A patient is escorted to the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20). Comfort is moored pier side in San Juan, Puerto Rico, to provide humanitarian relief. The Department of Defense is supporting the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the lead federal agency, in helping those affected by Hurricane Maria to minimize suffering and is one component of the overall whole-of-government response effort. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Stephane Belcher)

Docked well in view of the cityscape of San Juan sits the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) ready to help the people of Puerto Rico in any way possible.

A Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT), consisting of dozens of medical personnel from the U.S. Health and Human Services and Comfort’s medical staff, has been stood up ashore to provide administrative and medical services near the pier prior to patient care aboard. Patients are screened and evaluated by the DMAT to determine if further treatment aboard the hospital ship is necessary.

“The Puerto Rican Department of Health along with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has determined that being in close proximity to Centro Medico is the best utilization of Comfort to help relieve pressure on the Puerto Rican healthcare system,” said Capt. Kevin Robinson, mission commander aboard Comfort. “We’re going to […] have a great opportunity to reduce human suffering. That continues to be our number one goal.”

Since arriving on Oct. 27, Comfort and the surrounding medical staging areas have provided care for more than 270 patients from around the hurricane-ravaged island.

“Comfort has enabled us to see many patients,” said Ronda Lacey, a Health and Human Services (HHS) team lead on the island. “I am so proud of the individuals here and from the Comfort who are here to help. It is an honor and a service to be here.”

These sentiments are shared by fellow Puerto Ricans who are equally happy with the level of care and treatment from the many government entities involved in alleviating the afflicted in Puerto Rico.

“Everybody is real good, everybody has treated us great, it is great,” said Madeline Landarau, a citizen of Puerto Rico. “I don’t have words to explain it.”

Comfort is a seagoing medical treatment facility that currently has more than 850 personnel embarked for the Puerto Rico mission including Navy medical and support staff assembled from 22 commands, as well as over 70 civil service mariners.

The Department of Defense is supporting the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which coordinates all federal assistance requested by the government of Puerto Rico to help those affected by Hurricane Maria.

Comfort’s primary mission is to provide an afloat, mobile, acute surgical medical facility to the U.S. military that is flexible, capable, and uniquely adaptable to support expeditionary warfare. Comfort’s secondary mission is to provide full hospital services to support U.S. disaster relief and humanitarian operations worldwide.
that can think better and adapt faster will win. As we prepare for operations an intellectual contest between thinking and adapting adversaries. The team's maritime logistics and history, and personal and organizational successes. Submissions from MSC employees across the enterprise, touch on issues that can be a great aid in this area.

Our professional development as well. This can best be achieved through our commitment not only applies to our processes and procedures, but to our personal and organizational success. We are committed to continuous improvement and innovation. This is our responsibility as leaders and team members to continue to grow, intellectually challenge ourselves, and to question the status quo.

I encourage you to discuss with your teammates the ideas, concepts, and lessons from history you learn through reading books on this list and look for ways to use this knowledge to better inform the work we are doing at MSC.

MSC Reading List

As detailed in the Voyage Plan and Navigation Track, Military Sealift Command is committed to continuous improvement and innovation. This commitment not only applies to our processes and procedures, but to our professional development as well. This can best be achieved through honing our critical thinking and analysis skills. A regular diet of reading can be a great aid in this area.

MSC has developed a reading list that serves as a common frame of reference among our employees. These books, chosen from dozens of submissions from MSC employees across the enterprise, touch on issues which are of high relevance to our daily operations and include topics of maritime logistics and history, and personal and organizational success.

They reflect the diversity of thought and talent we have throughout MSC.

Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. John Richardson, provides a thoughtful perspective on the value of reading when he says, “Warfare is a violent, intellectual contest between thinking and adapting adversaries. The team that can think better and adapt faster will win. As we prepare for operations and war with an increasingly complex set of potential adversaries, we must do more to sharpen our thinking, learn the lessons from history, and expand our minds.”

The MSC 2017 Reading List is located on the MSC portal at the Commander’s Corner under Commander’s Links; and also on the MSC public website at http://www.msc.navy.mil/pao/ReadingList/MSCReadingList2017.pdf. Your supervisor can also provide you a copy of the reading list.

Our intent is to update this list annually so if you come across books you believe would be a good addition don’t hesitate to submit those titles to our Public Affairs office for our 2018 list.

