



January 2012

# THE COURIER

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Portsmouth, Va.



Million Dollar Sailor Course — Page 9

## NMCP's Warrior Transition Unit Officially Opens

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

The new Warrior Transition Unit was officially opened at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth when Rear Adm. Elaine Wagner, NMCP commander, and Capt. Daniel Unger, Wounded Warrior Program Manager, snipped the ceremonial ribbon on Jan. 6.

The unit takes advantage of an “overflow” inpatient area in the medical center that is used only when other wards are full. Now, when a Wounded Warrior is medevaced from overseas – often from the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany – the unit is activated and becomes the service member's first stop instead of the Emergency Room.

The unit is a more subdued and less chaotic environment than the ER, and provides privacy for family members to be reunited with their injured service member.

“In many instances, Naval Medical Center

*See TRANSITION UNIT, Page 5*



**Rear Adm. Elaine C. Wagner, NMCP commander, and Capt. Daniel Unger, Wounded Warrior Project Manager, left, cut the ribbon to officially open the new Warrior Transition Unit on Jan. 6. Lt. Gen. Dennis J. Hejlik, commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command, third from left, and Adm. John C. Harvey Jr., commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, right, also attended the ribbon cutting.**



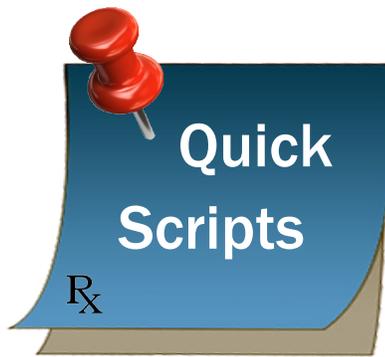
Photo by Rebecca A. Perron

### Media Blitz

## Baby Born on NMCP Lawn Brings Family Moment of Fame

After AMAN (AW) Minna Siebert's labor advanced faster than expected, she didn't quite make it into the hospital and gave birth to her daughter on the lawn by the parking garage. After the local media found out, requests for interviews and pictures with the family began pouring in.

Read The Courier's story about the uncommon birth on page 3.



## Get Ready to Vote: Register, Request Ballots Now!

All military and their dependents are eligible to register and cast their ballots for federal, state and local elections as absentee voters.

The web site with voting information and materials is [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov).

Election dates, and state specific voting information, plus links to state's own voting support sites are available.

Contact NMCP's voting assistance officers with questions or concerns: Lt. Robert Bartholomew, NMCP, 953-7646; Ensign Cory Nackos, Branch Health Clinic Little Creek, 953-8159; Lt. Christine Hobbs, Sewells Point Branch Health Clinic, 953-8896; Lt. Renardis Banks, Branch Health Clinic Oceana, 953-9607.

## Hospital Corpsman Ball Committee Seeks Volunteers

The Command Hospital Corpsman Ball Committee wants YOU! Volunteers are needed to support fundraising activities and event planning details for the 114th Command Hospital Corpsman Ball.

Meetings are held every Tuesday at 2 p.m. in Bldg. 3, 2nd Floor (classroom TBD). Contact HM1 Taylor at Sajata. Taylor@med.navy.mil or 953-7543 with questions or comments.

## Crews Into Shape in March

It is time to get teams together for Crews Into Shape 2012! This is sponsored by the Navy & Marine Corps Public Health Center and is open to all services, DoD, active duty, civilians and family members.

The four-week challenge runs from

March 4 - 31 and encourages a fun team approach to better health and wellness. No "wee in."

Each crew member earns points for exercising, maintaining or achieving a goal weight, eating fruits and other activities.

Register your crew with NMCPHC by March 4. To register, email the crew worksheet to NMCPHC. Each crew member who completes the challenge receives a certificate.

Contact the Health Promotion Wellness Department with questions at 953-9247.

For more information, visit <https://webapps.mar.med.navy.mil/poddocs/crewsflyer2012Jan.pdf>.

## 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 and are always happy to welcome new members.

For membership information, email [tidewater.oakleaf@gmail.com](mailto: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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**MC3 (SW) Anna Arndt**

**SN Nina Howard**

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](mailto: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.

# Baby Can't Wait: NMCP Staff Help Mom Give Birth on Lawn

STORY AND PHOTOS BY REBECCA A. PERRON  
NMCP Public Affairs

An off-duty nurse and staff from several departments at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth sprang into action to help a patient who began to give birth on the lawn adjacent to the parking garage on Jan. 24.

Aviation Mechanic Airman (AW) Minna Seibert, Strike Fighter Squadron 106 at Naval Air Station Oceana, experienced the early signs of labor that morning, but did not leave for the hospital until she felt contractions. Her husband, Operations Specialist 2nd Class (SW/AW) Cody Seibert, USS Iwo Jima, left work to drive her to the hospital, expecting that when they sped away from their Hampton home, they would get to the hospital for a routine birth.

Cody said she experienced contractions throughout the drive, and she squeezed his hand with every one, turning it white by the time they arrived at NMCP. He located a parking spot just inside the garage on the ground floor and parked. Then her water broke.

"I didn't notice her water break, but after we got out of the truck, she said she couldn't walk, so I threw her bag back into the truck and tried to carry her in the 'ready position,'" Cody said. "But after walking 50 feet, she asked me to put her down. She said the baby was coming, and she didn't want the baby to fall on the ground."

