



THE COURIER



February/March 2003

NMCP smallpox immunization program in full swing

By JO2 Sarah Langdon

It's immunization season again at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth. Sailors, Marines and other healthcare personnel are lining up to receive shots, but this time the scene is much different.

Instead of going to the immunization clinic, the individuals are heading to an immunization and screening site located on a different floor of the hospital. And instead of one prick from a hypodermic needle, they are receiving three or 15 jabs (depending on the patient) from a two-pronged needle – a process that hasn't been seen in this country in almost 30 years.

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth began vaccinating selected groups of its active duty personnel last month in accordance with the President's National Smallpox Vaccination Program that became effective Dec. 13, 2002. The decision was made as a cautionary and preventive measure should terrorists attempt to use the smallpox virus as a biological weapon.

"We've begun vaccinating certain personnel as ordered by the President," said Cmdr. (Sel) Rachel Haltner, Service Line Leader for Preventive Care and Wellness at NMCP. "The vaccine is being administered primarily out of concern for our servicemembers and their health.

It is very important and it is our responsibility to our Sailors and Marines to protect them if there is ever a threat of exposure to smallpox," she



Photo by JO2 Sarah Langdon

HMC(SW) Ted Plaugher, officer-in-charge of the Special Immunizations Clinic at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, gives the smallpox vaccine to MSCM(SW) Steven L. Kruse, Preventive Care and Wellness Senior Enlisted Leader in support of the Special Immunizations Clinic. The shot is administered through a series of jabs with a two-pronged needle.

explained.

The smallpox virus has been around for thousands of years with a death rate of 30 percent. The last case in the United States occurred in 1949 and the last case reported globally occurred in Somalia in 1977.

Due to the worldwide vaccination of the Earth's population, the smallpox virus was declared eradicated by the World Health Organization and vaccination of the general public was terminated.

This virus causes high fever, rash and highly contagious sores, raised bumps or spots. These bumps eventually transition into pustules, which

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DAPA NEWS

“Some truths about marijuana”

By HMI (SW) Luann Smith

It has been widely publicized that less than one percent of service members test positive for illegal drugs and that it's been that way for some time. The consistency of drug testing has played an important part in maintaining a drug-free environment in the military service.

Of those drugs showing positive in tests, one stands out as the drug of choice among illegal substances. That drug is marijuana, long considered by many to be “safer, fairly harmless and non-addicting”. Marijuana has even found approval in medical usage in some areas such as California for easing the pain and other symptoms of patients with certain cancers, AIDS and other serious and painful diseases. This approved usage continues to create tension with federal laws prohibiting its possession.

The truth about the marijuana of today is that it is stronger and more potent than that of the 70's. All forms contain THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol), which is the main active chemical. Up to 400 other chemicals can be found in the various forms which can make it very dangerous, especially when drinking alcohol or taking other drugs.

Marijuana is a mind-altering drug. Short-term effects can range from feeling nothing at all, relaxation, hunger (the munchies) and thirst, to sudden paranoia, problems with memory and learning, distorted perception, trouble thinking clearly and problem solving, loss of coordination, increased heart rate and anxiety. Users should know that even small traces of THC in the system can be detected several days after smoking it.

More heavy or chronic users can expect more permanent damage to memory, judgment and perception. Regular use affects the respiratory and immune systems and has played a role in some kinds of cancer. In heavy chronic users, traces of THC can continue to be detected for weeks after drug use has stopped. *Continued on Page 11*

An authorized publication of the Naval Medical Center, 620 John Paul Jones Circle, Portsmouth, VA 23708. The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the United States Navy.

The Courier is published monthly by the Public Affairs Office. Be sure to check out NMCP's website at:

www-nmcp.mar.med.navy.mil.

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How do I get something in The Courier?

The command's monthly publication provides an avenue to circulate all the useful information the Medical Center staff has to offer. Contact the Public Affairs Office at 953-7986, Fax 953-5118, via Guardmail, or you can E-mail the PAO, Lt. Jacky E. Fisher, at jefisher@mar.med.navy.mil.

Submissions should be on a disk in text or Word format with a paper copy attached. Photos are welcome and can be returned on request.

The Courier now comes out once a month. Send your submissions to the Public Affairs Office and we'll put it in the next current issue, space permitting. Submission deadline for the next issue is the 15th!

We are located in Bldg. One, Fourth deck, Room 411.

A Note from the Department of Neurosurgery

The Department of Neurosurgery is now located on the 4th floor of BLDG. 215.

