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MEDNEWS #01-26

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MN012601. TRICARE University Opens to Public

Cyberspace - TRICARE University, an on-line version of the TRICARE Basic Student Course, is now available to anyone who wants an improved understanding of the TRICARE benefit. TRICARE University introduces its students to the health care benefits available for uniformed services beneficiaries and family members. In addition, this course provides customer service guidance and an overview of TRICARE administration.

TRICARE University consists of 13 lessons, practice questions and non-graded examinations that are accessible at the end of each lesson. The questions reinforce lesson content and promote learning with immediate feedback and, if necessary, guided review.

A "Course Objectives" button takes students through information related to objectives, prerequisites, and requirements. Those new to the TRICARE University's web-based learning environment can use the "Navigation Tutorial" section to learn how to navigate through the various features and functions available in the course.

At the end of this course, students will be able to recall the basic benefits of TRICARE options, pharmacy and dental programs, to match available health benefit options with beneficiary eligibility status and category, calculate costs, and file claim forms. They will also be able to find a list of resources available on the Internet and from TRICARE Management Activity if they need further information.

TRICARE University can be found on the TRICARE Web site at 199.211.83.208/public/homepage.html or by going to www.tricare.osd.mil, clicking on "Browse by Topic" to get the drop-down menu, and then selecting TRICARE University.

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MN012602. Jacksonville Sponsors Special Delivery Baby Service
By Terresa D. White, Naval Hospital Jacksonville

Jacksonville, FL - Deployed Jacksonville Sailors who are soon-to-be fathers no longer have to wait for "snail mail" to see a photo of their

baby. Thanks to Naval Hospital Jacksonville's medical photographers, they now receive a digital photograph of their new son or daughter via e-mail.

With the parent's permission, the hospital's photographers visit the nursery and take digital photographs of the newborns. They are then e-mailed to up to ten people of the parent's choice, including to dad, if he's deployed.

"Taking photos of our babies is one of the highlights of my day," said HM2 Michael Morgan, a medical photographer at the hospital. "When I come in to take the photo, the family is thrilled about their new baby. Everyone is happy and I feel great because it allows me to participate in their celebration."

It's not just dads who are thrilled with the new family-friendly service. One set of grandparents living in Hawaii were elated to get a photo of their new grandson even before he left the hospital.

"We're being swamped with e-mails from family and friends thanking us for the photo and encouraging us to keep the service going," said LCDR Terry Lane, head of customer satisfaction at the hospital.

As a result of the new e-mail service, several parents are getting happy phone calls from family and friends even before mom has been discharged from the hospital.

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MN012603. San Diego Holds Baby Bash Reunion

By J01 Sonya Ansarov, Naval Medical Center San Diego

San Diego - Graduates of the Naval Medical Center San Diego's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), together with their families, friends, and staff recently gathered for their 18th annual reunion.

Co-Sponsored by the Medical Center and the San Diego Armed Services YMCA, the event honors the center's tiniest, most vulnerable infants and their families. Former patients received graduate recognition and awards were presented for the smallest, longest NICU stay, and greatest distance traveled to attend the reunion.

The reunion allowed families to meet others with similar experiences and doctors and nurses a chance to see their former patients. It also gave parents a chance to say thank you to the staff who took care of their children in need.

"It's an incredible event. My son loves coming here. It makes him less afraid of the hospital, and he loves to see his doctors and nurses," said Debrah Sade, mother of 4-year-old NICU survivor Brandon. Brandon was born 10 weeks early and weighed only two pounds.

Brandon's physician was LT Timothy Dwyer, MC, who was thrilled to see his former patient.

"This is such a great event. I've been away from the hospital for three years and now I have the chance to see kids that I took care of who are now growing up and are healthy. It really makes me feel good," said Dwyer.

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Naval Medical Center San Diego is the largest Armed Forces facility of its kind.

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MN012604. Navy Medicine Reserve Force: More Than a Helping Hand

By LT Mike Robinson, Naval Reserve Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Unit 106

Navy Medicine is improving its readiness by implementing a new operational and personnel initiative that will more fully integrate the Medical Reserve Force into day-to-day activities and global operations than before. The Navy Medical Reserve Utilization Program (MEDRUP) will make it

easier for Reservists to meet fleet command and parent command requirements, improve the overall effectiveness for utilization of the Medical Reserve Force, and maximize medical and dental Naval Reserve readiness.

VADM Richard A. Nelson, MC, Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery; VADM John B. Totushek, Commander of the Naval Reserve Force; and RADM John F. Brunelli, Commander of the Naval Surface Reserve Force signed a Memorandum of Understanding that will enhance the Medical Reserve Force's flexibility and response time. Among many other MEDRUP benefits is an increase in the quality, quantity and variety of assignments, improved training, job satisfaction, working relationships with sponsoring commands, and, ultimately, the reduction in vacant billets by improving billet-to-personnel matching and increasing peacetime contributory support.

"For individual Selected Reservists, this change will mean we will be employed more effectively doing important work in support of Navy Medicine's worldwide responsibilities on shore, in the field with the Marine Corps and in the Fleet," said BUMED Assistant Chief for Reserve Force Integration RADM William J. Lynch, MC.