Cody helped his wife get into the birthing position as bystanders either ran to get help or tried to shield the couple with their



**Baby Rylee was given a thorough examination after exposure to the cold and the less-than-sanitary conditions. Every test she received came back showing a picture of perfect health for the 6-pound, 9-ounce newborn.**

jackets. Despite a mild January temperature in the 60s, according to Cody, they knew mom and baby would be susceptible to the cold and needed some sense of privacy.

"She was coming much faster than I thought she would," Minna Seibert said. "All I could think about was the pain. I didn't realize how many people were around us trying to help. I only knew of the people right in front of me."

A nurse who was leaving the medical center after her shift was walking nearby and thought the person on the ground might be having a heart attack.

"My nurse senses kicked in when I saw her on the ground," said Cmdr. Rhonda Day, a nurse anesthetist in NMCP's Operating Room. "I went over to ask if they needed assistance and someone said, 'She's having a baby.' When I peeked around a jacket that was being held in front of her, I saw the baby crowning.

"I took off my jacket, threw my stuff on the ground, rolled up my sleeves and began to deliver the baby with the husband's help," Day continued. "I had been a Labor and Delivery nurse at NMCP from 2000 to 2002 and had watched many deliveries, so I mimicked the actions I had seen the OB doctors do."

According to Cody, Day told Minna that if she wanted to push she could and that it looked like they were going to have to deliver the baby right there. After a few minutes, the baby girl — Rylee Payton — was born at 3:22 p.m.

Day then wrapped the baby in her own jacket, checked the baby's airway and placed the baby on Minna's stomach.

Meanwhile, the nurse's station in Labor and Delivery and the Emergency Department had received word that a woman in labor needed help. Lt. Angela Dicarolo-Meacham, an OB-GYN doctor, and other staff grabbed a delivery pack that contained the medical instruments and supplies they would need and ran to the scene, arriving with ER staff just minutes after the baby was born.

"The baby came out crying, but had started turning bluish,



**The Seibert Family gets a visit from OB-GYN doctor Lt. Angela Dicarolo-Meacham, one of the staff members who responded to the scene and assisted with the delivery.**

See **BABY**, page 9

# REACH Information Fair Educates Wounded, Ill and Injured Warriors on Post-Military Careers

STORY AND PHOTO BY MC1 ELIZABETH ST JOHN  
NMCP Public Affairs

A REACH Program Information Fair was held at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Jan. 25 to spread the word about the program designed for wounded, ill and injured active-duty service members who are facing a medical discharge and are likely to have a disability rating of 30 percent or higher.

The Reintegrate, Educate and Advance Combatants in Healthcare Program is an education and training program that provides career counseling and training assistance in select medical fields. The program, launched in May 2011, is a joint initiative of the Director of Navy Medicine Total Force and the Director

of Navy Medicine Wounded, Ill and Injured at the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.

“It is career training – some experience a chance to just think about that next step since they have this unexpected change in their career,” said Dawn Cheetham, REACH director for Academics and Training.

The REACH program helps injured service members maximize their job opportunities by using their recovery time at a medical treatment facility to shadow a specific medical career field. By starting their training while they are still in recovery, service members can see what the career will be like before they dedicate themselves to it. It helps make the transition process a little smoother.

“The main thing is just to get some college courses started,” said Leigh Hammer, REACH career coach. “Let’s start thinking about where you’re going to go from here. You’ve got value. You’ve got a point of purpose, and we want to help you get that pulled together so when you get discharged, it’s the easiest transition possible back to the civilian world.”

Hammer guides service members to their goals and assists them with the educational requirements needed to reach those goals. She puts together all the needed resources and develops individualized plans for service members. She is able to coordinate mentoring opportunities, job shadowing opportunities and internships.

Another helpful aspect of the program is that each service member’s plan is spe-

cifically tailored to suit their needs.

“It’s all very individualized, because everyone is starting at slightly different place education wise and experience wise,” said Cheetham. “Everything is very much up to the individual, their situation and what they’re looking for in the future.”

Career fields supported by REACH include case managers, dental assistants, diagnostic radiological technicians, medical records and coding, medical technicians, nurses, occupational therapists, physician’s assistants, physical therapists and respiratory therapists. Additional medical career fields are under constant evaluation and new ones may be added in the future.

In some cases, the REACH Program can help service members earn some income even while they are still in school.

“The Bureau of Medicine headquarters is sponsoring some part-time jobs in the hospital,” Cheetham said, “so you can get exposure part time while you go to school and get all your qualifications to be ready for your real job.”

Chief Yeoman Ann Rhodes is a wounded warrior going through the medical board process. She is three weeks into her internship with the Case Management Department at NMCP.

“It’s been a great learning experience,” she said.

Rhodes always wanted to be a case manager, which is what drew her to the program.

“I want to help patients, I want to do everything I can,” Rhodes said. “When this program was offered and I was there, I said, ‘That’s me!’ so I just jumped on board.”

Those who are facing a potential medical discharge and want to find out more about the program can contact REACH Career Coach Leigh Hammer at [leigh@smartsolutionscorp.com](mailto:leigh@smartsolutionscorp.com).



**REACH Career Coach Leigh Hammer, left, goes over program details with YNC Ann Rhodes during the REACH Program Information Fair Jan. 25. The fair was held to spread the word about the education and training program designed for wounded, ill and injured active-duty service members who are facing a medical discharge and are likely to have a disability rating of 30 percent or greater.**



**NMCP commander, Rear Adm. Elaine C. Wagner addresses the audience at the official opening of the Warrior Transition Unit. The unit's purpose is to provide a quicker evaluation of wounded warriors for better treatment and a less chaotic area where they can reunite with their families.**

### **Transition Unit, continued from page 1**

Portsmouth is the first place where family members are able to see their loved ones after an injury or illness suffered during a deployment or other overseas duty," said Wagner. "This area is far more conducive to those private emotionally charged reunions than an open bay in the Emergency Department."