It is our responsibility as leaders and team members to continue to grow, intellectually challenge ourselves, and to question the status quo.

U.S. TRANSCOM TRAILBLAZING TRANSITION TO CLOUD COMPUTING

By Michael P. Kleiman, U.S. Transportation Command

U.S. Transportation Command is the first Department of Defense organization to initiate the migration of its cyber domain to a commercial cloud provider to improve mission assurance, while strengthening information technology efficiency and effectiveness.

Last month, the first wave of five USTRANSCOM IT systems transitioned to a commercial cloud-based solution.

Relying heavily on the transportation industry to help accomplish its mission, USTRANSCOM faces significant challenges to provide transportation service providers timely information to carry out its tasks. As a result of this, and, in addition to the threat of a cyber-domain attack and the command’s aging electronic infrastructure, USTRANSCOM Commander Air Force Gen. Darren W. McDew subsequently directed the organization’s move to the cloud earlier this year.

The move will, among other things, allow USTRANSCOM to streamline and strengthen its security when working with industry partners while allowing them quicker access to vital transportation information.

In February, the command’s Cloud Center of Excellence stood up. Three months later, the CCoE, in collaboration with the Defense Innovation Unit Experimental, which underwrites pilot contracts for commercial innovation solving DoD problems in under 90 days, and the Army Contracting Command, Picatinny Arsenal, New Jersey, executed a contract for a prototype cloud-migration solution with REAN Cloud LLC, Herndon, Virginia. The contract established a USTRANSCOM protected enclave within a government-authorized cloud environment.

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"The command’s transition to a cloud-based solution not only enhances mission assurance, but controls IT infrastructure costs and strengthens cyber agility, resiliency and innovation," said Air Force Lt. Col. John Rieker, deputy chief, Enterprise Infrastructure Portfolio and Support Division, USTRANSCOM’s Command, Control, Communications and Cyber Systems Directorate. "This transformational move to the cloud also allows us to keep pace with industry."

In addition, by year’s end, the CCoE will migrate capability onto a cloud-native platform and transition 22 applications to a commercial cloud service provider including 19 systems associated with one of its three components, the U.S. Army’s Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command collocated on Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. All other USTRANSCOM programs will migrate to the contracted commercial cloud provider by July 2018.

"In transitioning to proven commercial cloud technology, USTRANSCOM pays only for services used, while the commercial cloud service provider manages and adjusts the command’s flexible IT footprint in minutes and with near-perfect reliability,” stated Wes Schooley, chief, Enterprise Engineering Branch, Command, Control, Communications and Cyber Systems Directorate. “As acting as the pathfinder, USTRANSCOM leads the DoD in cloud migration, demonstrating increased transparency, risk tolerance, experimentation and innovation.”
The Navy christened the Expeditionary Sea Base future USNS Hershel "Woody" Williams (T-ESB 4) during a ceremony Saturday, Oct. 21, at General Dynamics NASSCO, San Diego.

The Hershel "Woody" Williams is the first ship to bear the name of Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer Hershel Woodrow Williams, the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient recognized for heroism at the Battle of Iwo Jima during World War II.

Maj. Gen. Eric M. Smith, commanding general, 1st Marine Division, delivered the ceremony's principal address. Williams' daughters, Tracie Jean Ross and Travie Jane Ross, who serve as the ship's sponsors, will break a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow to formally christen the ship, a time-honored Navy tradition.

"This ship honors a man who dedicated his life to service—heroic service as a Marine and continued service to his fellow veterans," said the Honorable Richard V. Spencer, secretary of the Navy. "This dedication will live on in USNS Hershel 'Woody' Williams as the ship is deployed around the world bringing additional capability to our growing fleet. The ceremony on Saturday will also represent the dedication to service demonstrated by the men and women who worked tirelessly to build this ship and their commitment to quality and innovation."

The future Hershel "Woody" Williams is optimized to support a variety of maritime-based missions and designed around four core capabilities: aviation facilities, berthing, equipment staging support and command and control assets. ESBs can be enhanced to meet special operations force missions through increased communications, aviation and unmanned aircraft system support.

Built by General Dynamics NASSCO, the Montford Point-class is comprised of five ships across two variants: expeditionary transfer docks and expeditionary sea bases. USNS Montford Point (ESD 1), USNS John Glenn
COMFORT WELCOMES NEWEST ADDITION
By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Ernest R. Scott

The sound of two bells rang through the passageways of the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) as the announcement passed over the ship’s one main circuit.

