



# CHARLIE MIKE

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

### **What does Charlie Mike mean?**

In an era long before the advent of satellites, cell phones, and radios, seafarers used a communication system based on flags and pennants to “speak” with other ships at sea. For more than 30 years, Navy Medicine has used these flags which are part of the International Code of Signals to convey our posture and activity within the Fleet. In November 2021, we shifted our colors to reflect our active mission of “Rendering Assistance” to our warfighters. We are keeping them in the Fight and ensuring they are operationally ready for that next mission. In Signal Code, “Rendering Assistance” is communicated by using the Code Pennant followed by the Charlie and Mike flags and is spoken, “Code Charlie Mike.”

### **When did the Charlie Mike Flags become official?**

On November 8, 2021, Rear Adm. Bruce Gillingham, Surgeon General of the Navy, approved the adoption of Charlie Mike. They were officially launched across the Enterprise on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

### **What is the red and white flag that precedes Charlie Mike?**

This is the Code pennant which means the “Answer” or “Acknowledge.” When a NATO warship wants to communicate using the International Code of

Signals the code pennant must precede the signal flags (e.g., Charlie Mike). The code pennant is typically wider than the flags.

**Prior to Charlie Mike, what signal flags were used to represent Navy Medicine's posture?**

In 1987, we adopted the motto “**Charlie Golf One**” to signify Navy Medicine was “**Standing By, Ready to Assist.**” Following the attacks on September 11th, Navy Medicine shifted to “**Charlie Papa**” meaning that we were “**Steaming to Assist**” in times of crisis.

**Does “Rendering Assistance” replace the Surgeon General’s 4 Priorities?**

No. The foundation for Navy Medicine remains well-trained **People** operating on optimized **Platforms** demonstrating high-reliability **Performance** to project Medical **Power** for Naval Superiority. Flags will be used in conjunction with the 4Ps.

**Will our command be required to purchase these new signal flags?**

No. Commands can choose to display printed flags and/or incorporate flags in products digitally. If commands chose to purchase they may do so.

**If we want to fly these flags at our command, where can we purchase flags?**

Flags can be purchased online through a flag/banner store of choice. Vendors include: [flagstoreusa.com](http://flagstoreusa.com), [flagandbanner.com](http://flagandbanner.com), and [flags.com](http://flags.com).

**Am I permitted to use the new signal flags on our command website?**

Yes. We encourage commands and activities to incorporate flags in messaging, websites, marketing materials.

**Where do I direct questions about the Charlie Mike Flags?**

Please direct any questions you have about the signals to: [usn.ncr.bumedfchva.mbx.bumed-general-inquiries@mail.mil](mailto:usn.ncr.bumedfchva.mbx.bumed-general-inquiries@mail.mil)