, process improvement coordinator for the Boone Clinic Triad. "One big reason was a recent DUI within the command. We have to continue to educate and spread the word about the dangers of drinking and driving. Unfortunately, with the summer coming up, there is usually more drinking and driving."

HM1 Toni Hess, left, and HN Charles Carrol from the Director of Clinical Support Services deck out in summer gear to educate passers-by of the importance of pool safety.

Their display offered special "drunk glasses" which dramatically simulate the effects of alcohol. Onlookers were challenged to walk a straight line while wearing the glasses.

"I wish every single Sailor would take a minute to wear these glasses," said Keisha Acree, Boone Clinic Drug and Alcohol Program advisor, "so they can understand what the effects of alcohol are while they are sober."

"The displays were all informative in a very creative way," said Chief Hospital Corpsman Jannine Tobler, leading chief petty officer of the Orthopedic Department, who was one of the judges. "The presenters were enthusiastic and thorough. Judging them was very interesting."

Members of NMCP's Security Department stand with McGruff the Crime Dog next to their display at NMCP's 8th annual Safety Day May 11. Members of the Portsmouth Police Department Motorcycle Unit were also available to answer any safety questions passers-by had.

Safety Day winners were presented gift baskets donated by three local credit unions that included snacks, candy, coffee and other treats.

First place

"Medication safety and poison prevention display" — Pharmacy

Second place

"Dangers of texting while driving" — Linen Department

Third place

"Reducing SIDS — back sleeping and crib safety" — Pediatric Intensive Care Unit

Therapeutic Garden Opens, Adds Treatment Options for Patients

Story and Photos
by MC2 Riza Caparros
NMCP Public Affairs

Horticultural therapy, the process of working with plants and gardening resources for therapeutic purposes, is now a viable treatment at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth following the ribbon cutting and opening of its Therapeutic Garden on May 5.

The garden was approved and funded two years ago. After much planning, work on the 900-square foot garden progressed throughout 2010, beginning with the groundbreaking in April and its completion in the fall. On Oct. 21, with the help of volunteers from two local Lowes Home Improvement stores, more than 100 flowers, plants and vegetables were planted, and a bird bath, a trellis and garden benches were installed. Lowes volunteers worked through the "Heroes at Home" initiative, a company program that allows employees to volunteer to help military families.

The garden is adjacent to the Fisher House with two ornamental plum trees flanking its entrance. The garden was officially opened with a cut of the ceremonial ribbon. Wielding the scissors were: Capt. Darin Via, NMCP deputy commander; Cmdr. Peter Roberts, director of Surgical Services; Charles Olson, therapeutic garden lead occupational therapist; Bruce LaLonde, president and chief executive officer of the United Service Organization of Hampton Roads; and Amy Beth Johnson, Lowes district commercial account specialist for the military. They also planted one of the plum trees, which symbolize virtue and courage triumphing over tribulations.

From left, Cmdr. Peter Roberts, director of Surgical Services; Charles Olson, therapeutic garden lead occupational therapist; Capt. Darin Via, NMCP deputy commander; Bruce LaLonde, president and chief executive officer of the United Service Organization of Hampton Roads; and Amy Beth Johnson, Lowes district commercial account specialist for the military; cut the ribbon symbolizing the grand opening of NMCP's Therapeutic Garden on May 5.

The therapeutic garden was Olson's idea and creation. Olsen is a strong believer of the benefits of horticultural therapy, and said the garden will help patients maximize their healing — socially, cognitively, physically and psychologically.

"It is becoming a popular new therapy meeting great success for the patients," Olson said. "Horticultural therapy puts patients in a natural instead of a clinical environment, creating an atmosphere to relax. It has proven positive results in treating mental depression, schizophrenia, bi-polarism, traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder for our returning warriors."

"This is a proud day for the USO of Hampton Roads," said LaLonde, who was a conduit between Lowes "Heroes at Home" initiative and NMCP. "We are happy to have been a part of making this garden a reality, knowing it will bring a lot of healing to such deserving patients."

The garden modernizes a centuries-old practice that continues to treat patients today. In the 1800s, Dr. Benjamin Rush, considered to be the "Father of American Psychiatry," reported that garden settings held curative effects for people with mental illness.

Rehabilitation of war veterans hospitalized in the 1940s and 1950s was assisted by the practice of horticultural therapy. Patients at NMCP embraced the therapy before the garden opened by cultivating cuttings and plants. Now, as the patients garden, the receive care while caring for the plants.

May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month

In 2009, the CDC identified 698 confirmed and 210 probable cases of Lyme disease in Virginia. Most of the cases occurred during the summer, but ticks (which carry the disease) are already out.