Our new phone number is 953-9390. The duty pager remains the same: 669-7420.

Thank you.

3 Navy Knowledge Online website unveiled: Part 2

By JO1 Rebecca Perron

The Navy's training revolution took another step forward January 24 when the Navy Knowledge Online (NKO) website was unveiled. The concept, known as a "Personal Portable Web Page," is to create a tailored education and training plan for each Sailor.

Private industry is key to the revolution in training, as the Navy will use more civilian training programs already in place, making it easier for Sailors to relate their training and experience in the service to the civilian sector.

"If we use programs from the civilian community, then the translation between Navy jobs and civilian jobs is apparent," says Lt. Eric Morris, NKO program manager. "We can use industry standards instead of reinventing the wheel. We can update our training programs as the civilian community does. This ensures we keep pace and service members stay competitive for jobs once they decide to leave the service."

Another way for service members to stay competitive is through college degree programs. Task Force EXCEL is exploring new ways to help Sailors earn a college degree. The task force is working with the Naval Postgraduate School, the Naval War College and public universities to establish advanced degree opportunities.

Another pilot program in the works is called 'Blended Solution.'

"Blended Solution uses NKO to push information to someone who is scheduled to enroll in a school for advanced training," Morris says. "The person has the opportunity to study ahead of time, come into the class already knowing something. This reduces the time required for the school and minimizes time away from the command."

The idea of pushing information to the user based on their job and leadership role is the basis for the NKO website, whether in preparation for advanced training or advancement. Especially critical is information that users may not be aware they need.

"NKO is going to change the way people view advancing their career," Morris says. "When I came up through the ranks, I asked what I needed

to do. And the responses to my questions were based on personal experience rather than the Navy's viewpoint. Now, using NKO, anyone can look at their career map and see where they are and what they need to do.

"The current thought is that once the five-vector model is in place, the Navy can use that to target who has completed what they need for advancement," Morris says. "By taking the 'Wheel of Fortune' aspect out, the Navy is ensuring the most qualified candidates are advanced."

Another rapidly developing prototype is the 'Sea Warrior' program, which will affect the detailing process. "Sea Warrior is a web-based job brokering process that will use the five-vector model to match qualified candidates with job requirements. The most qualified candidates possessing the skills required would be the ones detailed to those positions."

This approach will improve the way the Navy considers individual capabilities and interests as the basis for job placement and training. The approach of the task force and all of its initiatives are affecting everything from advancement exams to job responsibilities. The training revolution and the NKO forum will transform the Navy into a more responsive and efficient learning organization that adapts and applies new technologies and war fighting tactics. The program's focus is on people, not hardware.

NKO is currently available to all active duty, reserve and retired Sailors and Marines, as well as all Department of the Navy civilian personnel. Access is scheduled to be available to active duty dependents (Navy and Marine Corps) within the next few months. A Secret Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNET) and shipboard version are in development.

New NKO users can log on by going to <http://www.nko.navy.mil> and clicking on the 'I'm a new user' button to register. The current target is to have the program implemented Navy-wide for all ratings by the end of the year. Visit the website <http://www.excel.navy.mil> to learn more about the Revolution in Training and Task Force Excel. ▼

NEHC's most junior Sailor receives high honors 4

By JO1 Daniel Bristol

Sometimes the most junior personnel are the most qualified, and sometimes they make the best candidates for certain awards. This was proven when Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's Naval Environmental Health Center's (NEHC) most junior Sailor was given a high honor. That honor was the NEHC Sailor of the Year award for 2002, a distinction given to HM2 Claude Copeland.

Copeland, leading petty officer for the NEHC Navy Drug Testing/Occupational Medicine Center, says he puts everything he has into his job.

"It's not about being the best," said Copeland. "It's about a team effort, and I believe I set the example for the team."

In addition to serving as the leading petty officer, Copeland volunteers a good portion of his time among many different special interest groups at the command.

"I have had many collateral duties during my time here at the hospital," he explained. "I'm the PRT coordinator and CFC coordinator. I've also been a part of the recreation committee and the hospital ball committee, to name a few. So between my regular duties as well as collateral duties, I keep myself pretty busy."

Copeland said he keeps himself busy at the command as well. Through the Navy's drug testing program and procedures, he has assisted in retaining five Sailors in the Navy. He also worked with the Management Information Department to improve the functionality of the office by improv-



HM2 Claude Copeland dedicates much of his time, not only to NEHC, but to other organizations such as the recreation committee, hospital ball and CFC as well.

ing the use of NEHC's command database program.

