



April 2012

THE COURIER

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Portsmouth, Va.



Command Egg Hunt

— Page 10

Spanish Sailors, NMCP Staff Pay Tribute to Spaniards Buried in NMCP Cemetery

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MC3 (SW) ANNA ARNDT
NMCP Public Affairs

The Spanish navy paid tribute April 17 to three Spanish sailors who died during the Spanish-American War of 1898 and were buried in the Captain Theodore H. Conaway Memorial Naval Cemetery adjacent to Naval Medical Center Portsmouth.



Crew members of the Spanish frigate SPS Blas de Lezo salute the graves where three Spanish sailors were buried during the Spanish-American War of 1898.

Most of the Spanish attending the wreath-laying ceremony were crew members from Blas de Lezo, a Spanish ship currently

visiting Norfolk to participate in the Composite Training Unit Exercise with Carrier Strike Group 8. Rear Adm. Elaine C. Wagner, NMCP

commander, and other hospital staff members also attended.

Several years ago, the Spanish navy discovered three of their fallen shipmates were buried in the old cemetery. They had sustained injuries during the battle at Santiago de Cuba, the largest naval engagement of the war for Cuba's independence. After the battle, USS Solace boarded the wounded from USS Brooklyn and all of the Spanish wounded, steaming north to Portsmouth for medical treatment. Two of the 47 Spanish prisoners of war died from their wounds; a third died from disease. In the days before embalming, sailors were buried locally. Bodies were not shipped home.

The ceremony gave members of both navies a chance to interact and cement their shared bond.

"It's a very emotional moment," said Capt. Javier Nieto, a Spanish naval attaché. "I believe we owe a debt to these three men that have fallen in action. My grandfather was a prisoner in that war, and I feel like this is a positive revival of history. It is very nice to be here, and it's nice the U.S. Navy has supported us today."

"These ceremonies are important because they remind us of how similar we are and how much we have in common with

— See **TRIBUTE**, Page 12

Historic Bldg. 1 Tour

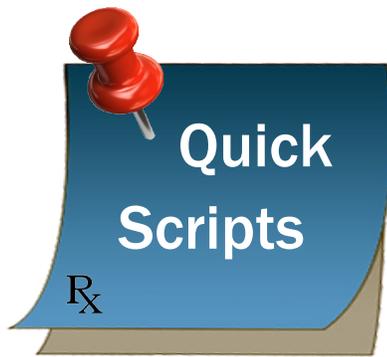
Al Cutchin, command historian, explains the history of the fifth floor of Bldg. 1 during the tour of the building on April 18.

He detailed the addition and use of the operating room on this floor before taking the group outside for a tour around the building.

Cutchin had already led the group of 15 through most of the building, including the "dungeon" below the steps at the front of the building.

Photo by MC3 (SW) Anna Arndt





Transitioning from Pediatrics into Adulthood Forum in May

Neurodevelopmental Pediatrics will host "Transitioning from Pediatrics to Adulthood" on Thursday, May 31, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Bldg. 3, 2nd Floor, Classroom 3.

Per Virginia state law, once an individual becomes 18 years old, that person is considered an adult regardless of the level of his or her disability. It is never too early for families to begin transition planning for children with severe disabilities, chronic medical conditions and other special needs.

The Transition Forum features military and civilian experts who will provide information about diverse issues associated with the children transitioning to adulthood.

This educational opportunity is available to members of all branches of the

services. There is no cost to attend. Registration is required.

For additional information contact Glenda Lewis-Fleming at: Glenda.Lewis-Fleming@med.navy.mil

Get Ready to Vote

It's not too late to register and request absentee ballots for Presidential preference and state primaries held in May and June. Voters should visit www.fvap.gov to view the Primary Election Calendar, register and request their absentee ballot.

Those who have not received a ballot 30 days prior may submit the back-up Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot at www.fvap.gov.

Many states allow ballots to be submitted electronically or give online ballot access. Voters should check their state's election website for information or candidates, elections, contact information and links to their local election offices.

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Contact NMCP's voting assistance officer, Lt. Robert A. Bartholomew at 953-5994, for assistance.

Ticket Discounts, Vacation Packages through MWR

The MWR office now has Busch Gardens and Water Country USA season passes for civilian, DoD and contract employees! A special discount for two-park annual passes is offered to active duty until May 31.

For more information, visit MWR in Bldg. 3, 2nd floor for more information about ticket prices and vacation packages, email nmcp-mwritt@med.navy.mil or call 953-5439.

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 Hampton Roads. The club is a charitable organization servicing those who benefit the Hampton Roads naval medical community. We are always happy to welcome new members.

For membership information, email tidewater.oakleaf@gmail.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.

PHS Officers at NMCP Highlighted in DoD Video

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MC2 NIKKI SMITH
NMCP Public Affairs

Public Health Service officers stationed at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth were literally in the spotlight April 19 and 20 as they were interviewed for a video showcasing the Department of Defense/Public Health Services Psychological Health Partnership.

The DoD/PHS partnership began in 2008, with its sole mission to provide mental health officers to Military Treatment Facilities. Due to increasing numbers of mental health patients, there has been a higher demand for mental health officers. This partnership allows MTFs to request PHS personnel for the positions they need filled.

Capt. Dean Coppola, U.S. Public Health Services liaison to the DoD for the behavioral health partnership, was joined by a three-man video crew to conduct interviews and shoot scenes around the medical center. The video will be used to recruit potential PHS officers, as well as an aid to leadership at Force Health Protection and Readiness.

PHS recruits psychiatrists, licensed clinical psychologists and licensed clinical social workers to fill MTF positions. Each officer is assigned to a location for three years, and is then able to choose a new MTF to transfer to.

“NMCP has the largest number of PHS officers in this program, and we wanted to make sure we were able to include them in the effort to highlight the program and show the accomplishments of the partnership,” Coppola said. This “will be instrumental in showing the value of the partnership.

Everyone who watches it will be able to see the success of the program straight from each military treatment facility.”

Before the taping, NMCP PHS officers were contacted to see if they would share their experiences with the partnership.

Lt. Cmdr. Jonathan Lewis, Lt. Carolyn Bui, and Lt. Cmdr. Ingrid Pauli are PHS officers who work in the mental health department at NMCP. Each was videotaped for interviews, and then led the video team to their working areas in the Psychiatry Department, Traumatic and Operation Stress Services Clinic and Occupational Therapy.