“Sara Victoria Llul Rodriguiz, born this day Oct. 14, arriving!”

With Comfort underway in the vicinity of San Juan, Puerto Rico, providing medical assistance throughout a region devastated by Hurricane Maria, the birth of Sara aboard the ship was a reminder of the work to be done, but also hope for the future of the island.

“I never thought that our special moment would happen here on this ship,” said Francisco Llul Vera, Sara’s father. “Everyone has been so helpful and gentle while caring for our baby. I hope this opens the door for those who still need help to seek out the Comfort.”

At 6 pounds 8 ounces, Sara may be small, but her presence is mighty. Her birth on Comfort gained the attention of the Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rossello who said this has been a bit of good news that has gone across the island. Capt. Kevin Robinson, Comfort’s mission commander, said the special occasion is one felt throughout the ship.

“Sara Victoria Llul Rodriguiz, born this day Oct. 14, arriving!”

Sara’s birth was one felt throughout the ship, as indicated by a special declaration issued by the ship’s master.

“The last birth aboard Comfort occurred on Jan. 21, 2010, while the ship was providing humanitarian relief in support of Operation Unified Response following a 7.0 magnitude earthquake that caused severe damage in Haiti. Recognizing the rarity of the situation, Comfort’s current Ship’s Master Roger Gwinn ceremoniously renamed one of the ship’s two small boat tenders the Sara Victoria.

“We wanted to do something special, the crew has taken to the baby as one of our own,” said Gwinn. “As she goes forward in life, we hope she carries Comfort with her.”

As of Oct. 15, Comfort has delivered more than 10 tons of food and water, 21,000 liters of oxygen, and treated more than 100 patients to relieve pressure on the Puerto Rican health system.

DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY, USNS SUPPLY DELIVER PRODUCE FOR SAILORS ABOARD USS OAK HILL
By Shawn J. Jones, DLA Troop Support Public Affairs

When acquisition professionals at the Defense Logistics Agency Troop Support received an emergency order to stock the galley of a Navy ship performing hurricane-relief operations, they raced against the clock to ensure the Sailors had fresh produce to fuel their efforts.

The USS Oak Hill was operating in the Caribbean, ready to help those affected by Hurricane Irma. The ship was running low on fresh fruits and vegetables and would need to be replenished by the USNS Supply, a Military Sealift Command ship docked at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia. The USNS Supply was set to depart Sept. 9 on a mission to replenish several ships operating in the Caribbean, including the Oak Hill.

Larry Munoz, a field representative for the DLA Troop Support’s Subsistence supply chain, with the help of fellow Subsistence acquisition professionals, received and executed several emergency orders to stock the Supply.

But the order for the Oak Hill wasn’t submitted due to a communications error. By the time the error was corrected, only four hours remained before the Supply would close its cargo holds in preparation for departure.

“I think the birth of that little girl has reinvigorated the crew,” said Robinson.

One of Comfort’s primary missions is to provide full hospital services to support U.S. disaster relief and humanitarian operations worldwide. Although fully equipped, capable and ready to support, Sara’s delivery came to many as a welcome surprise.

“We stood up the labor and delivery ward prior to getting underway,” said Lt. Karri Washbon, a labor and delivery nurse aboard Comfort who assisted with Sara’s birth. “We expected to see a lot of patients, but we weren’t sure how often we’d get to utilize this aspect. With every birth, there is a unique story and we are glad to be a part of their experience. Now everyone just wants to see the baby!”

While more than 800 medical personnel and support staff aboard Comfort want to greet their newest “shipmate,” Sara’s 6-year-old brother Alonzo and 4-year-old sister Sofia, who are currently staying with family ashore in Puerto Rico, anxiously wait her return.

“They are so excited to meet her,” said Tania Rodriguez Ramos, Sara’s mother. “I got the chance to call my family and let them know that I am ok and that the baby is healthy and happy. It’s a huge blessing for Sara to be here; I owe everything to the doctors and nurses and everyone aboard.”

The last birth aboard Comfort occurred on Jan. 21, 2010, while the ship was providing humanitarian relief in support of Operation Unified Response following a 7.0 magnitude earthquake that caused severe damage in Haiti.

“We wanted to do something special, the crew has taken to the baby as one of our own,” said Gwinn. “As she goes forward in life, we hope she carries Comfort with her.”