In his present position, Copeland works alongside many top-caliber physicians. He considers that a challenge that drives him to continually better himself and keep his skills up to, if not beyond, par.

"You really have to have all of your eggs in the basket working here because the best of the best is here at NMCP," said Copeland. "You have to know what you're talking about and know what you are doing if you are going to succeed. I'm always studying different (medical resources and training instructions) to keep my professional skills up to speed as well as my military skills. This also helps me perfect my leadership skills."

Keeping focused and staying true to your goals are two things

Copeland believes Sailors can do to help ensure a successful career.

"Whether or not you decide to make a 20-year career out of the Navy, don't let anything keep you from achieving your goals," he said. "You should also always maintain a certain level of professionalism, that way your colleagues and supervisors will always know that whatever you do, you do the best you can and whatever you can to get things done."

Copeland said the one aspect of his work ethic that he believes contributed most in achieving this high honor is sustained superior performance. He said he always tries to perform above what is actually expected of him by his superiors.

"If my chief thought enough of me to nominate me," said Copeland, "I felt I owed it to him to win." ▼

⁵ Emphasis on education keeps servicemembers informed and comfortable with vaccine

Continued from Page 1

form a crust and become scabs.

The disease usually runs its course in two weeks and is most infectious during the first seven to 10 days following onset of the rash. However, some individuals may be contagious during the first two to four days. The contagious period lasts until the last scab falls off.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the vaccine for smallpox is not made from the smallpox virus nor can it cause the disease smallpox. It contains live vaccinia – a pox like virus related to smallpox that is effective against smallpox. The present vaccine is the same vaccine that was used 30-plus years ago. This is the same vaccine used for the population's parents, grandparents and great-grandparents as well as our military personnel during World War I and II.

Under the Department of Defense policy, certain groups have been identified to be the first to receive the vaccine. A three-stage program is in place that identifies these groups and vaccinates them accordingly. The first stage, already in action at the medical center, includes first response teams, health care workers and active duty military personnel assigned to deployable platforms, such as fleet hospitals and surgical support groups.

NMCP is following a very strict screening process designed to identify certain factors and conditions that make a candidate ineligible to receive the smallpox vaccine in a pre-exposure environment. Before any individual receives the vaccine he or she is required to attend a mandatory training and education brief and subsequent question and answer session.

"We've found the education to be very positive for our personnel," Haltner explained. We've been very cautious and actively looking for and exempting people who should not receive this vaccine. We've gone to great lengths to educate our servicemembers, screen them and follow up on their care."

Not only is education an important medical part of vaccination, it also plays heavily into the

mental well-being of the hospital's staff. When the issue of anthrax vaccinations first came up in the 1990s, many military personnel expressed anxiety over receiving the vaccination. Some even refused to take the vaccination and were formally disciplined as a result.

"Everyone has to go through the training and education, and everyone has to get screened," Haltner said. "At the training we give everyone an opportunity to voice their concerns and ask questions. There are some people who have a little anxiety and are nervous about getting the vaccination. We sit down with them and actively listen to their concerns. They seem to feel better and are more comfortable, and to date we have had no personnel refuse to take the shot."

During the screening process, the servicemembers are asked questions pertaining to their health, past and present, and their home and work environment. Screeners ask about family members and roommates to ensure no one is unduly put at risk. Only one contraindication is required to cause an individual to be exempt, temporarily or entirely, depending on the situation.

Any individual with a history of skin conditions, such as eczema, psoriasis and even a present outbreak of severe acne, will be exempt from the shot. People who are immune deficient due to disease, medication or radiation are also exempt.

Other exemptions include breastfeeding mothers, mothers of children less than one year old and individuals who had allergic reactions to previous doses of the vaccine.

In the event of an outbreak, these individuals would likely get immunized if they were exposed to the virus, since the risk of death from the smallpox virus is far greater than the risk of a serious, adverse event from the vaccine.

The vaccine should prevent smallpox if given within four days of exposure. According to the CDC, the vaccine protects 95 percent of those vaccinated and provides immunity for three to five years. ▼

NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER PORTSMOUTH CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

“The Souls of Black Folk: Centennial Reflections”



The luncheon also featured an informative and inspirational PowerPoint presentation by HM2 J.J. Brown which highlighted influential African-Americans, such as Harriet Tubman and Louis Armstrong, throughout history.