PHS chose NMCP as one of its three locations for the video because of the high volume of officers assigned here. Most military treatment facili-

ties have fewer than five PHS officers; there are 12 assigned to NMCP. Capt. Kevin Kennedy, director for Mental Health, requested each officer to maximize NMCP’s participation in the program.

“We have been very lucky in building up a high number of PHS members at NMCP,” Kennedy said. “We love our PHS



The video crew tapes Lt. Cmdr. Ingrid Pauli of the Psychiatry Clinic and Capt. Thomas Costello, head of Psychiatric Social Work, holding training on the stress continuum model for use in the DoD/PHS Psychological Health Partnership video.

officers. They have been instrumental in our mission readiness, and it is concerning what we would not have been able to do without their presence here. They are always there to step in when one of our officers deploys, and are critical to the day-to-day workings of the mental health department.”

The crew began shooting April 10 at Womack Army Medical Center in Fort Bragg, N.C. The last stop was scheduled to be completed April 18 at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio. The completed video will be eight to 12 minutes long, and will incorporate scenes and interviews from all three medical centers. When finished, it will be available for viewing on the PHS website, www.usphs.gov.

“We love our PHS officers. They have been instrumental in our mission readiness.”

— Capt. Kevin Kennedy, director for Mental Health



Lt. Carolyn Bui, left, an occupational therapist in the NMCP’s Occupational Health Clinic, speaks with Angshu Mojumder during an on-camera interview. The video about the Do/PHS Psychology Health Partnership will be used as a recruitment tool for potential PHS officers.

Nti Commissioned into Medical Service Corps

STORY AND PHOTOS

BY MC1 (SW/AW) STEVEN J. WEBER
NMCP Public Affairs

The Navy Medical Service Corps welcomed a new member to its ranks March 19, when former Hospital Corpsman First Class Fred D. Nti was commissioned an ensign during a ceremony in the main chapel at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth.

Cmdr. David Collins, director for Administration, was the guest speaker and Cmdr. Gabriel Brown, assistant director for Administration, gave the oath of office. Nti's wife, Xaviera, placed his shoulder boards, while his daughter, Cassandra, presented his cover.

Nti said he chose to apply to be officer "to be able to use my experience and educational knowledge to contribute to the mission of the Navy and the course of the United States of America."

Nti began his career as an undesignated deck seaman aboard USS Sacramento, where he spent his time after hours getting on-the-job training from a hospital



Ensign Fred D. Nti gets emotional as he thanks his wife, Xaviera, and those who helped him become an officer.

corpsman. He also qualified as an enlisted surface warfare specialist.

His drive to succeed continued after he became a hospital corpsman, completing tours with 2nd Marine Division to the Mediterranean, and Central and South America, as well as Iraq. While on shore duty at Branch Health Clinic Lakehurst, N.J., he earned bachelor's degrees in Marketing and Health Care Administration from Park University in Parkville, Mo.

In 2008, while working with Maritime Civil Affairs Squadron Two, Nti completed his Masters Degree in Health Care Administration from University of Maryland University College, Md., and began to apply for an officer program.

"When I got accepted, this was my third time to apply," Nti said. "I started applying in 2008, but skipped 2010 due to a deployment. For the application for 2011, I started working on it in January 2011 upon reporting to the command, even though the package was not due until August 2011."

Finding the right people to support and provide guidance was one of the benefits Nti found at NMCP.

"It is a very competitive process and you need the optimum support and guidance to excel, not from one person but a group of people to review your package and provide positive advice and counseling," Nti said.

"I believe Ensign Fred Nti has demonstrated relentless and persistent dedication to excelling during his Navy career overall," said Cmdr. Gabriel Brown, who also mentored Nti. "His quest to become a Navy leader started over 14 years ago. It's incredible to imagine a person who has maintained his level of performance and completed three degrees and, amazingly, six military deployments. Ensign Nti's



Ensign Fred D. Nti's wife, Xaviera, places his shoulder boards with help from Cmdr. Gabriel Brown, assistant director for Administration.

career has been exceptional and impressive! I look forward to serving with him as a naval officer!"

Nti's advice to anyone trying to become an officer is to never quit.

"No matter how challenging and tedious the application process becomes, never give up," Nti said. "Take all inputs to be positive and take what is applicable. Never be discouraged. Be determined and pray for the right people to come your way."

Nti added "I will be willing to support and provide guidance to anyone willing to take the same route."

Nti's will attend the Officer Development School in Newport, R. I., and then to his first assignment as an officer with the 4th Force Service Support Group in Hampton Roads.



Daughter Cassandra places her dad's new cover during the March 19 ceremony.

NMCP Celebrates Women's History Month with WAVES

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MC2 NIKKI SMITH
NMCP Public Affairs

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth staff observed Women's History Month March 28 with a celebration hosted by the Diversity Committee in the command chapel.

After a traditional event opening of the National Anthem and invocation, five Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service served as the guest speakers, each one entertaining the large crowd that gathered during the hour celebration with their sea stories. They each talked about their experiences and showed off uniform items and photos from their time as Navy WAVES.

Dassa Carvey, WAVES National president, Jo-Anne Teel, Elizabeth Morrison, Linda Mitchell, and Gabriella Morisson, all members of WAVES unit 152, all emphasized how much they enjoy seeing what women in today's Navy can do, and each one was excited about the opportunity to speak to NMCP staff to recognize Women's History Month.

Elizabeth Morrison joined the Navy in 1961 and served 27 years. Even through the challenges of being a woman in the service, she said she loved her time in the Navy and that the people she met and worked with were the best part of her service. Morrison said she is consistently amazed at the things she sees women doing in the military now. She was especially excited during her travels

as a speaker to see a female pilot of an F/A-18 Hornet.

"Women in the Navy have come a long way. You didn't do it alone, you've been able to do all the amazing things you have standing on the shoulders of the women before you," Morrison said, speaking directly to the women at the gathering. "Things have changed so much since I was a Sailor; now, there's really nothing you can't do."

The women also commented on how different the uniforms are now, from to what they were required to wear. As part of a visual representation of their time in the Navy, the WAVES brought two vintage uniforms to show the audience. One was a light blue cotton top and skirt, the other a blue and white striped seersucker dress. While Carvey talked, she showed off the Navy-issued pantyhose they were had to wear with their uniforms, complete with a seam up the back, explaining that the seams were required to be perfectly straight.