To reduce your risk, avoid wooded areas with high grass, walk in the center of trails and ask the health department about tick-infested areas to avoid. Typical symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue, and a characteristic skin rash called erythema migrans.

For more info, visit www.cdc.gov/lyme.

Staff Keeps Fit during Walk at Lunch Day

Story and photos by FC3 Jovanté Washington
NMCP Public Affairs

The mood was jubilant as Naval Medical Center Portsmouth staff members stepped out for a walk on April 27 to celebrate National Walk at Lunch Day. Staff could choose how long they walked and where — around Hospital Point, around the base or inside the medical center — during the two-hour lunchtime event. Capt. Darin Via, deputy commander, NMCP, was among the 65 who choose Hospital Point.

Capt. Darin Via, deputy commander, NMCP, joins medical center staff members on April 27 to celebrate National Walk at Lunch Day with a walk around Hospital Point.

The lunchtime walking program was created by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association to encourage people to take steps toward better health by incorporating more physical activity into their daily lives.

"This was a great event for me and all of my coworkers who attended," said Bobbie Belanger, a third party collector for the Directorate for Resource Management. "It leaves us feeling refreshed and clear minded when we get ready to return to work. It's good to know that we are doing something that is not only fun, but is also good for our health."

Staff from the Department of Resource Management stretch their legs during the National Walk at Lunch Day April 27.

Calloway Recognized for 30 Years

Cassandra Calloway, financial management analyst, Director for Resources Management/Comptroller, received her pin in recognition of 30 years of federal service during a ceremony held April 15 in Bldg. 1. Calloway was presented her pin by Rear Adm. Alton L. Stocks, NMCP commander.

Calloway has worked at NMCP for six years. She began her civil service career in 2000 as an analyst at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek/Fort Story, Naval Construction Battalion. She then worked at NMCP in the Customer Service Department, processing travel claims before finally joining DRM in 2005.

Before beginning civil service, Calloway served in the Navy for 20 years, retiring in 2000.

"There is a great sense of accomplishment and pride for this recognition," said Calloway. "I think if I had the chance, I would do the same thing that I have done over the last 30 years, and that is serving my country. I truly have enjoyed all of my experiences and look forward to continuing my service."

Photo by FC3 Jovanté L. Washington

SAPR, MWR Host 'Walk a Mile in Her Shoes' Event

Story and photos by FC3 Jovanté L. Washington
NMCP Public Affairs

Men were left "feeling the pain" after they participated in the first ever Walk A Mile In Her Shoes event at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth April 29 in recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

The event was a joint effort by the Morale, Welfare and Recreation and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response team. It allowed men to walk a one-third mile course in high heels to give them a better understanding and appreciation of women's experiences.

"Our reason for doing this event today is for the education and awareness of the rising numbers of both female and male victims who are sexually assaulted," said HM1 (FMF/SW/AW) William Strickland Jr., leading petty officer of the Radiology Clinic. "The heels, for us, are a representation of the pain women who have been sexually assaulted experience."

"This walk gave me a new respect for women and what they go through," said HM1 Wayne Jackson, leading petty officer of the Orthopedics Clinic. "I guess the pain is necessary in order to understand some of the day-to-day challenges that women who have been assaulted can face."

The idea for the event was taken from the nationally recognized Walk a Mile in Her Shoes Foundation, which began in 2001. Its mission is to give men an opportunity to raise awareness in their communities, to take sexual violence seriously and work toward eliminating it.

Jacqueline Stiffler, the fitness coordinator at Portsmouth MWR, oversaw the event.

HM1 Wayne Jackson, leading petty officer of the Orthopedics Clinic, takes a break to comfort his heel-clad feet during "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes."

"We were thrilled to have so many military and civilian members participate," Stiffler said. "I never expected so many positive comments, and I am overall pleased with the goal of getting the message across in today's event. It has been a great turnout, and we look forward to making this into an annual event at NMCP and other installations."

Above: Members of the Orthopedic Clinic strut their stuff while participate in "Walk a Mile In Her Shoes."

Right: Participants show off their shoes before the "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" event.

Collins, Bultje Awarded Purple Hearts by Hejlik

Story and photo by MC2 Nikki Smith
NMCP Public Affairs

Two Marines who deployed with the 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines received the Purple Heart during a ceremony May 4 in the foyer of Bldg. 1. Lt. Gen. Dennis J. Hejlik, Commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command, presented the Marines with their awards.