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With no time to waste, subsistence professionals went to work, trying to figure out how the crew of the Oak Hill could receive the fresh produce. Dave Jolls, who manages Subsistence’s produce and market fresh division, said he had a vested interested seeing the order filled.

“I know how it feels to be on a ship and not receive those fresh fruits and vegetables,” said Jolls, who spent 24 years in the Navy.

Getting the order to the Oak Hill would prove to be a complicated process, Jolls said.

The primary vendor with an established Subsistence contract was unable to deliver the items in time. So Jolls had to coordinate with vendors in the Norfolk area who were capable and willing to coordinate with the vendor under contract to meet the requirements.

Jolls said he didn’t expect to be able to meet all of the Oak Hill’s requirements, but would try to fill at least some of the order.

“We weren’t looking for 100 percent, because it was last-minute, and you don’t know what the vendors have in stock,” he said.

It also proved difficult to find a short-notice delivery driver who could access the military installation with minimal delay.

Jolls and Munoz, also a Navy veteran, worked the phones, drafted contracting documents and fired off email after email in an attempt to accomplish their part of the mission.

“It was tough, but it was good,” Jolls said. “It was all hands on deck, the whole nine yards, all in the matter of a couple of hours.”

Their efforts paid off as the driver made the full delivery with no time to spare.

Navy Lt. Tam Colbert, a logistics support officer in Naval Supply Systems Command’s Fleet Logistics Center in Norfolk, said she thought there wouldn’t be enough time for the vendor to make the delivery, but she placed the request anyway.

“To our surprise, Larry said ‘Send the order in,’ she said.

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Civil Service Mariners Conduct Survey for Comfort’s Continued Support

By Petty Officer 2nd Class Stephane Belcher, Navy Medicine East

Civil service mariners (CIVMARs) aboard the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) surveyed berths for the ship along the shore of Ponce, Puerto Rico, Oct. 23.

It’s not typical to conduct hands-on surveys of a pier, but after traumatic experiences, like hurricanes, there could be damage to the piers—when someone needs to make sure the pier is still structurally sound.

“Today’s mission was a reconnaissance mission of the port,” said Grant. “To see if we can do a similar [patient] tender ops, like we did in Arecibo, and also the possibility of maybe pulling in the entire Comfort vessel because there’s a container terminal there. To see if it was able to support us, similar to what we did in San Juan.”

Ensuring there’s no obstruction that occurred in the port is vital, especially with a ship as large as Comfort. But the 85 CIVMARs working around-the-clock for this hybrid ship provide much more. They support the military treatment facility (MTF) by ensuring the ship is operational.

“We work seamlessly together,” said First Officer Andrew Cheng, “There’s the hull side, which is the operations of the ship. We navigate, we communicate and we operate the plans and all the facilities on board while the MTF operates the hospital. We provide them with the ability to operate the hospital. We get them there, we drive the ship.”

Trenton’s Crew Features Reserve SAR Swimmers

By Matthew Montgomery, Military Sealift Command Europe

The MILDET helps foster theater security cooperation, preserve freedom of the seas, and promote peace and regional stability. Trenton is currently assigned to Commander Naval Forces Europe-Africa (CNE-CNA), and operates in the U.S. Navy’s 6th Fleet Area of Operations (AOO).

Trenton’s adaptive force package includes two seven-meter rigid-hull inflatable boats (RHIB) with corresponding boat crews. Each crew has two boatswain mates, two engine man and a search-and-rescue (SAR) swimmer. They are AFP mission enablers when responding to emergencies, such as casualty evacuations (CASEVAC), unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) waterborne recovery, as well as migrant and other maritime scenarios. Additionally, the AFP boat crews are prepared to support other task force element missions and conduct foreign military-to-military training exercises and engagements in the AOO.

So far Trenton’s boat crews have conducted multiple at-sea and in-port training and operational evolutions, accumulating over 50 hours of SAR and CASEVAC drills and UAV standby recoveries. They have also conducted medical evacuation litter retrieval exercises with Trenton’s MSC civilian mariner crew, referred to as CIVMARs.

Currently, the two MILDET boat crews are made up of two active duty and six reserve component Sailors. The two SAR swimmers are both reserve Sailors from the Navy Reserve Littoral Combat Ship units, one of which was instrumental in the development of the reserve SAR swimmer program.

