



CHARLIE MIKE

Frequently Asked Questions

What do the Charlie Mike Flags mean?

In an era long before the advent of satellites, cell phones, and radios, seafarers used a communication system based on flags and pennants. Transmitting messages over long distances is called Semaphore, and these visual signals enabled ships to “speak” with other ships at sea. For more than 30 years, Navy Medicine has used Semaphore Flags 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 Semaphore, **Rendering Assistance** is communicated by an Answer Pennant and two Flags -- “Charlie” and “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.

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 chose 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, flagandbanner.com, and flags.com.

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