Many of the patients in the unit have been wounded by IEDs. The most common injuries are orthopedic, thoracic, mental health and vascular. Medevac patients who need pain medication typically receive low dose during the flight. Their pain is addressed immediately when they arrive at the unit.

"This is a full-service Warrior Transition Unit," said Capt. Thomas Craig, Operational Forces medical liaison, who came up with the idea for the unit. "The whole idea is that whatever needs the warriors have are met when they come here. The beauty of it is that (the unit) is completely flexible.

"We know four to five days out from when the patient arrives what they need. We have at least three days to prepare so we can custom tailor it to their needs," Craig added.

Before the creation of the Warrior Transition Unit, Wounded Warriors who were being evaluated could spend several hours waiting in the Emergency Department.

"When they were being treated in the ER their stays usually lasted about six hours; now the longest stay we have had was one hour and 44 minutes," said Craig. "Now they come straight up here where it is calm and quiet and they each have their own individual room."

After patients are evaluated in the transition unit, they will either be admitted to one of the inpatient units, or, depending on their individual medical needs, transition to the Patriots' Inn, the Medical Hold Barracks or even their own homes for outpatient services.

"This unit is very much focused on the Wounded Warrior to meet all their needs and their families' needs," said Unger, the program manager. "I think it's awesome. I think it's the first step in developing a world-class wounded warrior care program here."

The unit has served 23 Wounded Warriors since it opened on Oct. 15, 2011.



## **FCPOA Holds Stromboli Sale**

**HM1 (SW/FMF) James Frymire, HM1 Laura Arellano and HM1 Yolinda Ellison work at the First Class Petty Officer Association stromboli sale Jan. 13 in Bldg. 3. Proceeds will benefit Sailors living in the barracks by sponsoring recreational activities for them such as bowling and movie nights.**

Photo by SN Nina Howard

# NMCP Patients Receive Purple Hearts



Adm. John C. Harvey Jr., commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, presented Marine Sgt. Matthew Berube of 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, the Purple Heart during a ceremony in the foyer of Bldg. 1 on Dec. 29. Berube has been recovering at NMCP after his left leg was amputated. In September, he stepped on an IED while on security patrol in Southern Sangin, Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

Berube and his wife, Lori, with Adm. John C. Harvey Jr., commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, and Lt. Gen. Dennis J. Hejlik, commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command, during the Dec. 29 ceremony.



Lt. Gen. Hejlik, presents HN Darrell Butler Jr. the Purple Heart on Jan. 6 before the ribbon-cutting ceremony for NMCP's new Warrior Transition Unit.



Adm. Harvey congratulates HN Darrell Butler Jr. after he was presented the Purple Heart on Jan. 6.

Butler received gunshot wounds to his lower right leg on Aug. 3 while on patrol with Combat Logistics Battalion Eight in the Southern Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

# NASCAR Donates Hood to Wounded Warriors

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

The hood from NASCAR driver Kyle Busch's car was presented to more than a dozen Marines from Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's Wounded Warrior Battalion-East Detachment Jan. 11. Representatives from Mars Chocolate North America, Busch's primary sponsor, also donated a check for \$1,500 to the USO of Hampton Roads to be used for the Wounded Warriors.

The idea to donate the hood came after Mars made it possible for about 20 Wounded Warriors from the detachment and their families to attend the Sprint Cup Series race at Richmond International Raceway on Sept. 10, 2011. The hood, which looks deceptively like the star field of an American flag, is from the car driven by Busch that day.

Mars and the military have had a long relationship, going back to World War II; Mars got its start when the military requested a chocolate that would not melt in soldiers' pockets, resulting in the M&M.

"The Mars family's start was through the military," said Gregg Koons, the Military-Government Channel manager for the company. "So we always try to give back, and I couldn't ask for a better cause to give back to."

Mars also donated the proceeds from the sale of a red, white and blue diecast car sold during the Sprint Cup Series Race to the USO National Chapter, which then dispersed the money throughout the organization.



**Bruce LaLonde, the President and CEO of the USO of Hampton Roads, speaks to the group of Marines from NMCP's Wounded Warrior Battalion-East Detachment Jan. 11 before being presented with a check for \$1,500 from Mars Chocolate North America.**

"They (Mars) are a very large corporate sponsor for the USO," said Bruce LaLonde, the president and CEO of the USO of Hampton Roads. "As a non-profit, non-governmental organization we need support from the American people and corporations so we can give support to the military."

The USO will use the donated money to buy items the Portsmouth detachment requests. In the past, the USO has provided them items such as coffee pots, bicycle helmets and barbeques.

"I think it's pretty cool," said Cpl. Heath Ware, a Marine in the detachment. "It's a physical symbol of appreciation. It means a lot, and we really appreciate it."

The NASCAR hood will be displayed on the seventh floor of Bldg. 3 for six months and then will be moved to another USO-sponsored organization.



**Bruce LaLonde, the President and CEO of the USO of Hampton Roads, and Marines from NMCP's Wounded Warrior Battalion-East Detachment accept a check for \$1,500 from Mars Chocolate North America Jan. 11. The representatives also presented the hood from NASCAR driver Kyle Busch's car to the detachment.**

# NMCP Maintains Teaching Hospital Cancer Program Accreditation

By MC1 ELIZABETH ST JOHN  
NMCP Public Affairs

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth announced Dec. 20 that the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer re-accredited its Teaching Hospital Cancer Program for three years, the maximum length possible.