The Command Heritage Committee hosted a luncheon in honor of Black History Month February 21 at the Sand Bar, located on the Naval Medical Center Portsmouth compound. The event, hosted by Ms. Sarah M. Montague, Chair, Command Heritage Committee, featured guest speaker YN2 Wallace Powell, recreating the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous speech, “I Have A Dream” and Poetry and Essay contest winners, Cmdr. Alverine Mack, USN (Ret) and Ms. Monique Dunnington. Both women read their pieces aloud for the attendees.



The event included a special demonstration from the Capoeira Uhuru Association, an Afro-Brazilian martial arts group.



The Power of Social Work: Preserving Rights and Strengthening Voices

Submitted by Lt.j.g. Amanda Neal, LCSW for Social Work Product Line

Dedicated Colleagues:

Thank you to all those devoted health care professionals who are committed to patient care. We as health care providers continue to strengthen our patient's ability to improve their own quality of life through empowerment. Every health care professional serves a vital role in helping to maintain the strength of the health care team. It is through teamwork that we support the operations as we continue to support one another.

In support, we would like to give special recognition and thanks during the month of March to the Social Work Product Line and to all those social workers who help to advocate for patients, policies and individual rights. The social work profession is unique in its versatility and myriad of services. The social worker uses a systems based theory in helping patients and families move towards resolution. Social workers are efficient in the negotiation of complex and sometimes exhausting systems, which may impede the progression of recovery. They have a comprehensive understanding of the resources available in their specialized area and a keen ability to access those resources. Social workers are also skilled and practiced in therapy, education, assessment and referral. It is through multiple talents and an ability to tap into both macro and micro systems that social workers have become an instrumental discipline serving to strengthen and enhance patient care in our Navy. Again, thank you to our Social Workers and to all of our dedicated health care professionals.

Please be encouraged to utilize the Social Work Product Line for their services and expertise. The theme for March 2003 focuses on allowing the power of social work to preserve rights and strengthen voices. May we accomplish this together as a team. ♣

Mail Order Pharmacy Change

HMHS, Louisville, KY -- The new TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy (TMOP) contract, administered by Express Scripts of Maryland Heights, MO, will replace the existing National Mail Order Pharmacy (NMOP) contract on March 1, 2003.

The TMOP will provide a worldwide, full-service mail order pharmacy program to all TRICARE-eligible beneficiaries.

Like the NMOP, the TMOP will offer TRICARE beneficiaries a cost-effective prescription resource that is especially well-suited to filling prescriptions for maintenance medications that are taken on a regular basis.

The TMOP service will be offered in addition to prescription services available to TRICARE beneficiaries through military and retail pharmacies.

Beneficiaries should continue using the NMOP for their mail order prescriptions through February 28, 2003. NMOP customers who have refills remaining on prescriptions on March 1 will be transferred to Express Scripts so they can continue ordering medications on time, with a few exceptions.

Beneficiaries who currently use the mail order pharmacy service will receive information about TMOP prior to its start date.

More information about the new TMOP program is available on the TRICARE Web site at **www.tricare.osd.mil**.

Beneficiaries may also visit the Express Scripts Web site at **www.express-scripts.com** for more information.

TRICARE Mid-Atlantic Region:
(800) 931-9501

Local servicemembers give gift of blood on Valentine’s Day

By JO1 Daniel Bristol

As the possibility of war looms heavily in the air like a thick fog, preparations are being made in many ways to ensure that Sailors have what they need to complete their mission.

One necessity, as far as those working at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth are concerned, is the need for blood. To make sure there is a large supply on hand, a blood drive was held February 14 at the School of Music, Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Va., from noon until 3:00 p.m.

Donations came from many different sources as the school is home to students from all four branches of the military. Marine Staff Sgt. Judson Howry, the blood drive coordinator for the school, said the drive was strictly for the students this time, but in the future he wants to try to open it up to the base. Howry said he expected between 50 and 75 units of blood from this drive.

This school, with the assistance of the Armed Services Blood Program at NMCP, sponsors a blood drive every three months. Howry said the

drive is planned usually two months in advance. Students still have to attend their classes, so they

have to donate during the free time between classes. Additionally, the room where the blood drive is held is also used as a classroom, so preparations have to be made to move those classes somewhere else during that afternoon.

According to HM1 Vicente Santos, a hospital corpsman working at NMCPs blood bank, the blood is collected in one-pint bags and transferred to test tubes. It is then shipped to Fort Hood, Texas, where it is to be tested and deemed suitable for use.

The blood is collected in bags and dispersed into test tubes through small tubes, allowing the blood to be used without contaminating the entire supply. This is also done so the blood in the bags will remain sterile. Santos said the blood supply in the bags is only good for a maximum of ten days, and the platelets in the blood are only good for five days.