Boatswain’s Mate 1st Class Gregorio Bianchini has been in the Navy Reserves for 14 years and was one of the key driving forces behind the creation of the reserve SAR swimmer program. He is from North Plainfield, New Jersey, and works as a pilot and student in his civilian career.

Machinist’s Mate 2nd Class Jared Aellis has been in the Navy Reserves for three years. He is actively pursuing and plans to apply for the Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewman (SWCC) program upon returning from his current mobilization. SWCC are responsible for operating a variety of small boats in direct support of Navy SEALs and other special operations forces.

Aellis is the first non prior-service Sailor to ever qualify as a SAR swimmer. He lives in Freehold, New Jersey, and is currently a student at Brookdale College pursuing a degree in psychology.

During their deployment aboard Trenton, Bianchini and Aellis have already completed over 25 hours of SAR sustainment training and 11 RHIB operations. Both reserve Sailors are current on all SAR required training including six-at-sea rescue litter evolutions. They have also conducted 20 hours of SAR classroom training with presentations provided by Afloat Training Group.

“Together, they helped improve the Maintenance Material Management Schedule, known as the 3M SKED program, for the boats and successfully put together a parts requirement list which resulted in 100% of the required shipboard allowance being ordered. This contributed directly to ensuring proper boat maintenance. They also used their SAR swimmer expertise to improve the SAR required equipment aboard Trenton, and their efforts have directly led to improvement in future planning for U.S. 6th Fleet and MSC in regards to the T-EPF AFP concept of operations.”

Comfort is a seagoing medical treatment facility that currently has more than 800 personnel embarked for the Puerto Rico mission including Navy medical and support staff assembled from 22 commands, as well as the 85 CIVMARs.

The Department of Defense is supporting the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which coordinates all federal assistance requested by the government of Puerto Rico to help those affected by Hurricane Maria.

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USNS BRITTIN DEPARTS VIRGINIA TO SUPPORT HURRICANE RELIEF EFFORTS IN PUERTO RICO

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command’s dry cargo surge sealift carrier USNS Brittin (T-AKR 305) departed from Newport News to provide logistical support for ongoing hurricane relief efforts in Puerto Rico, Oct. 25.

“Prior to departing, Hampton Roads, vital hurricane relief equipment and stores were loaded aboard the ship,” according to Rick Caldwell, a Military Sealift Command supervisory marine transportation specialist. “Brittin is sailing to Charleston, South Carolina, to pick up additional hurricane relief equipment and supplies to be transported to Puerto Rico. They will also be bringing worn equipment back to the U.S. mainland to be refurbished.”

“With the devastation that Puerto Rico has sustained, all of the cargo Brittin will be delivering is critically needed to support the re-building of the island’s infrastructure,” added Caldwell.

Some of the equipment Brittin is transporting to Puerto Rico includes mobile water buffalo trailers, prime movers and rough terrain container handlers, according to Caldwell.

Brittin is also delivering portable generators, water purification systems, and portable cell phone charging stations and support vehicles.

“Brittin is crewed by 32 contract mariners,” added Caldwell. “The mariners maintain the safe and efficient operation of the vessel for MSC, from re-building pumps in the engine room to operating the cranes for heavy lifts, while they perform routine maintenance on the vessel.”

Brittin is a large medium speed roll-on, roll-off cargo carrier, which is capable of conducting cargo operations at anchor or pier-side. Brittin can conduct cargo operations from four areas aboard; from the stern ramp, side-port ramp for roll on, roll off operations, and port and starboard side for lift-on, lift-off requirements.

Brittin is self-sustaining cargo vessel with four cranes and external and internal ramps to roll cargo on and off and into the hulls. It has two 110-ton Hagglunds deck crane pedestals mounted with twin cranes to lift cargo through three hatches,” added Kimberly Harris, an MSC transportation specialist. “It can carry various cargos from wheeled to containers and break bulk secured on six decks and in six holds.”

USNS Brittin’s namesake is Medal of Honor recipient Sgt. 1st Class Nelson V. Brittin, an American combat Soldier who was killed in action during the Korean War. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions in Yonggong-ni, Korea, on March 7, 1951.

“Brittin is in service for this specific disaster relief operation. However, they requested support from the USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) typically works with civilians on missions. However, they requested support from the Department of Defense for this specific disaster relief operation.