The ACS Commission on Cancer accredits institutions based on their compliance with 36 standards that are the benchmark for quality cancer care.

The THCP accreditation is one of 12 categories of accreditation and is granted when the facility participates in training residents in at least four areas, two of which are medicine and surgery; when the facility offers the full range of diagnostic and treatment services, and when the facility participates in clinical research.

“As a tertiary care teaching hospital, please recognize the importance we have placed on maintaining both the quality and quantity of cancer care at NMCP,” said Rear Adm. Elaine C. Wagner, NMCP commander. “It’s also important to note that our strategic plan has direct indicators that will monitor our continued success in these areas.”

NMCP’s re-accreditation was the responsibility of its Cancer Committee. The committee, charged with the oversight of multi-disciplinary care, looks at NMCP’s practices and makes sure they comply with the standards set forth by the ACS Commission on Cancer.

“What makes this possible, first of all, is the excellent care that’s delivered by all the departments at this facility that treat cancer,” said Capt. Allen O. Mitchell, Cancer Committee chairman.

“The second is our tumor registry. It’s an important resource for determining the effectiveness of the cancer therapy we are giving, and it helps us to ensure that we are giving the highest quality care.”

Not only did NMCP maintain its accreditation, but it also garnered six commendations during the process. Some of those commendations were for the accuracy of tumor registry data, the numerous prevention and early detection programs available and the fact that the Cancer Committee implemented at least three quality improvements every year.

“This re-affirms our commitment to delivering the best care that’s on par with any institution in the United States,” said Mitchell. “It lets everyone know that we’re going the extra bit to make sure that everything is as perfect as it can possibly be.”

The re-accreditation began with the survey application document that detailed NMCP’s compliance with each one of the 36 standards. That was followed by an on-site inspection where the surveyor was shown all aspects of the facility and reviewed randomly-selected records. The surveyor then sat in on one of the tumor boards in which patients’ cases were discussed and treatment plans were formulated.

“Maintaining the on-going certification is very challenging, because the standards are constantly changing,” Mitchell said. “We have a unique set of challenges to us in that we have doctors come and go and get deployed and we have considerable turnover.”



*It's a Girl!*

## Welcome First Baby of 2012

**Congratulations to Christy and Nicholas Eddy on the birth of their daughter Carly, who was Naval Medical Center Portsmouth’s first baby of 2012. Carly was born at 1 a.m. New Years Day. Carly weighed 7 pounds, 12 ounces and was 19.5 inches long. She has four older siblings.**

**The Eddys have been in Hampton Roads since 2010 when IT1 Eddy checked in at NAVNETWARCOM at Joint Expeditionary Base-Little Creek. Before that, they were stationed in Corpus Christi, Texas.**

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

# FFSC Instructs NMCP Staff on Becoming ‘Million Dollar Sailors’

STORY BY MC3 (SW) ANNA ARNDT  
NMCP Public Affairs

Fleet and Family Support Center Norfolk facilitated the first Million Dollar Sailor Course held at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Jan. 19 – 20.

The Million Dollar Sailor class is a personal wealth-building program that teaches service members and their dependents how to properly manage their money. About 40 staff members attended the two-day class which covered a wide variety of financial information.

The topics included money management, military pay, consumer awareness, insurance, credit management, home and car buying, banking and financial services, retirement planning, savings and investing, and the Thrift Savings Plan.

“Million Dollar Sailor is a class that encompasses an entire life cycle of financial education and planning for Sailors, from the basics to the more advanced,” said Karen Melvin, Financial Education Services, Fleet and Family Support Center Norfolk. “This is a free service and is open to anyone, from E-1 to O-7.”

In her position as command financial specialist, Chief Hospital Corpsman Hollie Rinschler saw a need to bring the class to NMCP.

“We’ve had people not knowing how to manage their money,” Rinschler said. “I thought this would be a good start to get Sailors aware of how to do their own finances instead of just the general military training that we do every month.”

Financial security plays an important role in military readiness. Many rates

require security clearances, which may be revoked due to debt. Over time, debt can also affect enlisted personnel’s Perform to Serve approval.

“The more financial education people get earlier in their career, the more successful they will be financially, which will prepare them for deployment,” Melvin said. “It all boils down to command readiness, personal readiness and personal satisfaction with the military. There’s a marked difference between people who have had successful financial education early in their career and those who haven’t. People are more likely to stay in if they know how to manage their money well than if they are having financial issues.”

The program, originally created by Navy Region Hawaii’s Fleet and Family Support Center, grew and spread to other locations due to positive feedback from participants.

“The class is very informative,” said Hospitalman Diamond Green. “Some of the information doesn’t pertain to me now, but it will eventually, so it’s good to learn. The most useful part for me was the car-buying portion, because that’s something I will probably be doing soon.”

Many people see this as a course designed for newer Sailors, but there is useful information for all.

“At first, I thought it was just for the junior people, but

I decided to come anyway, and I’m glad I did because I learned a lot,” said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Magen Gordon. “I was really interested what they had to say about home buying, because I’m about to purchase a home and they steered me in the right direction. It’s a great class, it is for everyone — anyone who gets money and spends money should go.”

“This is just an amazing opportunity for people to learn more,” Melvin added. “The personal benefit you can get from class and how you can incorporate that into your own life to do better is amazing.”

The class will be held quarterly at NMCP and is also offered to groups of 15 or more participants.