Carvey enlisted in 1963 as a journalist, advancing to journalist 2nd class before she decided to leave the service. She joined the WAVES National in 2000, and after discovering there was no Hampton Roads unit, she decided to charter one. The Tidewater Tidal WAVES were born in 2002, and now have more than 80 regular members.

"I love coming out to speak to the different commands and seeing all of our women in uniform; talking to and encour-



Elizabeth Morrison displays a vintage Navy uniform while speaking to NMCP staff during the Women's History Month celebration in the chapel on March 28.

aging the young ladies is just amazing." Carvey said. "I'm really trying to keep our history alive. If you know where you have come from, you know that there is no limit."

Hospitalman Starr Whitenack, from Director of Medical Services and a Diversity Committee member, had a large role in coordinating the event and was passionate about having the WAVES come out to tell their Navy stories.

"As a woman in the Navy, I know we have come a very long way," Whitenack said. "I really wanted to have a hand in making this day happen because I know it's easy to forget the history. We just forget to stop and think about where we have come from and about the people who paved the way for us women in the military. I am really happy and proud at how many people came to our event, and I couldn't be more thrilled about the WAVES being here to talk to us."



Gabriella Morrison, WAVES unit 152, chats with NMCP staff while showing off photos and old uniform items at the Women's History Month Celebration March 28. Morrison served from 1975 - 1981 and spoke to staff about her experiences in the Navy.

Red Cross Volunteers Recognized during Annual Awards Ceremony

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY MC3 (SW) ANNA ARNDT
NMCP Public Affairs

Volunteers of the American Red Cross Portsmouth Station were honored during the annual Volunteer Recognition ceremony in the Red Cross office in Bldg. 3 on April 3. Twenty-two volunteers were acknowledged with a presentation of certificates, including two awards.

During 2011, 126 volunteers at NMCP contributed 24,128 hours, saving the medical center more than \$361,900.

“The American Red Cross would not be able to operate as we do without volunteers,” said Red Cross station manager Betty Ridgeway. “It has been said the

volunteers are the heart of the Red Cross and that is so very true.”

Cmdr. David Collins, director for Administration, spoke at the beginning of the ceremony, telling the volunteers how important they are and praising of the impact they have on the hospital’s mission and patients.

Collins then presented the certificates to the volunteers, followed by individual awards. Charlotte Beard received the Exceptional Volunteer Service Award (volunteer of the year) for spending about 16 hours a week volunteering at NMCP. Beard began volunteering at NMCP in October 2004, spending most of the time as the chairman of records and chairman of volunteers.

Beard now works in the NMCP Red Cross office, handling records and training the current chairman of records.

“I retired from working full time and started volunteering while I was at Fort Carson, (Colo.), when my husband was stationed there, and I really got to liking it,” Beard said. “It’s something everyone should do once they retire. I like working with people, and it gave me a purpose, a chance to give back.”

Elizabeth Schumann received



Charlotte Beard was awarded Volunteer of the Year during the American Red Cross award ceremony held at NMCP April 3.

the second award for her work as chairman of the Teen Summer Program. She has volunteered with the Red Cross for five years, and four of those years she served as chairman of the youth program.

“When we get all the applications in, we place the kids into different units depending on their area of interest,” said Schumann. “If they say ‘I want to go into Pediatrics’ I try to get them into Pediatrics.”

Schumann said she gets a lot out of being involved, knowing it’s important to give kids an opportunity.

“It benefits the kids; it gives them the opportunity to do some volunteer work, which a lot of them need for their college applications, and to see if they might be interested in a medical career,” Schumann said. “I love working with the kids, and I love what I can give back to the hospital.”



Elizabeth Schumann receives an award for her work as Director of the Summer Teen Program during the American Red Cross award ceremony held at NMCP April 3.

PSD Staff Play Easter Bunny, Bring Smiles to Wounded Warriors

NMCP’s Personnel Support Department staff put together and distributed 13 Easter baskets April 4 to the patients of the Wounded Warrior Battalion-East Detachment Portsmouth to show appreciation for their hard work and sacrifices. Each basket contained hygiene items, a notebook, a gift card and treats. PSD staff often make and distribute gifts for the joy of seeing the smile on their recipient’s face. Here PSD staff present an Easter basket to Wounded Warrior Lance Cpl. Collin Stanford.

Photo by SN Nina Howard



Donated Van to Benefit Wounded Warriors, Families

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MC3 (SW) ANNA ARNDT
NMCP Public Affairs

The Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Wounded Warrior Battalion-East Detachment Portsmouth and their families now have easily accessible transportation to use for running errands, enjoying local attractions and exploring Hampton Roads as of March 28.

Checkered Flag Toyota donated a wheelchair-accessible van to the USO of Hampton Roads and Central Virginia during a ceremony held at NMCP's Friendship Therapy Garden near the Fisher House for use at NMCP.

"Checkered Flag donating this van to the USO will be beneficial to the wounded warriors and their families," said Cmdr. David Collins, director for Administration. "Portsmouth is geographically isolated, and this will allow them to be more mobile throughout the region."

The van's mobility access seat uses wireless technology that guides it out of the vehicle and is lowered to the ground and, after the passenger is seated, lifts and repositions itself in the vehicle. This enables a passenger using crutches or a wheelchair to enter the van with ease.

"We're really excited to help out," said Tim Rayfield, Checkered Flag Toyota general manager. "They're great people, they have a need and they make a tremendous sacrifice, so we're just glad to do it. Initially, Toyota came out with a van that had a mobility access seat, and it was through the learning of its operation that we thought this might have some application in the community."

Family members, USO staff and wounded Sailors and Marines watched as several wounded warriors unveiled the van by removing the large checkered flag that was covering it.

Melissa Marshall, Marine Corps Liaison deputy officer in



The custom-painted Toyota Sienna minivan donated by Checkered Flag Toyota March 28 has an auto access seat and will be used by Wounded Warriors and their families for transportation while at the medical center.

charge, said the van will also benefit the families of the wounded warriors, who are often visiting from other parts of the country and have no access to transportation.

"A lot of the time all of the focus is on the warrior themselves, when the families are going through just as much heartache and stress," Marshall said. "What this will enable us to do is give the families a way to get out, to get off base and travel around."

The van will be driven by members of the USO, and will be available to wounded warriors and their families regularly. It will be kept at NMCP for quick access.