The test tubes are used instead of opening the entire bag, and as a result, the blood and the platelets can last as long as possible.

Santos said that the first thing done when someone comes in to donate blood is take his or her vital signs. Their finger is then pricked to test the hemoglobin for the iron level. If the level of iron level is too low, the individual can’t donate for fear they might lose consciousness or pass out. Low levels of iron in the blood will make someone ineligible to donate, but otherwise most anyone can donate blood.

“We need all the blood we can get,” Santos explained, “so we don’t turn anyone away.”



A message from the Acting Secretary of Navy

Hansford T. Johnson

WASHINGTON (NNS) — The following is a message from the new Acting Secretary of the Navy Hansford T. Johnson to Department of the Navy uniformed and civilian personnel:

Greetings. On Feb. 7, 2003, President George W. Bush named me acting Secretary of the Navy. Our Navy and Marine Corps team has a remarkable history of service and dedication to our nation, and I am honored and proud to serve as your secretary.

The President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense have noted this is a time of great consequence for our country. Fortunately, our department has been blessed with the great leadership of Secretary of the Navy Gordon R. England and Under Secretary Susan M. Livingstone during these historic times. We salute these two great Americans for their service and vision as they leave the Department of the Navy and look forward to meeting the challenges still facing our Navy-Marine Corps team.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Vern Clark, Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Michael Hagee and I pledge to keep the Navy and Marine Corps at the forward edge of our military's transformation and focused on our combat capability. We will focus on our preparations to carry out our mission and equipping our men and women in uniform with the tools they need to fight and win.

To each of you who dedicate your lives to protect and serve our nation, I pledge my greatest efforts to improve your quality of workplace as well as your quality of life. The leadership team will work to ensure you are prepared and equipped to accomplish your mission. We are positive these investments, as they have for 227 years, will pay great dividends for America.

Together, we will meet every challenge. It is my honor to serve you. Semper fidelis and sail proud! 

Naval Reserve Enlisted Programs

Naval Reserve Recruiting Command Area Northeast

The Naval Reserve is seeking highly motivated individuals who are separating from active duty, but looking to maintain their ties with the Navy through the Naval Reserve.

We offer **signing bonuses for selected ratings, opportunities for rate changes, enlisted to officer programs** and a **possibility to earn extra money for college.**

The Naval Reserve Recruiting Command Area Northeast can assist you with your transition from active duty to that of a reservist working in the naval medical community. Give us a call today!

For more information please contact
NC1 Stacy A. Petrin, Navy Counselor
(757) 462-5742

'Making A Mark' children's exhibit kicks off

By JO1 Rebecca Perron

With parents and doctors making the decisions, the young cancer patients of the Pediatrics Hematology and Oncology Clinic at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth often have little choice over their treatment. Choosing which arm they get the needle stick may be the extent of a child's decisions regarding how the clinic cares for them.

The world of art, however, opens up many decision-making possibilities.

"Kids have to follow the parent's treatment choices," said Lt. Cmdr. Tim Porea, Head of the Pediatrics Hematology and Oncology Clinic. "Art therapy does a number of things to help them through the process. It helps distract from the experience of being in the clinic all day.

"Art gives them an opportunity to let us hear how they are feeling," Porea continued. "Art gives them a choice in what they draw, if they draw, and what medium. They have more of a feeling they can control what's going on around them through art. And they can choose if their work deals with cancer or not."

These children have the chance to show off their self-expression in an art exhibit called 'Making a Mark,' currently on display at the Children's Museum of Virginia in Portsmouth. The ribbon cutting ceremony was held February 8, and the show is available for viewing until March 31. "Making a Mark" started in September 1991 near the Texas



by JO1 Rebecca Perron

Visitors to the Children's Museum of Virginia in Portsmouth view the artwork created by some of the pediatric oncology patients at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth. The exhibit is expected to run through March 31.

Children's Hospital in Houston to highlight Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. This year's exhibit is the 12th annual. Each piece is from a child who has been touched by cancer or a related blood disorder. The artwork provides a unique focus on the personal issues of patients and their siblings.

The full exhibit in Houston contains 250 to 300 pieces and travels throughout Texas for one year before new art is selected for the following year's show. In addition to Virginia, partial exhibits have traveled to Japan, North Carolina and Washington, D.C.

Fifteen children from the NMCP clinic have artwork at the

children's museum that augment the pieces sent from Houston.

The artwork ranges from paintings, crayon drawings and relief work, such as masks, to poems, stories and photo collages.