**Karen Melvin, Financial Education Services, Fleet and Family Support Center Norfolk, facilitates the first Million Dollar Sailor Course held at NMCP Jan. 19-20. The class will be held at the hospital quarterly and is open to all active duty military and their dependents.**

**BABY**, continued from page 3

possibly due to the cold,” said Dicarlo-Meachan. “We clamped and cut the cord and immediately carried the baby inside for an examination, while mom was placed on a gurney and was taken to a delivery room to finish the birthing process.”

Once inside, baby Rylee was given a thorough examination after exposure to the cold and the less-than-sanitary conditions. Every test she received came back showing a picture of perfect health for the 6-pound, 9-ounce newborn. Mom and baby were separated for less than an hour.

“This was my first baby to deliver,” Day said. “I will never forget this – I’ll never get over the idea of the event. I’m very glad it all turned out ok.”

“It was definitely an experience I’ll never forget, especially Rhonda,” Cody said. “I held my wife’s hand and helped the nurse. This is the most intense thing I’ve ever done.”

“This was really crazy,” Minna added. “I didn’t think her birth would happen like this. This probably means she’ll be an attention getter. And now what a story we have to tell her when she’s older.”

## 2nd Annual IDC Conference Builds Rapport, Educates

STORY AND PHOTO  
BY MC1 ELIZABETH ST JOHN  
NMCP Public Affairs

Approximately 110 Independent Duty Corpsmen from commands around Hampton Roads attended the 2nd Annual IDC Conference on Jan. 10 at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth. The conference featured speaker John “Doc” Hutchings, a former Fleet Marine Forces corpsman who served during Vietnam and who is the author of “The Names Not on the Wall.”

The theme of this year’s conference was “Caring for Our Patients through the Continuum of Deployment.” Topics discussed included specialty screenings, orthopedics, preventive medicine and post-traumatic stress disorder.

IDCs are qualified hospital corpsmen who may be assigned the responsibility of independent duty aboard ships and submarines, with Fleet Marine Force, SEAL and Seabee units, and at isolated duty stations, providing patient care independent of a medical officer. They are able to dispense medications, make diagnoses and come up with treatment plans.



**John “Doc” Hutchings, an FMF corpsman who served with Alpha Co. 1/5 1st Marine Division in Vietnam, was the guest speaker at the 2nd Annual IDC Conference Jan. 10.**

“The purpose of the IDC conference is to serve those stationed in the area,” said Lt. Matthew Moore, conference orga-

nizer and general medical officer at Dam Neck Branch Health Clinic. “It provides education for them that’s local and helps them supplement their medical education annually.”

Whether it is reinforcing what they already know or learning new techniques, the conference also gives IDCs a chance to build rapport with each other and with doctors in specialty fields, which results in improved patient care for Sailors and Marines everywhere.

The specialty leaders spent the day speaking to the IDCs, detailing best practices to provide the most efficient care when referring patients to them. The leaders also explained how they want referrals worked up for patients suffering from knee and back pain and headaches.

Some reiterated how to provide care for specific diagnoses. The conference included lectures delivered in a manner to spark spontaneous discussions.

While most of the conference dealt with present-day issues, lessons learned 40 years ago in the jungles of Asia were also shared. Guest speaker Hutchings, who served with Alpha Co. 1/5 1st Marine Division in Vietnam, spoke of his experience, corpsman to corpsman.

“My purpose in being here is to help you realize how important you are,” he said. “You guys are the elite in the military. You serve with the Marines, which are the best fighting force in the military.”

Hutchings admitted that early in his career he really just wanted to skate through corps school, and he had no intention of ever going to Vietnam. But he said

his life changed during the second week of school when one of his instructors was teaching how to treat pneumotho-

racic wounds (penetrating wounds to the chest).

“He told the class that in six months many of us would be serving in the jungle,” said Hutchings. “And he said, ‘What I don’t want to happen is to have you have a Marine die in your arms because you don’t know what to do.’”

That statement struck a nerve. Hutchings said that was a turning point for him and, from then on, he was dedicated to learning everything he could about being a corpsman. He added that today’s corpsmen are no different, and with the unique challenges faced by them – especially IDCs – conferences like these are a great way to continue increasing their medical knowledge.

Capt. Thomas Craig, operational forces medical liaison, was among those who came up with the idea for the conference last year. He worked with specialists in Radiology and Orthopedics and IDCs in the fleet to determine what the educational needs of the IDCs were and what issues they were having.

“I realized these two communities were diametrically opposed,” he said. “But let’s face it, we’re a teaching hospital; we teach medical students and residents all the time, so why wouldn’t we want to have some ongoing education for the IDCs?”

“And, it builds cohesion,” Craig added.

In deciding how he could bring the two camps together, Craig began coordinating the event with medical staff in various departments, such as Orthopedics, Preventive Medicine and Radiology, asking them to do the presentations, and then worked to invite IDCs to the event.

“The IDCs realized today they weren’t just being talked to, they were being taught,” Craig said. “We’re one team for medicine. It’s evident by their participation how important it is to them.”

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (FMF) Michael Ashline, newly assigned to NMCP, said this was his first conference. “It’s good to get a refresher; I’m a big fan of that. A lot of this stuff you may not see or do every day so it’s always good to go back to the books and remember.”

# NMCP Recognizes ASBP Donors During National Blood Donor Month

STORY AND PHOTO BY MC1 (SW/AW) STEVEN J. WEBER

NMCP Public Affairs

Local Armed Services Blood Program donors were recognized in Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's Apheresis Laboratory during National Blood Donor Month, with the lab's staff holding a donor open house and a cake cutting on Jan. 25. This is the third year the lab has celebrated the January observance to acknowledge their donors.