OFDA’s mission is to save lives, alleviate human suffering, and reduce the economic and social impact of disasters,” said Kate Legates, the deputy team leader of the Disaster Assistance Response Team. “If there’s a unique capability of the U.S. military to respond to a disaster, we will request it.”

OFDA and JTF-LI maintained two water desalination operations on Sint Maarten, providing clean water for the residents.

“People who have been affected by the storms have been very appreciative,” said Legates. “We do our best when we are one coordinated U.S. government team. It’s been really great to be a part of that.”

Spearhead continues to provide in-theater lift support to HA/DR efforts in the Caribbean while deployed as part of Southern Partnership Station 17.

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet (USNAVSO/FOURTHFLT) supports U.S. Southern Command’s (US SOUTHCOM) joint and combined military operations by employing maritime forces in cooperative maritime security operations to maintain access, enhance interoperability, and build enduring partnerships in order to enhance regional security and promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the Caribbean, Central and South American regions.

USNS SPEARHEAD TRANSPORTS TROOPS FROM SINT MAARTEN TO MARTINIQUE

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Kristen Cheyenne Yarber, Southern Partnership Station 17 Public Affairs

Expeditinary fast transport vessel USNS Spearhead (T-EPF 1) picked up Joint Task Force- Leeward Islands (JTF-LI) personnel at Philipsburg, Sint Maarten, Sept. 29.

Thirty-one people, including U.S. military personnel and members of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), boarded Spearhead and loaded their equipment into the ship’s mission bay.

“No-food items and humanitarian aid and disaster relief equipment were loaded onto the ship,” said Lt. John Graff, the operations officer for the military detachment embarked aboard Spearhead.

The leadership element of JTF-LI requested Spearhead’s assistance in transportation and equipment lift from Sint Maarten to the island of Martinique. JTF-LI relocated their headquarters to Martinique after Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, the previous location of their headquarters.

JTF-LI worked in conjunction with members of USAID to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR), after Hurricane Irma caused significant damage to the island of Sint Maarten.

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NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

By Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Neil P. McNulty, the president of Eggleston, addresses Military Sealift Command service members and civilian teammates during the National Disabilities Employment Awareness Month Special Observance, Oct 24. (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

CIVILIAN TEAMMATES AND SERVICE MEMBERS

National Disability Employment Awareness Month is held annually to recognize the significant contributions of American workers with disabilities make each day.

The keynote speaker for the event was Neil McNulty; the president of Eggleston, one of Virginia’s largest, oldest and most respected non-profit organizations for employment and services for persons with intellectual and physical disabilities.

“Persons with significant disabilities often face an uphill climb in the workplace,” said McNulty. “Some of the challenges that persons with disabilities face include limited mobility and trouble communicating."

"But when it comes to employment, what usually happens is once an organization hires a disabled person, that organization discovers they have an extremely valuable teammate who loves their job," said McNulty.

The special observance included a video presentation focused on disability etiquette mistakes. According to the video, there are some common mistakes people make when interacting with the disabled.

“First, one should not grasp a visually impaired person’s arm to guide them someplace. Most visually impaired people would prefer to take your arm and have you guide them to your destination. Be sure to warn them of any obstacles,” according to the video.

“Secondly, shouting at someone with a hearing impairment actually makes it more difficult to understand you so just speak in your normal voice and volume and make sure the person can see you,” the presentation continued.

“Thirdly, talking to guide-dogs before their owners. We all love dogs, but it is considered to be rude to pay attention to a guide-dog before addressing its owner. So always talk to the person, not the dog,” the video continued.

“Standing up when talking with a wheelchair user could cause the person to develop a stiff neck from looking up at you while you talk,” according to the video. “Try to position yourself at a similar level as the person you are talking with.”

“Finally, don’t assume you know how to assist a person with disabilities,” the video concluded. “It is better to ask the person you are trying to assist how you can best help them.”

Military Sealift Command and the Department of Defense has an ongoing commitment to an inclusive total force where qualified men and women of all walks of life can pursue their full potential.

CHANGES ARE COMING TO TRICARE: ARE YOU READY TO TAKE COMMAND OF YOUR HEALTH?

By Naval Hospital Jacksonville

Changes are coming to your TRICARE benefits beginning Jan. 1, 2018. These changes will give you more benefit choices, improves your access to care, simplifies cost shares, and allows you to take command of your health.