The idea for the exhibit to travel from Houston to Hampton Roads came from Porea, who had seen it during his years of study at the children's hospital.

"I received a good bit of my medical training in Houston," Porea said. "I trained and worked there in pediatrics oncology for eight years. The hospital and the Periwinkle Foundation sponsor the exhibit and send it around Texas throughout the year.

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DASS says thanks to Security Patrol with lunch

By JO2 Sarah Langdon

The security guards assigned to Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's Security Department received a special treat on Valentine's Day when various staff personnel presented them with a special "thank you" lunch buffet. Members of NMCP's Directorate of Administrative Support Services, Healthcare Excellence and General Medicine Education departments all worked together to provide the security force with deli meats for sandwiches, banana bread and other desserts in a effort to say thank you for a job well done.

"The Security Patrol has been doing an extraordinary job and we wanted to show them some recognition and appreciation," said Anita Lewis, DASS awards coordinator and one of the organizers. "Last Monday, in the midst of the rain and cold, long lines and traffic, one of the security gentlemen smiled and told me to have a blessed day. They always take the time to tell you to have a great day. That really meant something to me."

The buffet was set up in the Security building where security personnel were able to come in a grab a bite to eat whenever they changed shifts or had a break.

"On behalf of Security," said David Smith, Security Officer for Naval Medical Center Portsmouth. "We really appreciate it." ▼

David Smith, Security Officer for Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, accepts a deli meat tray from Anita Lewis, awards coordinator for Directorate Administrative Services, Members of the NMCP patrol force were invited to sample the spread whenever they had a chance that day.



Photo by JO2 Sarah Langdon

Drug use and abuse ends careers; the bottom line ... users will get caught

Continued from Page 2

As with many drugs, every user does not get addicted. THC can be an addictive substance for one who may be predisposed, or has had previous serious antisocial problems. When a user begins to seek out and use marijuana compulsively they are said to be addicted or dependent on the drug. Many people entering drug treatment programs report

marijuana to be their primary drug of choice, showing they need help to stop using.

Finally, using marijuana can cause one problems in all aspects of their life, work, school, sports, and relationships with friends and family. A person is more likely to make stupid mistakes and take risks that could hurt you or others. They'll lose interest in

how they look, what they say or do, and how they get along with others.

The bottom line is, it only takes one positive urinalysis to begin mandatory processing for Administrative Separation, usually resulting in an Other than Honorable (OTH) discharge. Is your career and everything you've invested worth it? ▼

Additional Medical Staff Called to Comfort

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From National Naval Medical Center Public Affairs

BETHESDA, Md. (NNS) — Medical and support staff from National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) and several other Navy medical units in the region have been ordered to join the Navy's hospital ship *USNS Comfort (T-AH 20)* deployed to the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM). The deployment of more than 800 additional crew members will bring the ship up to its 1,000-bed hospital capability.

Comfort deployed January 6 as part of the repositioning of forces and assets in support of the President's global war on terror and future contingencies. One of two U.S. Navy hospital ships operated by the Military Sealift Command, Comfort's primary mission is to provide flexible medical response to support wartime operations.

When operating at full capacity, Comfort has a medical treatment facility staff of more than 1,200 active-duty Navy medical and hospital support personnel, and more than 60 Department of the Navy civil service mariners who operate the ship.

Comfort is equipped to care for the victims of all types of medical trauma including the effects of a chemical or biological attack.

Comfort will be staffed with an extensive variety of general and specialized services to

include trauma treatment, surgical and intensive care. Some specialty fields include OB/GYN, psychologists, radiologists, pharmacists, certified nurse anesthetists, laboratory technicians, physical therapists/technicians and medical administrators.

Supply and support personnel consist of Navy mess management specialists, communications specialists, flight deck operators and Navy chaplains.

Comfort's medical crew is comprised of personnel from the National Naval Medical Center and its branch medical clinics, as well as from other naval hospitals and clinics along the U.S. eastern seaboard.

The largest group of Navy medical and support personnel to staff the Comfort comes from NNMC.

As the hospital prepared to send more than 800 additional staff to join the more than 200 NNMC Sailors that deployed with the ship in January, Rear Adm. Don Arthur, NNMC commander, told the departing staff "there is nothing more important that we do than caring for our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines."

For related news, visit the National Naval Medical Center Navy NewsStand page at www.news.navy.mil/local/nnmc.



Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) steams toward her first port of call at Naval Station Rota, following her transit across the Atlantic from her home port of Baltimore, Md. The ship made a logistics stop and took on supplies and fuel on her way east in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and possible war with Iraq. U.S. Navy photo by PH2 Timothy Comerford.