National Blood Donor Month has been observed in January since 1970 because blood drives across the country see drops in donations during the winter months – a challenge since the shelf life of blood is so short.

To kick off the open house, Capt. Jean Scherrer, Transfusion Services division head and recent ovarian cancer patient, spoke about the importance of the program and thanked the donors.

"I know you all know how quickly the blood product expires on the shelf and how many patients we have going through cancer treatments, hematological malignancies, as well as surgeries," said Scherrer. "I greatly appreciate it; without you, we would have to cancel surgeries. I mean that from the bottom of

my heart, because we cannot get this product from local sources."

Scherrer went on to explain some of the difficulties and restrictions associated with getting blood product shipped, such as having to

keep it in a strict temperature window. She also pointed out that the Red Cross supplies most of the other local hospitals.

"Simply put, you have saved our bacon many times," said Lt. Cmdr. Leslie Riggs, Blood Bank division head, thanking the donors. "You have made a difference in the number of surgeries we can support and quality care we can give at this medical center. You do a tremendous amount of good, and we appreciate everything you have done."

Lloyd Cevora has been donating for about the last eight years, since a neighbor talked him into it, telling him that it could be used to help cancer patients. Having lost his mother to cancer, Cevora thought it was a good idea.

While waiting on his wife while she had her medical appointments, Cevora would go down to the lab to donate platelets. That was how he was introduced to the program here at NMCP.

Cevora said it's his conscience that behooves him to continue to donate. Other donors at the event nodded in agreement, saying they feel honor bound to keep donating.

Of the units collected at NMCP, half are used by NMCP patients or patients at other military treatment facilities, while the other half are used on the battlefield to treat service members injured there. Units are frequently needed by cancer patients.

The ASBP provides blood products to active-duty service members and their families receiving care at MTFs worldwide. NMCP is one of 22 ASBP blood donation centers and aims to collect 500 to 700 units per month.

To help meet the goal, the lab offers appointments Monday through Friday, with Thursday used for whole blood donations only. Appointments can be made by calling 953-1717 or 953-1730 or visiting the ASBP website at [www.militaryblood.dod.mil](http://www.militaryblood.dod.mil).

Donations are also collected through an ASBP mobile van that visits area installations four days a week to collect at bases as far north as Fort Lee. The mobile van schedule can also be found at the ASBP site by selecting Blood Donation Centers and then Naval Medical Center Portsmouth. The site allows users to find drives, schedule appointments and track the monthly goal.

Donating whole blood takes about eight to 10 minutes, while donating platelets, red cells or plasma can take longer. Whole blood can be donated once every eight weeks, while the other blood components can be donated more often. One donation can help up to three people.

To donate blood, donors must be at least 17 years old, weigh at least 110 pounds, be without infection or fever, should not use antibiotics and should generally be feeling well on the day of donation.



**Ensign Matthew Coon and HN Julio Gonzalez cut the cake during the National Blood Donor Month open house at NMCP Jan. 25.**

# 2011 CFC Goal Surpassed by \$93,000

*Dedication of campaign keypersons made the difference*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MC1 ELIZABETH ST JOHN  
NMCP Public Affairs

The hard work and dedication of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's Combined Federal Campaign coordinators and "keypersons" made it quite a successful year, with the medical center and its branch health clinics, Navy Medicine East and Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center collecting more than \$228,000 in donations as of Jan. 3.

The goal of \$135,000 was surpassed by Oct. 13, about halfway through the official 2011 CFC season, which ran from Sept. 1 through Dec. 15. Donations for this year can still be made until March 1.

The CFC was established by President John F. Kennedy in 1961 and provides an opportunity for federal employees, including military, civilian, military and postal employees, to donate to local, national and international non-profit organizations through the annual campaign.

Lt. Cmdr. Lorena N. Griffin, one of the CFC unit coordinators for NMCP, credits the 125 NMCP keypersons for surpassing the goal. Keypersons are responsible for contacting each federal employee within their area of responsibility, informing them of the opportunity to donate through the CFC and providing them with the administrative resources to do so.

"Our CFC volunteers did a great job," she said. "They quickly realized that this was not an easy collateral duty, but they stuck to it. They put out a great effort while processing and delivering donations until the very end. It was a pleasure to work with all of the volunteers on this project."

With people watching their money more closely, this year's campaign could have had a much different outcome. Griffin said her volunteers' dedication really made a difference.

"I strongly believe that the motivation of the volunteers and donors are what made the campaign successful," Griffin added. "These are tough economic times for the nation, but most people also realize that there are others less fortunate and they are. Thus, they answered the call for assistance."

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (FMF/SW) Freddy Mejia, keyperson for the Emergent and Urgent Care Department, was the first to turn in donations and finished with the third highest total in the entire NMCP? Hampton Roads? campaign.

"I think we were all motivated from the beginning," Mejia said. "We knew that the goal could be accomplished with hard work and motivation, and we did it."

Griffin also attributes the success of this year's campaign to the volunteers from the branch health clinics.

"I was impressed by our branch health clinics and dental representatives," she said. "They drove distances and dealt with parking for the majority of the meetings and communicated well in advance when patient care came first."

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Elizabeth Abimbola, keyperson for the Directorate for Dental Services, took on this task to help those in need. She made 100 percent contact with the 500 staff in her directorate during the campaign.

"I volunteered (to be a keyperson) because I wanted to make a difference in someone's life, be it someone with a disease or condition that runs in the family," she said. "The individuals who donate to this cause will hopefully help find a cure for most diseases or conditions in the nearest future."