This is the second van Checkered Flag has provided for wounded service members — the first van was donated to the Navy Mobilization Processing Site at Naval Station Norfolk on Aug. 4.



Reading Volunteers Ease Children's Fears

Kathryn Pruden, an American Red Cross volunteer, reads to Olivia Self, 5, while she waits in the Pediatrics Clinic waiting room for an appointment on March 20. Volunteers read to children to help reduce the anxiety they may feel about their visit to the doctor.

Photo by Rebecca A. Perron

New Non-Profit Brings Comfort to NMCP's Infusion Patients

STORY AND PHOTO BY REBECCA A. PERRON
NMCP Public Affairs

Patients undergoing chemotherapy and other treatments at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's Ambulatory Infusion Center have a reason to be a little more comfortable during their treatment — a non-profit organization has been established to donate homemade comfort items to them.

Rebecca Davis started the Military Heroes Comfort Project a few weeks ago and stopped by the AIC March 20 to drop off the first batch of donated items: four quilts and 29 hats.

"I decided to start the non-profit after talking to a pancreatic patient here," said Davis, a licensed professional counselor and marriage and family therapist. "He said that the unit wasn't able to provide these types of comfort supplies. As a counselor, I feel it is therapeutic to have comfort items during treatment."

The AIC sees 20 to 30 patients a day and 10 to 15 chemotherapy patients a week, providing care for a variety of conditions, including Crohn's disease, multiple sclerosis and fibromyalgia, as well as pain management. All treatments are given intravenously, which can make a patient cold. Many of the infusions take six to eight hours as patients receive two to three liters of fluids.

"If they forget to bring a quilt, or have lost a lot of weight, it

can be hard for them to stay warm," said Lt. Penelope Heiges, the AIC's division officer. "These quilts will help keep them comfortable, and the hats will go to patients who are losing their hair."

Davis, along with her fiancé, Chief Warrant Officer Bill Hodges, Naval Ocean Processing Facility at Dam Neck, are trying to spread the word about the organization, hoping that many in the community will join their effort.

"In addition to quilts and hats, we are looking for afghans, knitted slippers and prayer shawls," Davis said. "For those who don't knit or sew, they can send supplies for others to make them."

"We are also looking for stamps," Hodges added. "We include self-addressed stamped envelopes with the items so the recipient can send a thank you letter to the person who made it."

AIC staff was grateful for the donation, as they know firsthand how important it is for their patients to be comfortable.

"It would be helpful in any health care setting, civilian or military, to have these things on hand," Heiges said. "It's a great thing to help the military families who are already coping with so much, to help them cope with one more struggle."

Until the non-profit grows, Davis will focus on AIC patients, but hopes that someday soon she will be able to donate comfort items to patients receiving treatments in other areas of the medical center.



Four blankets and 29 hats were donated to the Ambulatory Infusion Center or chemotherapy patients and others receiving treatment through an IV. Rebecca Davis, second from left, is a licensed professional counselor who recently started the non-profit organization, Military Heroes Comfort Project, to provide comfort items to patients at NMCP undergoing such treatment.

Silent Auction Benefits Portsmouth Nurses Assn.

Members of the Portsmouth Nurses Association set up baskets for their silent auction in Bldg. 3 on April 4. The money raised will go to the fund that pays for their events. The Portsmouth Nurses Association is a non-profit, Tidewater-area group to bring military and civilian nurses together to preserve the traditions and history of nursing at NMCP.



Photo by MC3 (SW) Anna Arndt

Retiree Credits Navy Doctors With Saving Her Life

Years of Undiagnosed Pain Finally Resolved

BY MC1 ELIZABETH ST JOHN
NMCP Public Affairs

Retired Navy Journalist First Class April Brown spent years in excruciating pain — pain that no one could explain. For more than 10 years, she dealt with the pain she likened to a sucker punch. She feared she would lose her job; she feared she would lose her life.

It began in 1999. She was seen at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and went through all sorts of kidney tests with no answer as to the cause of her pain. For years her pain went unexplained, even when she transferred to Norfolk for sea duty in 2004. Still she had no answers.

"I had nowhere to turn," said Brown, public affairs specialist with Navy Region Mid-Atlantic.

Brown was finally diagnosed in 2009 at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth by Urology Department Head Dr. Paul McAdams with a very rare kidney disease known as Loin Pain Hematuria Syndrome or LPHS.

"I have had quite a journey with my kidneys and numerous civilian and military docs didn't know what to do with me," said Brown. "I started getting treated at the Urology Clinic at Portsmouth a couple of years ago. Dr. McAdams helped me get diagnosed, sent my records to the Mayo Clinic who is supposed to be the best of the best, and they didn't know what to do with me."

"There wasn't an obvious surgical or mechanical problem," said McAdams. "We had done multiple x-ray tests but there is no test for LPHS. It's pretty hard to diagnose."

LPHS is a kidney disorder characterized by persistent or recurrent loin pain and blood in the urine. Many people with LPHS are unable to keep their jobs due

to the debilitating pain.

"It's a horrendous disease," said Brown. "One year ago, I was a hot mess. I was in so much pain. I was at the point where I could not function. I could barely work."

When McAdams had to transfer from NMCP for a fellowship, Brown became the patient of Dr. Jamey Sarvis, currently stationed at Naval Medical Center San Diego.

"Dr. Sarvis went to great lengths to find out what was wrong with me and he told me he would help me," said Brown. "Between Dr. McAdams and Dr. Sarvis, they did just about every kidney test known to man."

"Dr. Sarvis did a test that showed my kidneys falling into my abdominal cavity when I was standing up, which literally explained a lot of my symptoms."

Sarvis told Brown he could get her out of pain.

According to Dr. Alison Christie, Urology Department staff surgeon, Brown had what they call ptotic kidneys, which means they are abnormally situated in the pelvis. Not everyone with LPHS has ptotic kidneys, but this is what was causing

more pain for Brown, compounding what she would have felt if she only suffered

from LPHS. She described the pain as excruciating and lasting for days.

"I commend Dr. Sarvis for helping her with her problem, because a lot of people missed it," said Christie.

Brown stated that within 45 minutes of finding the cause of her pain, she had



her first surgery scheduled. On April 14, 2011, Sarvis performed a nephropexy — stitching the kidney to the back muscle wall — with Christie assisting. The surgery is done only on extreme cases and requires chain-of-command approval. Christie took over Brown's care after Sarvis transferred to San Diego and performed her second surgery Oct. 16.