Art allows patients or their siblings a way to express feelings on cancer through chosen medium

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When I received orders here in 2000, I asked the organizers if I could bring the exhibit to Virginia.”

Organizers from the children’s hospital agreed they would send the exhibit if Porea could find a place to host it. The children’s museum was the obvious choice, according to Porea and organizers from Houston and the museum and Porea began preparing for the show.

The exhibit debuted at the museum last year, with 110 pieces. The main exhibit gathered in Houston is open to children from all treatment centers and attracts submissions from around the world.

“Our kids are eligible to send their work to Houston, but only one did for last year’s show. Two more local kids contributed additional work to the display just while it was here. This year, we have 130 pieces from Houston, plus 15 from our kids.

“Some of the patients are too young or too sick to draw,” Porea noted. “So the exhibit is open to the patient’s siblings as well.”

Of the 130 pieces from Houston, approximately 45 are from children from outside the United States.

“I unpacked and hung each piece, one at a time,” Al Schweizer, site manager for the children’s museum, said. “I read each caption. It is very emotional. We had so much success with the show last year that we decided to ask for it back this year.”

Fourteen people visited the museum on the opening day of the exhibit, according to Schweizer. About 20,000 people will see the exhibit throughout its stay.

“Their work shows us and other people that

they have the same hopes and dreams as all kids and allows them to feel like other kids,” Porea said.

“They can communicate through another medium if they don’t feel like talking about what they are going through,” Schweizer said.

A comment book has been placed where visitors can send messages to the artists, allowing for communication about their work and their experiences.

“We have a comment book at the exhibit where visitors can write comments to the kids,” Schweizer said. “So far, I’ve read comments such as ‘We feel your pain’ and ‘Stay strong.’”

The book will be shipped back to Houston with the artwork at the close of the show. Artwork made for the kids in Texas by young visitors on opening day will also be sent with the book.

“They have more of a feeling they can control what’s going on around them through art. And they can choose if their work deals with cancer or not.”

-- Lt. Cmdr. Tim Porea

Eastern Virginia Medical School students hosted a hands-on art therapy session after the ribbon cutting ceremony.

When the show ends, Porea plans to ask the patients if the clinic can keep their work and hang it on the walls around the clinic. Porea hopes that the display in the clinic will encourage more kids to show off their work in next year’s exhibit.

He added that he is appreciative of everyone who helped out, including the children’s museum for hosting it.

The ‘Making a Mark’ Exhibit, which runs through March 31, is at the Children’s Museum of Virginia. It is open Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The museum is located in Olde Towne Portsmouth at the corner of High St. and Crawford St.



SAFETY PRESCRIPTION

FROM THE NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER PORTSMOUTH SAFETY OFFICE

PERSONAL SECURITY ACTIONS

Since 9/11, questions and concerns about safety and security have been on everyone's mind. To help ease some of that anxiety, the Safety Department has provided a list of things you can do to ensure both your and your family's safety.

Avoid packages and luggage that are left unattended. If you are on the NMCP compound, report suspicious packages or personnel to the Security Desk at extension 953-5225 or NSI Agent 953-5226. If you are off base, call 911.

When traveling on the road, don't get trapped in traffic – leave enough space around your car to navigate away from other vehicles.

Vary your routes of travel to and from work as well as other frequent destinations.

Attend events with someone – minimize the time you are traveling alone, and always let someone know where you are and when you will return.

Lock the doors on your house and vehicles. Take the time to perform a "walk-around" to look for suspicious indicators that your vehicle may have been tampered with before you enter it.

Pay attention to your surroundings and be alert for personnel who may be observing you.

Keep a low profile. Do not linger in public areas in uniform. Take off your military headgear while driving.

Review bomb threat procedures and ensure the Naval Medical Center Visual Aid is posted in your work center.

Stay on base for lunch or work breaks. Limit your exposure to possible terrorist attacks.

Eating wholesome food helps to reduce stress

Continued from Page 14

between 100 and 300 percent of the U.S. RDA for all vitamins and minerals, including the B vitamins, calcium, magnesium, and the trace minerals chromium, copper, iron, manganese, molybdenum, selenium and zinc. Vitamin E is safe in adult doses up to 400 IU. Vitamin C is safe up to 500 mg, unless you have a history of kidney stones.