Lance Cpl. David Collins, originally from Midland, Texas, and Lance Cpl. Steven Bultje of Columbus, Ohio, were given the medal for wounds suffered while deployed to Afghanistan.

Collins received his injuries Jan. 27 while conducting combat operations in Helmand, Afghanistan. He was driving an MK25 standard cargo truck, the first in a convoy of five, when his vehicle hit an improvised explosive device. Collins was the only one injured in the blast, sustaining multiple injuries to his left foot and leg.

"The Purple Heart is an honorable award, but it's an award most people don't want to get," Collins said. "I'm just happy I lived through it and I'm alive today. I still wish, though, that I could be back with my unit. My best friends are out there, and I want more than anything to be fighting with them."

Bultje was conducting a foot patrol with his unit March 5 when he stepped on an IED in Sangin, Afghanistan. Since it had been raining for two days, the IED blast was not at full explosive power, and he was the only one on the patrol who was hurt. After the explosion, Bultje began to place a tourniquet on his leg and set security among his junior Marines. He also suffered a traumatic brain injury, multiple injuries to his right leg and shrapnel in his eyes.

Lt. Gen. Dennis J. Hejlik, Commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command, pins the Purple Heart Medal on Lance Cpl. Steven Bultje during the May 4 ceremony in Bldg. 1 Bultje was injured while deployed to Afghanistan.

Lance Cpl. David Collins, who was injured while conducting combat operations in Afghanistan, was awarded the Purple Heart during a ceremony on May 4.

"My family is really important to me, and I really was fighting for them," Bultje said. "All of my sacrifices in the Marine Corps are for them. I know how much they worried while I was deployed and receiving the Purple Heart is a big deal to me, so I could let my family know that their sacrifices and support were being recognized as well."

After their injuries, both were medically evacuated and are now working toward recovery. Both said they only want to return to the Marine fleet if they can resume working in their current respective military occupational specialties.

Bldg. 1 Historical Tour

Join Al Cutchin, the command historian, for a tour of historic Bldg. 1. Tours are set for July, September and October and are limited to 30 participants. Watch the All Hands/POD for exact dates. Each tour usually fills up within a day of the announcement.

Sailor of the Quarter

As the leading petty officer of the Security Department, MA1(EXW) Jesus Rodriquez led, mentored and trained 106 Naval Security Force personnel. His leadership provided security and force protection for 6,000 staff members and 1,000 patients, guests and visitors daily. He facilitated the 2011 Auxiliary Security Force Academy, which provided 12 Sailors basic security force response training, and enabled a robust team of professionals to augment Naval Security Forces during increased force protection conditions and emergency situations. His professional competence and personal dedication increased operational efficiency and enhanced the command's emergency response capabilities.

Photos by MC1 Elizabeth St John

Junior Sailor of the Quarter

HM2(SW) Alexandria Cannon expertly led 15 personnel in the timely completion of 1,650 operational screenings, re-enlistment, separation and retirement physicals, as the assistant leading petty officer of the Executive Medicine Department at Sewells Point Branch Health Clinic at Naval Station Norfolk. As a Career Development Board team member, she completed eight CDBs and one "C" school package. Her selection for this highly competitive award sets HM2 apart as a "model Sailor and true professional." HM2's tireless efforts and commitment to excellence ensured all patients were treated with the utmost respect and professionalism regardless of rank or rate.

Blue Jacket of the Quarter

As leading petty officer of the Gastroenterology Clinic, HM3(FMF) Jesse Coddington managed the flow of 800 patients monthly, resulting in exceptional uninterrupted patient care. He supervised the clinic's standard operating procedures which greatly improved patient care standards. He also mentored and motivated nine junior Sailors while coordinating departmental advancement study sessions and pre-deployment preparations.

Civilian in the Spotlight

Choo D. Chin

Hometown: Chesapeake

Years of Civilian Service: 50 years (38 years at NMCP)

Work Center: Laboratory

Job: Microbiologist

What do you like most about your job? Doing the work I love to do in the job with a group of highly dedicated professionals.

What do you do in your off duty time/hobbies? Gardening, watching television and listening to the radio.

Favorite food? Chinese

Why he was nominated for the Civilian in the Spotlight: "Mr. Choo received his 50 years of government service pin last year," said Cmdr. Cynthia Wilkerson, "I don't know of anyone that has achieved this milestone. I think it is very rare."

Sailor in the Spotlight

Ens. Matthew Joseph Coon

Hometown: Independence, Mo.

Years of Naval Service: 5 years (3 months at NMCP)

Work Center: Laboratory (Assistant Division Officer, General Laboratory)

What do you like most about your job? The variety of challenges I face daily.