Brown found support online through her long ordeal. Websites such as Living with LPHS and LPHS — Our Right to Fight enabled her to draw strength and inspiration from other sufferers of LPHS.

"Without the group, it would be a very rough ride...emotionally," said Brown. "It is not a fun disease, it is rare, and the group has really bonded. We are like a family, because when no one else understands us, we understand each other. That in itself is priceless."

Brown's journey back to health has been a long one.

"Some people don't even survive the whole journey," Brown added. "I'm extremely, extremely grateful for my Navy docs. They literally gave me my life back."

"I'm extremely, extremely grateful for my Navy docs. They literally gave me my life back."

— April Brown

Command Egg Hunt

PHOTOS BY REBECCA PERRON
NMCP Public Affairs

Candy and prizes inside more than 4,100 plastic eggs were at stake during the annual Command Egg Hunt on March 31, when about 150 kids scrambled around Hospital Point looking for eggs. During the two-hour event, the kids could visit the Easter Bunny, eat snow cones, hamburgers or hotdogs, get their face painted, and take a turn in the bouncy castle.

After the egg hunt, the Easter Bunny made an appearance in the Pediatrics Ward, handling out baskets filled with toys and candy to a dozen children.

The event was sponsored by the Oakleaf Club, Chief Petty Officers Association, First Class Petty Officers Association, the Junior Enlisted Associated, Morale, Welfare and Recreation and Navy Federal Credit Union.



Soon-to-be Spiderman Jack Phillips, 4, giggles as the paint brush tickles his face, while his brother, Grayson, 6, waits for his Batman face paint to dry. They are the sons of Lt. Ryan Phillips, an anesthesia resident.



Left: The Easter Bunny high fives down the line of 3 – 5 years olds waiting to start the egg hunt.



Rear Adm. Elaine C. Wagner, NMCP commander, and her husband, Greg, with the Easter Bunny just before they visited the children in the Pediatrics Ward to hand out Easter baskets.



Children take turns jumping in the bouncy castle.

Right: Isabella Spence, 6, daughter of Cmdr. Kenneth Spence, an NMCP nurse anesthetist, gets her face painted during the Command Egg Hunt.

Far right: Jazlin Davis, 5, (right) and Miranda McCord, 9, with the Easter Bunny.



Brian Cortes, 8, and his sisters Melanie, 6, and Hannah, 3, with their balloon animals. They are the children of Lt. Emilio Cortes of the Office of Emergency Management.



Children in the 6-to-8-year-old group scramble for their share of the eggs hidden on Hospital Point.



Far left: Falon Persley, 16, with the bunny after he presented her with an Easter basket.

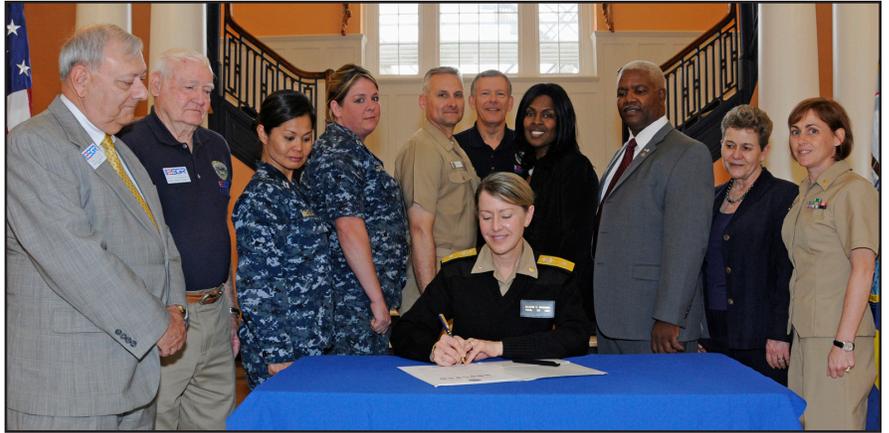
Left: Lukas Trossbach, son of HM2 Stephanie Trossbach of the Emergency Department, shows off his snow cone.



Employer Support of Guard and Reserve Statement Signed

Rear Adm. Elaine C. Wagner, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth commander, signs a formal Statement of Support on April 18 for the Employer Support of Guard and Reserve with representatives from the ESGR present. By signing the statement, it offers employers a way to demonstrate support for employees in the reserves or National Guard and pledges to honor the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act.

Photo by MC3 (SW) Anna Arndt



WREATH LAYING — Continued from page 1

other navies,” Wagner said. “The Spanish navy deeply appreciates the sacrifices their sailors made for their country, just as we appreciate our Sailors.”

The ceremony began with a short memorial prayer conducted by chaplains of both navies, followed by the wreath laying and remarks by Nieto and Vice Adm. Antonio Hernandez Palacios, the Spanish senior officer at NATO – Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk. The wreaths’ red and yellow flowers echoed the colors of the Spanish flag.

“They wanted to remember and honor them on this day, just as we here in the U.S. want to honor our fallen heroes,” Wagner continued. “There was a very personal feeling to the event that was felt by all participants, U.S. and Spanish. We all mourned the loss of the three sailors while celebrating their bravery and dedication.”



Crew members of Spanish frigate SPS Blas de Lezo lay wreaths on the graves where three Spanish sailors were buried during the Spanish-American War of 1898.

ing room was at the time for those who needed surgery. Most of the patients had burn wounds from the battle. During the tour,

After the wreath laying, command historian Al Cutchin showed about 35 Spanish guests where their shipmates would have been treated in the old hospital and the view they would have had.

“I pointed out to them where along Hospital Point the Solace would have anchored and where in the hospital they stayed,” Cutchin said. “An interpreter translated what I was saying as we went. I also showed them where the operat-

I found out the great-grandfather of one of the sailors from the Blas de Lezo was one of the patients.”

The Spanish patients reported that they were treated with kindness, despite being prisoners of war, having fought against the U.S.



Wreaths adorn the graves where three members of the Spanish navy are interred in the Captain Theodore H. Conaway Memorial Naval Cemetery at NMCP.

“While the practice of medicine has changed dramatically, the values and compassion that our providers and support staff exhibit have not,” Wagner said. “We are — and have always been — committed to the healing arts and will always willingly provide high quality, compassionate care to all who are in need of our services, including enemy combatants. It was heartwarming to hear Vice Adm. Hernandez speak of his country’s gratitude for the care that the naval hospital rendered to eight Spanish sailors so many years ago, when our country was at war with Spain.”