A CFC wrap-up celebration is planned for Feb. 17 in the NMCP galley where keypersons and unit coordinators will be recognized. Awards, including Letters of Appreciation, Letters of Commendation and Navy Achievement Medals, will be presented depending on each person's effort to the campaign.



**The CFC thermometer near the main gate shows the overwhelming progress of the campaign.**



**Lt. Cmdr. Lorena Griffin, left, one of NMCP's CFC coordinators this year, commemorates the end of the CFC season with some of the outstanding keyworkers who made this year's campaign such a success.**

# SAFE Class Teaches Sexual Assault Forensics Gathering Techniques

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

Eighteen Navy nurses, physicians and corpsmen from commands across Hampton Roads attended the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence class at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Jan. 23 – 27. The SAFE course is a military medicine initiative and was the fifth time the course has been given at NMCP since being introduced here in April 2011.

The goal of the course is to improve the techniques of military medical personnel who are gathering forensic evidence for law enforcement use so that charges against a sexual offender will stick, ultimately leading to conviction. Topics in the five-day course include teaching personnel how to properly collect and store forensic evidence, since they won't always have access to a hospital.

The commander of NMCP welcomed attendees and spoke of the significance of the job they are doing.

"I want to thank you all for taking time out of your schedules and volunteering to attend this class," said Rear Adm. Elaine C. Wagner. "This may be one of the most important jobs that you ever have to do for the Navy. Defending sexual assault is an extremely important goal for the Department of Defense — the DoD (Sexual Assault Awareness Month) theme is 'Hurts One, Affects All.'"

Sexual assault devastates victims, undermines teamwork, threatens unit cohesiveness and reduces fleet readiness.

"Navy leadership must educate our Sailors, respond to victims and hold the offenders accountable," Wagner said. "These patients deserve the highest quality, world-class forensic care. I'm committed to making sure that you have the resources that you need to effectively carry out this important work."

Reporting sexual assault has changed drastically over the years. Previously,

there was no confidentiality in reporting; victims had no control over the release and management of their information.

"Currently, we have a new policy," said Lt. Cmdr. Michelle Ortiz, course instructor and one of three certified forensic nurses in the Navy. "Under our new policy, we only have restricted or unrestricted. The quality of the exam in a restricted or unrestricted kit is no different – it's the same exam. Only unrestricted will have law enforcement involvement.

"This class is important because we know sexual assault is happening," Ortiz continued. "We also know that if we contract this out to other organizations, it doesn't serve the training component. We have to make sure that when our people are underway or out of the country, that they have the same access to care, and that includes forensic care as well."

The course covers all the different areas of the examination process as well as the roles of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response team and other support services.

"It is not our place to decide what is or is not sexual assault," said Chief Hospital Corpsman Jannine Tobler, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Coordinator for NMCP. "A victim's advocate is there for the patient and a SAFE examiner is there for the evidence. We want people to seek help where they're comfortable seeking help."

Medical personnel are often not familiar with the proper way to collect evidence or even with the examination process. There are also law enforcement chain-of-custody issues that may be unfamiliar.

"We have the (kit) on board the ship,

but I was not very familiar with the contents or how to provide the exam, other than the other medical experience I have," said Chief Hospital Corpsman (SW/FMF) Michael Young, an Independent Duty Corpsman stationed on board USS Barry. "When you are doing a forensic exam on someone, it is very different because you still worry about the patient's health, but you also have to worry about collecting evidence for a courtroom appearance.

"So there's a chain of custody, there's an order of operations that is unique in terms of cross contamination," Young added. "When you present this evidence



**Rear Adm. Elaine C. Wagner, NMCP commander, addresses students at the SAFE class on Jan. 23.**

in court, you have to be sure without a doubt that this evidence has not been contaminated."

After completing the 40 hours of classroom training, medical personnel are more prepared and confident to effectively handle sexual assaults.

"I'm with the Fleet Surgical Team, we're getting ready to go on deployment, and I'm the only female medical officer on the entire ship," said Lt. Sarah Huley, Fleet Surgical Team Four. "Before the class, I would have just opened the kit and followed the instructions, and now I understand the process better and can take this information back to the fleet. If you don't know how to properly do a kit, you don't have the evidence to convict someone."

The SAFE course is offered four times per year.

# BHC Oceana Commemorates MLK Day with Music, Readings

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MC3 INDRA BOSKO  
NAS Oceana Public Affairs

Promoting the theme of “Breaking All Barriers,” Branch Health Clinic staff commemorated Martin Luther King Day on Jan. 20, one of several events at Naval Air Station Oceana celebrating King’s life and Black History Month.

“We set aside a special time to honor Martin Luther King Jr., his sacrifices, his achievements and his pursuit to preserve freedom for all no matter race, religion, color or creed,” said Lt. Andrew Brod, NAS Oceana chaplain, during the invocation. “Allow us to break the silence and to carry on his legacy.”

Cmdr. David Thomas, senior nurse at the Oceana Clinic, gave the opening remarks which included a brief history of King’s life, achievements and legacy.

“Dr. King’s leadership was fundamental to reversing the legal segregation, separation and unequal treatment of Americans throughout the South,” said Thomas. “His was the template upon which the world sees the civil rights laws.”

Thomas illustrated how King’s legacy continues to live on. He noted that Martin Luther King Day was first observed in 1986 but it was not accepted in all of the states until 2000. This year marks the nation’s 26th year celebrating King’s life.

In an emotional rendition, an excerpt from King’s renowned “I Have a Dream” speech was read by Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Cedric Odom.