“Taking command of your health means empowering you to make the right health care and coverage choices for you and your family,” said Lt. Cdr. William Bennett, Naval Hospital Jacksonville director for healthcare business. “Leading up to Jan. 1, 2018, we will connect you with TRICARE resources to navigate your benefit questions.”

The best way for you to prepare now is to update your information in DEERS at:
https://TRICARE.mil/plans/eligibility/DEERS

Sign up for TRICARE benefit updates at: www.TRICARE.mil/subscriptions

Visit TRICARE changes at: https://TRICARE.mil/about/changes.

Here are changes that you will need to know about:

Region Consolidation

Currently, there are three TRICARE regions in the U.S.: North, South and West. The North and South regions will combine on Jan. 1, 2018 to form TRICARE East, while TRICARE West will remain mostly unchanged. Two new contractors, Humana Military, and Health Net Federal Services will administer these regions. This change will allow better coordination between the military hospitals and clinics and the civilian health care providers in each region.

"The theme for this year’s observance was ‘Inclusion Drives Innovation’, which was intended to highlight the contributions that individuals with disabilities provide to the total work force effectiveness,” said Information Systems Technician Second Class Allison Shorter, the mistress of ceremonies for the event. “Each year we observe National Disability Employment Awareness month from Oct. 1-31 as an opportunity to reaffirm the Department of Defense’s commitment to recruit, retain and advance people with disabilities throughout our workforce.

“National Disability Employment Awareness Month began on Aug. 11, 1945, with the signing of President Harry S. Truman’s signing of proclamation 2664. Whereas the people of this Nation are determined to foster an environment in which those of their fellow citizens who have become physically handicapped can compete to make their rightful contribution to the work of the world and can continue to enjoy the opportunities and rewards of that work,” according to Shorter.

TRICARE Prime

TRICARE Prime is a managed care program option. An assigned PCM provides most of your care. When you need specialty care, your PCM will refer you to a specialist. Active duty service members and their family members do not pay anything when referred to a network provider by their PCM. All others pay annual enrollment fees and network co-payments.

Enrollment

All current TRICARE beneficiaries will be automatically enrolled into plans on Jan. 1, 2018 as long as they are eligible. TRICARE Prime enrollees will remain in TRICARE Prime. TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra beneficiaries will be enrolled in TRICARE Select. During 2018, you can continue to enroll in, or change coverage plans.

In fall 2018, TRICARE will introduce an annual open enrollment period. During this period, you will choose whether to continue, or change your coverage for the following year. Each year the open enrollment period will begin on the Monday of the second full week in November, and run through the Monday of the second full week in December.

Are You Ready? Take Action Now!

You can begin to prepare for the upcoming changes now:

* Sign up for a DS Logon: https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/identitymanagement/authenticate. do?execution=e41
* Update your personal information in DEERS: https://TRICARE.mil/Plans/Eligibility/DEERS

This is Your Benefit - Take Command! Stay informed with the latest information.

In the coming months, more information will be available at:
https://TRICARE.mil/about/changes.

To stay informed, sign up for email alerts at www.TRICARE.mil/subscriptions.

You can also get alerts by signing up for eCorrespondence in miConnect at: www.TRICARE.mil/eCorrespondence.

By staying informed, you’ll be ready for a smooth transition with TRICARE.
In October 2017, both Aellis and Bianchini assisted MSC with a five-day Fast Rescue Boat Driver Training course for the ship’s CIVMAR crew. They participated in the course as SAR swimmers and spent time in the water allowing the boat crews to learn, practice and certify in SAR swimmer insertion and retrieval.

“Having the MILDET Reserve SAR swimmers aboard allowed MSC to complete and certify this course and develop a plan for the integration of MILDET SAR swimmers as part of the ship’s Fast Rescue Boat team,” said Andy Peretti, Trenton chief mate. “This was previously exclusive to the CIVMAR crew.”

Bianchini is also certified as a second-class swim tester and spent four hours in a local Rijeka, Croatia, city pool conducting second class swim qualification for the MILDET crew. This allowed three members to obtain their second-class swim qualification and enhance the MILDET’s mission readiness. Aellis assisted a safety swimmer in the pool, thus assuring a safe training evolution.

Nathan Grant, 3rd officer aboard the U.S. Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20), places the name "Sara Victoria," the first baby born aboard the ship since 2010, on one of Comfort’s two patient tenders. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Stephane Belcher)