Despite the two navies being on opposite sides more than a century ago, the Spanish and American sailors found common ground at a memorial service.

“As Vice Adm. Hernandez and I spoke, it was remarkable to discover how similar our Navy jobs are,” Wagner added. “We discussed our admiration for the men and women who serve in our respective navies today and how proud we are to represent them. Vice Adm. Hernandez entered my office as a stranger, but left as a friend.”



Sea of Whites

The Department of Nursing Services had their departmental dress whites uniform inspection under a gorgeous morning sky on April 4 in front of Bldg. 1. Following the inspection, the department gathered for a group photo on the steps of Bldg. 1.



Photos by MC3 (SW) Anna Arndt

DMH Uniform Inspection



Photos by SN Nina Howard

Due to the drop in temperatures, the Department of Mental Health conducted its dress whites uniform inspection in the main gym April 5. The department gathered for a group photo after the inspection.



Holocaust Survivor Recalls Experiences, Interjects Humor

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY MC1 ELIZABETH ST JOHN
NMCP Public Affairs

It's rare that a subject as somber as the Holocaust is joked about. But that was the case when the Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Command Diversity Committee brought Holocaust survivor Thomas Weissshaus to speak to a standing-room-only crowd in the chapel April 19 as part of the Holocaust Days of Remembrance.

Capt. Darin Via, NMCP deputy commander, introduced Weissshaus and thanked him for coming to speak.

"It's easy to feel slightly detached from those days and the horrors that took place," Via said. "To have a first-hand account of those who survived is essential to aid us in remembering the lives lost, to inspire us with courage and to empower us to make a difference."

Weissshaus wrote "Not a Victim! Tales of Survival in Budapest," an account of his experiences as a teenager during the Nazi occupation of Budapest in 1944 to 1945.

Weissshaus told the crowd that he

speaks in public about things he lived through "so you will experience what it was like to actually see the devil face to face."

Before relating his story, he showed the film "Tell Your Children," which re-enacted events of the last few weeks of World War II. The brutal film showed Jews being taken to the Danube River and gunned down. A young girl manages to escape; fast forward many years later and the girl's seen as an old woman being harassed by Nazi sympathizers as she walks down the street.

Weissshaus said those events took place only one block from where he lived. "I could see the red color spreading on the Danube River," he said.

As he spoke of the Holocaust, Weissshaus would crack a joke every now and then, as if in an attempt to keep people's spirits up.

He recalled how it started. He and some friends went to see a jazz band play on a beautiful sunny morning. He joked about Europeans attempting to play American jazz, but he said, "It's all we had."

When he came out of the concert hall several hours later, the Germans had invaded Budapest. Tanks, motorcycles and soldiers filled the streets. All Jews were forced to move to designated apartment buildings to make it easier for the Germans to eventually get them on trains going to the concentration camps.

He told a tale of running through the streets with a big bowl of bread dough, trying to get to the bakery so they would bake it for him. While waiting in the queue (everyone wanted their bread baked), the building across the street



Thomas Weissshaus, the author of "Not a Victim! Tales of Survival in Budapest," tells of his experiences as a teenager during the Nazi occupation of Budapest in 1944 - 1945.

was bombed. Luckily, Weissshaus was unscathed. But the bakery's window was blown out by the explosion. Weissshaus ran in, threw down his dough, said, "Bake this!" and ran away.

While the bread was baking, he man-

Holocaust Remembrance Day - Yom Hashoah - commemorates the actions of rescuers during the Holocaust.

aged to slip into an abandoned movie theater where he ran into a pretty young blonde. (He started to give the audience more detail on his encounter with the blonde, but refrained.) Weissshaus went back to the bakery about an hour later; there was no one in sight but his bread was on the counter, baked and ready to be picked up.

Even though he narrowly escaped some close calls, Weissshaus said he never thought about his life being at stake.

But Weissshaus said he owes his life to Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat who rescued approximately 100,000 Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust, issuing Swedish passports to many and housing other in buildings designated as "Swedish territory."

Once the Nazis invaded Hungary, Weissshaus and his uncle had been required to join the Work Service. They were released mysteriously in November



Guest speaker Thomas Weissshaus speaks with Capt. Rick Freedman, director for Primary Care/Branch Clinics, after his presentation in the chapel April 19.

NMCP Trains LSS Champions

NMCP sets sights on sea duty screening process improvement

STORY AND PHOTO

BY MC1 (SW/AW) STEVEN J. WEBER
NMCP Public Affairs

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth and Navy Medicine East conducted the Lean Six Sigma Champions course at NMCP on March 28, adding a second class to this year's schedule. The course is normally given once a year; a class had already been facilitated in February.

Lean Six Sigma is a combination of two business improvement techniques. Lean focuses on eliminating waste and constantly shortening the cycle time. Six Sigma has a focus on quality and variability reduction. The combination of the two methodologies helps improve lead time, cost and quality.

An LSS Champion is a high-ranking manager who works with a "black belt" to ensure that barriers to a successful are removed and the project team has the organizational support it needs to be effective.

The training for Lean Six Sigma is provided through the belt-based ranking system similar to that of Six Sigma. The belt personnel are designated as white, yellow, green, black and master black belts. The champions course is the highest level offered.

With 26 staff at both sessions, the February class was attended mostly by senior leaders, while the March class drew more mid-level managers.



The 26 staff and NMCP and NME Lean Six Sigma facilitators after the completion of the Lean Six Sigma Champions course on March 28.

"Educating our senior leaders about Continuous Performance Improvement and Lean Six Sigma is an important step in shaping the organization's cultural focus on quality, safety, customer satisfaction and cost-readiness," said Capt. Carla Stang, Continuous Performance Improvement and Regional Lean Six Sigma black belt for Navy Medicine East. "The senior leaders' roles are to ensure that necessary resources are available to the CPI/LSS project teams while monitoring the implementation and sustainment of CPI across the organization."

NMCP currently has a team working on issues with the sea duty screening process, championed by Capt. Rick Freedman, director for Primary Care/Branch Clinics.

"We have an opportunity to change Navy Medicine, to standardize the way sea duty screenings are done across all MTFs so that the end user, the war fighter, gets a better product, and we can be assured we are doing the right thing, consistently

across the board," said Freedman.