What do you do in your off duty time/hobbies? Play basketball, golf and spend time with my family.

Favorite movie? Zombieland

Favorite food? Homemade chicken pot pie

An interesting fact about you: I once worked in an ice factory that was in a cave.

Why he was nominated as Sailor in the Spotlight: "Ens. Coon is a prior enlisted sailor who left the Navy to finish his undergraduate degree," said Cmdr. Cindy Wilkerson, director, Clinical Support Services. "He then worked as a civilian for more than five years and then pursued a commission as laboratory officer. He is a great role model for our enlisted Sailors."

Photos by MC2 Nikki Smith

March Awards

NAVY & MARINE CORPS COMMENDATION MEDAL

Cmdr. Robert Strange
Lt. Cmdr. Aric Baudek
Lt. Cmdr. Victor Diaz
Lt. Karen Daum
Lt. Tina Hitchner
Lt. Andy Lum
Lt. Shannon Toth
Lt. j.g. Michael Messick
HMC(SW) Sean Gailyard
HMC(SW/AW) Venita Johnson
HM1(SW/AW) Nalani Guerrero

ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL

HM2 Juan Cabrera

NAVY & MARINE CORPS ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

Lt. Cmdr. Sonsire Meachum
Lt. Lacey Gee
Lt. John Litchfield
Lt. j.g. Kimberly Burnes
Lt. j.g. Stephanie Cabrera
Lt. j.g. Abby Jo Keith
Lt. j.g. Jacqueline Price
HM1 Benjamin Debblay
HM1(SW/FMF) Raymond Sarabia
HM1(EXW/SW) Colwyn Wiltshire
HM2 Colleen Grey
CS2(AW/SW) Jerry Marin
HM2(FMF) Jerome Warren
HM3 Kenyon Alvarez
HM3 Adrian Buddington
HM3(SW/AW) Tyran Reed
HM3 Brandon Riggs
HM3 Jenise Rivera
HM3 Amber Trochta
HN Solomon Murrell

MILITARY OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD

HMC(FMF/SW/AW) Heather Hastings
HM1(SW) Jeffrey Pearson

NAVY MERITORIOUS CIVILIAN SERVICE AWARD

Shirley Anderson
Ronald Hartman
Edward Krauss
Wanda Richardson
Paula Strickland
Steve Yevich

Five Corpsmen Commissioned into Nurse Corps

Five former hospital corpsmen were commissioned into the Navy Nurse Corps as ensigns during a ceremony on May 6 in front of Bldg. 1. Congratulations to Ens. Donald Johnson, Ens. Jamie Moore, Ens. Amarachi Nwanajuobi, Ens. Brent Phillips and Ens. Emmanuel Waddell.

All five were commissioned through the Medical Enlisted Commissioning Program and received their degrees from Norfolk State University.

Photo by MC2 Nikki Smith

Shipmate of the Month

Photo by MC2 Nikki Smith

HN Kadeem A. Short, DMS
HM3 Benjamin T. Brandt, DPE
HN Fengyuan Yu, DPC
HM3 Moriba K. Weedor, DSS
HM3 Paul A. Patryas, DCSS
HM3 Janai K. Lewis-Delk, Command Suite
HN Earl M. Frazier, DNS
HN Shamaar R. Howard, DMH
HM2 Michael E. Wenzel, DPHS
HM3 Kaimeco M. Fairfax, DFA
ABH3 Jamie L. Saltzman, DDS

Photo by MC2 Nikki Smith

Mentor of the Month

HM1 Frank Robinson, a psychological technician, reported to Naval Medical Center Portsmouth in December 2008. His Navy career began in 1994 and has taken him to a variety of duty stations along the way, including Puerto Rico; Newport, R.I.; Groton, Conn.; two deployments to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and one deployment on board USNS Comfort.

He was initially assigned to the Mental Health Inpatient Ward and recently transferred to the outpatient Psychiatry Clinic, where he is the assistant leading petty officer.

During the course of his career, Robinson has received guidance and mentoring from many sources, including chiefs, physicians, nurses and peers. Although he has four official protégés, Robinson is very approachable and mentors anyone who is willing.

He has found himself sharing his knowledge and experience on a moment's notice in places like the gym. Among his junior Sailors, his guidance is personal and usually begins with a simple query: "What are your intentions?"

Would you like to become a mentor or find a mentor? Check out the Mentor Program on the Intranet to find valuable information about mentoring at NMCP. Go to the directory website map and look under "M" to learn more and join the Mentor Program today. Everyone is welcome.