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Fred Nti echoed King’s “I Have a Dream” speech on how children “will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character” and explained how he experienced tribalism and ethnocentrism as a child living in Ghana.

“The inferior feeling of having another human being look at you and tell you ... ‘you are not good enough’ because you look different,” said Nti.

After joining the Navy 14 years ago, Nti shared how King’s dream has influenced his life and career in the Navy.

Nti noted that even though there is a generational gap between King’s time and younger Sailors today, King’s dream is still part of everyone’s dream.

“Dr. King had a dream, a dream that changed the human race for many years to come,” he said.

Nti, who was recently accepted to the Medical Service Corps, credits his success in life and the Navy to King.

“Beginning my career as a deck seaman, King’s dream paved the way for me to be able to go through the ranks and to be selected as a naval officer,” said Nti. “My selection was based

on the ability to contribute to the mission, not on my skin color. I was not looked upon as just another African-American male who is good enough to cook and clean after a bunch of hungry Sailors,” said Nti. “We can continue to facilitate freedom in our own way.”

The presentation, which included a luncheon, ended with closing remarks by the clinic’s officer in charge Cmdr. Martin Kerr, who also shared his experience.

Kerr, who is of Irish descent, asked, “What does a white man know about racism?”

Kerr expressed that even though he can never be in the shoes of African Americans who have suffered racism and segregation, he can, however, share his experiences as a child facing religious segregation between Catholics and Protestants in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Kerr, a Catholic, said that segregation in Belfast is about the difference of names, religious flags or the color of sidewalks that separated Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods.



**Mistress of ceremonies HM1 Mary Wilkins welcomes the audience to the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. celebration Jan. 20. The “Breaking All Barriers”- themed MLK celebration was the first event hosted by the newly formed Heritage Committee at the Oceana Clinic.**

“I know a little of what it is like to be judged not by the color of my skin, but what my faith is,” said Kerr. “But I know a lot about what it means to be judged, to have preferential treatment or not have preferential treatment.”

Kerr revealed the keys to equality: education, communication and eradication.

“Nobody can take away your education and how you get ahead,” Kerr said. “Don’t be afraid to talk about race; and the third thing is eradicate any type of hateful comments in all of our communities.”

Nti also expressed to Sailors to not only honor King but to also honor those who have assisted their Navy careers along the way.

“It then becomes your duty as a good citizen of our beloved country to do the same,” said Nti. “Each of us must search within ourselves for the good we can do for people. As Dr. King once said, ‘the time is always right to do what is right; the time to do right is now.’”

# JANUARY AWARDS

## MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL

Capt. Peter Roberts  
Capt. John Smith

## JOINT SERVICE COMMENDATION MEDAL

Lt. Cmdr. Peter Cole

## NAVY & MARINE CORPS COMMENDATION MEDAL

GSMC(SW) Manuel Pastrana Jr.  
HM1 Thomas Lorenc Jr.

## NAVY & MARINE CORPS ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

Lt. Albert Cross  
Lt. Christopher Jackson  
Lt. Sarah Metzger  
Lt. Harley Ragle III  
Lt. j.g. Shelly McGaha  
Lt. j.g. Mary Pat Tobola  
Lt. j.g. Larry Yatchak  
HM1(SW/AW/FMF) Joseph Graham  
HM1(FMF) Jenifer Jenkins  
ET1(SW) Joshua Newell

ET1 Connie Taylor  
HM2 James Ash  
SH2(SW) Kenneth Batts  
HM2(SW) Sheree Bowens  
HM2 Joy Chipimarquez  
HM3(SW) Justin Echternacht  
HM2(AW) Eric Freudenthal  
PS2 Jessica Goines  
CS2(SW) Zachery Hebert  
HM3 Lilibeth Hunton  
SH2(SW) Lynee Jackson  
LS2(AW) Gene Kim  
HM2(SW) Cheryl Kivlehan  
MA2 Alicia Keene  
HM3 Amanda Manno  
HM3 Angela Norfeet  
HM2(SW) Blake Ogeris  
YN3 Gary Sharper

## NAVY MERITORIOUS CIVILIAN SERVICE AWARD

Marion Goodrich  
Anita Martinada  
Lynn Thomas



Capt. Darin K. Via, NMCP deputy commander, right, addresses awardees in the base gym during the award ceremony Jan. 20. Twenty-five staff members received awards including four Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals, nine Navy Achievement Medals, six Good Conduct Medals, one Flag Letter of Commendation and five Pillar awards. The pillar awards were for Customer Service, Quality Healthcare, Readiness and Education and Research.

# The Courier Asks What is your 2012 Resolution?



MA2 Kelli Pope  
Security  
*"To put in my officer package."*



HN Andre Belcher,  
Maternity Ward  
*"To make HM3 so I can better support my two kids."*



Katrina Barnes  
MWR  
*"To lose weight and to get my wedding planned, because I'm getting married in September."*



HN Wei Lei:  
Laboratory  
*"To lose the weight I gained in 2011."*



Amos Morgan  
Post Office  
*"To stay close to God."*



HN Timothy Hatfield  
Healthcare Operations  
*"To eat healthier, exercise more and manage my money better."*

## Winter Weather Advisories

*Be among the first to know how winter weather conditions will affect Naval Medical Center Portsmouth.*

*Closing and delay messages are provided to TV and radio stations, but the most timely and complete information will be at:*

[www.facebook.com/NMCPortsmouth](http://www.facebook.com/NMCPortsmouth)  
<http://twitter.com/NMCP1>  
[www.med.navy.mil/sites/NMCP](http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/NMCP)



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