His goal for the team is to make sea duty screenings a sustainable system that standardizes not only the training, but the operation of sea duty screenings across Navy Medicine that lasts far beyond any one's tenure. The LSS team will continue to look at the process with new sets of eyes to ensure it is always using the best practice.

"The Beauty of Lean Six Sigma is you get to the root of the problem," Stang said.

As a combined entity, LSS has been on the scene since the 1990s. Since then, LSS has enabled organizations to reduce total costs by 25 percent by eliminating wasted time and activities from operations. Reducing the waste has also been shown to improve the quality of the organization's products. Most importantly, LSS builds foundations within organizations that stimulate and nurture cultures of continuous improvement, providing benefits into the future.

HOLOCAUST — *Continued from previous page*

1944. His mother continuously moved him from safe house to safe house. Wallenberg issued a "certificate of protection" in Weissshaus' name, allowing him to survive the rest of the war. Sadly, when he returned home, his mother, grandmother, aunt and cousin had been taken away by the Nazis.

After the war, Weissshaus found work in the U.S. Army at a displaced persons camp. As an orphan of the Holocaust, he was eligible to apply for a U.S. passport. He emigrated to

the United States in 1947, settling in New England where he taught high school and university English for 33 years.

At the end of his talk, Weissshaus gave each audience member a copy of his book, adding, "There are lots of books that are going to be available if you just become a Jew."

Weissshaus then spoke individually with audience members. He said that it took him 50 years before he spoke in public about his experiences. His visit to NMCP was one of his first speaking engagements outside New England.

Barracks Residents Treated to Cook Out after Monthly Field Day

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SN NINA HOWARD
NMCP Public Affairs

A sunny afternoon was the setting for the First Class Petty Officers Association's BEQ BBQ Bash, cooked up in conjunction with the barracks clean up on March 29. The FCPOA wanted to show their appreciation for the hard work the barracks residents have done recently to keep the building clean.

While the residents cleaned — including sweeping and swabbing stairwells, scrubbing walls and picking up trash in the common spaces — the first classes fired up the grill and prepared refreshments. After the field day, spot room inspections were conducted before the residents headed to the grill to grab a hamburger or hot dog.



Members of the FCPOA serve a hard-working barracks resident with a hamburger.



HM1 (SW/AW) Bryant Hare, right, along with other members of the FCPOA, mans the grill while the residents of the barracks prepare to line up for food after the barracks clean up on March 29.



HN Ara Sandel, a barracks resident, does her part to get the barracks clean during the March 29 clean-up.

Officers of the Year Awarded



Photo by SN Nina Howard

NMCP's Officers of the Year were presented their certificates by Rear Adm. Elaine C. Wagner, NMCP commander, April 20 in Bldg. 1. Recognized were, front from left, Lt. Cmdr. Kerri Browne, Lt. Cmdr. Jill Maldarelli-Drey, and back row from left, Lt.j.g. Lynette Galgano, Lt. Cmdr. Alexander Holston and Cmdr. Lanny Littlejohn.

Senior to j.g. to Lieutenant in Four Months

STORY AND PHOTO
BY MC1 ELIZABETH ST JOHN
NMCP Public Affairs

Since the year began, Lt. Pamela Gregory has held three different ranks.

The registered dietician began 2012 as a senior chief. On Jan. 7, she was commissioned into the Medical Service Corps, concluding a two-year journey to become an officer. Then, on April 17, Gregory was promoted to lieutenant at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's Bldg. 1 flagpole.

Gregory's military career is long and diverse: She enlisted in the Army as a field medic and served in the first Persian Gulf War. Separating after four years, she decided to do her four reserve years in the Navy. She became a hospital corpsman and was able to serve in the same reserve unit as her sister for 15 years and learn the unique ways of the Navy.

When Gregory picked up chief petty officer, she was transferred to a Marine unit where she served as officer-in-charge for two corpsmen. Her priority there was

to take care of her Sailors, and she helped both advance.

Gregory simultaneously worked on and completed her bachelor's degree. She became a licensed dietician and worked as a dietician in the civilian sector.

After being selected for advancement to senior chief, Gregory was recalled to active duty in June 2010 while she was putting an officer package together. She had to postpone submitting an officer package for approximately a year while deployed to Iraq. She kept in close contact with her officer recruiter while she was in Iraq, mailing him huge stacks of the required paperwork.

When she returned from deployment in May 2011, she was able to sit down with the recruiter and finalize the package. Gregory received the good news last summer that she had been selected for the program.

"It was a very emotional time for me," Gregory said. "I went through a lot of emotions. I was very ecstatic and very

thrilled, but at the same time sad to give up my CPO status."

After waiting for funding and an approval by Congress, Gregory was commissioned in January. In February, she attended Officer Development School and reported to NMCP in March.

"I want to learn and get the most advanced experience I can while helping the patients we have here," she added.



Lt. Pamela Gregory, NMCP registered dietician, was promoted to her current rank by Cmdr. Connie Scott on April 16 by the flagpole in front of Bldg. 1.

Gregory's role at NMCP is planning inpatient and outpatient medical nutrition therapy and providing nutrition counseling and education.

Civilians of the Year Recognized in Ceremony

The Civilians of the Year were recognized April 20 in the Bldg. 1 foyer, receiving their certificates from Rear Adm. Elaine C. Wagner, NMCP commander.

From left; Sarah Montague, Physical Therapy; Karen Graham, NAS Oceana Branch Health Clinic; and Barbara Cailteux-Zevallos, Staff Education and Training. (Not pictured- Michael Keeling, Psychiatry.)



Photo by SN Nina Howard



Photo by MC1 (SW/AW) Steven J. Weber

Civilian in the Spotlight

Gina P. Sawyer

Hometown: Pittsburgh

Years of service: 7 years (all at NMCP)

Job: Lead medical coder, Outpatient Coding

What do you like most about your job? Helping providers understand that the coders are here to help them get credit for the hard work they do, by providing data and documentation to assure them that the coding department is a part of their team.

What do you do in your off duty time/hobbies? Read, visit art galleries and museums. I am currently working on a degree in Psychology and Social Science.