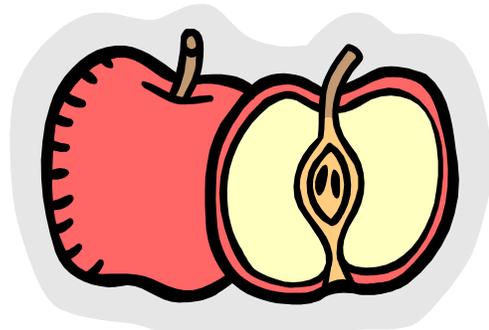
Vending machines can be a fairly good source of quick snacks. Unfortunately, NEX reports that most of the choices made at this command are candy bars and potato chips. Instead, try foods like peanuts, pretzels, raisins, trail mix, animal crackers, light products and low-fat items.

Better yet, bring your own fresh fruit or vegetables, whole-grain bagels or yogurt for snacks.

The Navy Environmental Health Center

has an excellent website that gives information on stress management, nutrition, and exercise which can be found at: www-nehc.med.navy.mil/hp.

Local health promotion class schedules can be found at: www-nmcp.mar.med.navy.mil/Wellness/index.asp. Remember, during stressful times, take the time to take care of yourself. ♣



¹² *Congratulations Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Award Recipients for November*

Defense Meritorious Service Medal

HMCS Michael C. Zaller

Meritorious Service Medals

Capt. Jeffrey J. Kuhn
Capt. Roderick F. Luhn
Capt. Jimmy D. Bowen
Capt. Martin Snyder
Capt. Cynthia B. Piccirilli
Capt. Christine D. Ehters
Capt. Richard W. Foley
Capt. Leo Kasuda
Capt. Joseph B. Slakey
Capt. Daniel V. Unger

Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal

Lt. Cmdr. William M. Davis
Maj. Ronald Delanois
Lt. Cmdr. David Cannon
Lt. Cmdr. Michael J. Elliott
Lt. Cmdr. Patrick L. Lawson
Lt. Cmdr. Jorge O. Leguizamo
HMC Marsha E. Burmeister
Cmdr. Robert B. Simpson
Lt. Joel W. Coots
MM1 Philip R. Barge
Lt. Cmdr. Neil M. King
HMCM Melissa M. Collins
Cmdr. Dominick A. Rascona
SK1 Bethanne A. Keeleytate

Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal

HM3 Valerie R. Dean
HM3 Jamie L. Neal
HM2 Byron M. Muse
MSCM Steven L. Kruse
HM3 Philip Baron
HM3 Joseph E. Sablada
HM3 Rochelle M. Mill
HM2 Peter Kensy
MA1 Richard M. Schwartz
HM3 Brian L. Owens
Lt.j.g. Sonsire Sterrett
HN Rachel L. Horton

Letters of Commendation

HM3 Eric J. Motz
HM3 Percy A. Mack
HM3 William E. Kelly
SK3 Andres A. Lopez
HM2 David N. Smith
HM3 Martin Dierks
HN Amber Logan
MS1 Melissa Whigham
MS3 Emmitt Bolton
MS2 Mervin Miller
MS2 Khalil Mayes
MS2 Joselin Desir
MS3 (SW) Thomas Lambert
MS3 Levar Coleman
MS3 Melissa Patchell
MS3 Jamie Vymetal
MS2 (SW) Samuel Hankins
MS2(SW) Chadwick Bradford

Letters of Appreciation

CM1 Douglas Spence
BUI John O. Ray
HN Katherine Stilgebouer
HM1 Romel Acquavers
HN Passion Brown
HN Elizabeth Swanson
HN Jennifer Lachance
HM1 Hector Soto
HM2 Rommel Galinato
HM1 Julie Wilcox
HM2 John Caole
HM3 Gregory Daniels
HM3 Joshua Ketzenberger
HN Daniel Belin
HN Argie Valdez
HN Lindsay Miliken
HM Reginald Burdette
HM2 Neal Smith
HM3 Errica Edwards-Garay
HM2 Davida Miller
MS3 Levar Coleman
RP1 Mary J Brown
HN Lawrence Librando
HM2 Tyson Rager
HN Mohammad Mayy
HM3 Michael Smith
HM2 Chris Stanley
HM1(AW) Lamar Bethel
HM1(SW/AW) David Lloyd
HM1(FMF) Ethan Wilson
HM1 Walter Moore
HM1 Joel Montalban
HM1 Travis Ferguson
HM2 Clarence Savage
HM3 Stewart Stevens
HM3 Pedro Ortiz
HM2 (SW) Stewart McKinley
HM2 Gilbert Valenzuela
HM2 Luis Hernandez