Favorite movie: Serendipity

Favorite food: Mexican

Why she was nominated for the Civilian in the Spotlight: “She consistently goes over and beyond to assist with a variety of duties to maintain the foundation of the Outpatient Coding program,” said Lt. Cmdr. Hazelann Teamer, Patient Administration Department head. “During the MEDIG/Joint Commission visit, she was instrumental in assisting with all aspect of the Outpatient Coding Division. She managed the completion of the DQ audit as well as researching and providing answers for numerous questions from the coding staff. Her dedication, teamwork, and reliability had a positive impact on the department receiving no hits in the overall outpatient coding department.”

Sailor in the Spotlight

HMC Joseph Farrales Alvior

Hometown: Zambales, Philippines

Years of naval service: 21 years (4 years at NMCP)

Job: Leading Chief Petty Officer, Patient Administration Department

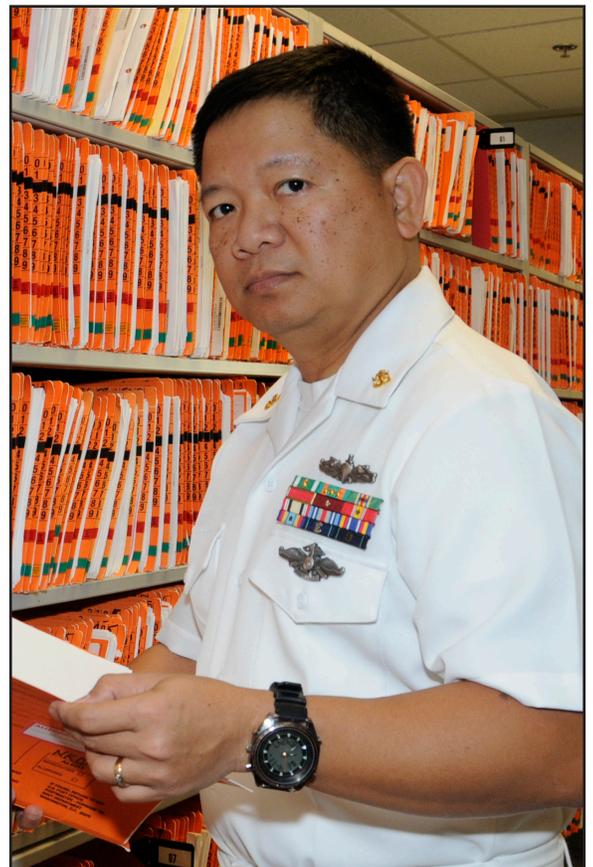
What do you like most about your job? Going home every day with a feeling that you did something good.

What do you do in your off duty time/hobbies? Gardening and fishing. I also teach a native Filipino musical instrument at the Philippine Cultural Center.

Favorite movie: Full Metal Jacket

Favorite food: Filipino dishes

Why he was nominated for the Sailor in the Spotlight: “His determination and outstanding work ethic has already made him an invaluable member of the Patient Administration Department and this command,” said Lt. Cmdr. Hazelann K. Teamer, PAD department head. “He was selected by the DFA to correct the entire directorate training records during the MEDIG/Joint Commission visit. He created a tracking database to ensure the training requirements of 168 personnel have been monitored and completed in a timely manner. His efforts resulted in a 45 percent increase in the completion rate of training requirements in less than two months. His contributions to this command’s mission cannot be overstated.”



MARCH AWARDS

BRONZE STAR MEDAL

Lt. Cmdr. Bennett Sandford

MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL

Capt. Gayle Kennerly
 Capt. Zsolt Stockinger
 Cmdr. Blair T. Miles
 Cmdr. Joseph Sposato
 HMCS(FMF/SW) David Lally, II

NAVY & MARINE CORPS COMMENDATION MEDAL

Cmdr. Lanny Littlejohn
 Lt. Cmdr. Kerri Browne
 Lt. Cmdr. Gregory Koontz
 Lt. Jamie Fitch
 HM1 Kimberly Edwards
 HM1(SW/AW) Christopher Roney
 HM1 Dwayne Singleton

NAVY & MARINE CORPS ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

Lt. Cmdr. Alexander Holston
 Lt. Jennifer Dennison

Lt. Helene Jacobson
 Lt. Kathy Pearsall
 Lt. j.g. Erica Margarito
 Lt. j.g. Adam Eaton
 Lt. j.g. Megen Scott
 Lt. j.g. Lynette Galgano
 IC1(SW) Torrence Hill
 AS1(AW) Enrique Pizarro
 HM1(SW) Calvin Stafford, II
 HM2 James Ash
 HM2(SW/AW) David Ellison
 HM2(FMF) Miguel Roman
 ET2(SW) Michael Tech
 HM3 Libbeth Hunton

NAVY MERITORIOUS CIVILIAN SERVICE AWARD

Barbara Caiteux-Zevallos
 Karen Graham
 Michael Keeling
 Sarah Montague



Command Awards

Photo by SN Nina Howard

Capt. James L. Hancock, NMCP acting commander, addresses the group at the monthly awards ceremony March 16, after giving out 21 awards. The awards were one Bronze Star, three Meritorious Service Medals, five Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals, five Navy Achievement Medals, two Good Conduct Awards, and six Pillar Awards.

SHIPMATE OF THE MONTH



Photo by SN Nina Howard

HN ERLANDE ALCIUS, DMH
HN NATHAN CANTRELLE, DMS
LS2(SW) SHAWN LOTT, DQM
HN ELIZABETH TEFFT, DNS
HN ZANZI WRIGHT, DPC
HM3 SOPI BROWN, DDS

HM3 JOSEPH HARDEBECK, DPE
HA NATHAN KINGSBURY, DSS
HN TYLER CURRIER, DCSS
HA SHANEE DAVILLIER, DPHS
CS3 BRYANT ALVAREZ, DFA



Photo by SN Nina Howard

MENTOR OF THE MONTH

HM3 Danielle Albert reported to Naval Medical Center Portsmouth in January 2009 and served as a general duty corpsman in the Emergent and Urgent Care Department. Assuming the role of training petty officer, Albert started the Preceptor Mentorship Program in her department and has trained 12 preceptors and mentors. Their responsibilities are to give new corpsmen on-the-job training and guidance regarding their naval careers.

During her career, Albert has been chosen as Shipmate of the Month, nominated for Blue Jacket of the Quarter, and received customer service appreciation certificates. She was supported through her chain of command and was guided by

those senior to her. She also credits her sailors for her motivation and success.

Albert is in the process of transferring to the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer, USS Truxtun. Her ultimate goal there is to start a mentorship program that will benefit everyone.

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.