MEDRUP is helping the medical units of the Naval Reserve Force make the transition from a "a force in reserve" to a force that can be seamlessly integrated into active components to support the full spectrum of direct support and "tip of the spear" operational requirements.

"The role of the Medical Reserve Force has changed," said MEDRUP manager CDR William Arbaugh, MSC. "MEDRUP allows us to be integral team members by being available whenever and wherever required by the Navy."

For more information on MEDRUP and the Navy Medicine Reserve Force visit: navymedicine.med.navy.mil/organizations/res_force_integration.htm.

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MN012605. Pensacola's Master Chief Retires

By Rod Duren, Naval Hospital Pensacola

Pensacola, FL - Naval Hospital Pensacola's master chief of the command, Randy Kafka, retired this week, after almost three years at the hospital and more than 31 years of naval service.

His career has taken him to Vietnam, Iceland, Diego Garcia, New York, Bermuda, Canada, Sicily, Bahrain, and finally, to his new home in Northwest Florida. He's been shot at and he's been shot. He's helped deliver a baby in the back seat of a policeman's car while waiting for his ship to come in. He's survived the crash landing of a C-1A aircraft when it was hit by mortar fire. He's stood by helplessly waiting for word about his son, aboard a ship half way around the world, victim to terrorist bombers.

His life reads like a book, and it may be a story that will be written, because writing is what he may do best. Kafka was a Navy enlisted journalist, and his retirement means the passing of the Navy's "gray quill."

Even with his retirement, the Kafka family will be well represented in the Navy. His oldest son, Eric, is a chief boatswainmate. The chief was aboard USS COLE when it was attacked by terrorists. They killed 17 and injured 39, including him. Another son, LTJG Michael Kafka, reports to the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery as the deputy public affairs officer this month.

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MN012606. Navy Teaching Centers "Fleet Up" Docs

By JO2 Duke Richardson, NMC Portsmouth and Rod Duren, NH Pensacola

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth and Naval Hospital Pensacola recently held ceremonies "fleeting up" more than 85 doctors.

At Portsmouth, 75 doctors "graduated" from being interns to practicing physicians. Guest speaker RADM Bonnie B. Potter, MC, Fleet Surgeon of the

U.S. Atlantic Fleet, reminded the graduates that they must now play two roles in their lives.

"Remember that you are a dual professional," she said. "You're not just a health care provider, a psychiatrist, or medical professional. You're also a naval officer who will be looked upon as a role model and a leader."

At Pensacola, the Family Practice Residency Training Program graduated 12. The new family practice physicians will be sent to medical facilities throughout the world. This was the 27th graduating class at Pensacola.

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MN012607. Korean Vet Displays Art, Is Reunited with "Lifesaver"

Bethesda, MD - In October 1951, just above the 38th parallel in Korea, Marine Sgt. John Fenwick and his patrol were ambushed by North Korean forces. Fenwick was hit four times in the stomach, and owes his life to the Hospital Corpsman who dragged him to safety and rendered emergency first aid, and the Navy doctor who performed the surgery that put him back together.

Back in the states, Fenwick spent the better part of a year recuperating at National Naval Medical Center Bethesda. As part of his recovery, he took up drawing.

On July 10, NNMC Bethesda will hold a ceremony to open a showing of his drawings. Attending the ceremony will be Howard Sirak, the Navy physician who performed the surgery that saved Fenwick's life, and Richard Baiocchi, a Marine who was also wounded in the same ambush and who was also treated by Sirak.

Fenwick's art will be on permanent display at NNMC Bethesda.

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MN012608. US Naval Institute Announces Arleigh Burke Essay Contest

The US Naval Institute (USNI) is now accepting submissions for its Arleigh Burke Essay contest. Essays should persuasively discuss a topic relating to the stated objective of the USNI, which is "the advancement of professional, literary and scientific knowledge in the maritime services, and the advancement of the knowledge of sea power."

Anyone can enter and three essays will be selected for prizes. For more information and contest rules, visit the USNI web site at <<http://www.navalinstitute.org>>

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MN012609. HealthWatch: Got Calcium? Get Strong Bones!

By Nicole Deaner, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

Did your parents make you sit at the table until you finished your milk? Hopefully your parents practiced what they preached. Calcium found in milk and other food serves a significant role in developing and maintaining a healthy body for all ages.

Calcium, the most abundant mineral in the human body, not only provides strong bones and teeth, but also helps your muscles contract, your blood clot and your nervous system function properly.

The body does not produce calcium; therefore you must get it from your daily diet.

According to LT Kristen L. Moe, RD, head clinical dietitian at National Naval Medical Center Bethesda, many people do not get a sufficient amount of calcium in their diets because they are afraid that dairy products such as whole milk and cheese will lead to high cholesterol and other health problems. But low fat or fat-free dairy products are excellent sources of

calcium.

For the body to function properly, the level of calcium in the blood needs to stay constant throughout the day. Blood will take calcium from the bones to maintain calcium levels. Over time, this will cause your bones to weaken and could make your bones more susceptible to breaking.

As we age, bone mass decreases and bones become weak and brittle and may lead to a condition known as osteoporosis. Osteoporosis can afflict both women and men. A lifetime commitment to a calcium-rich diet and regular physical activity can lessen your chances of developing osteoporosis. Calcium alone cannot prevent or cure osteoporosis, but plays a vital role in a prevention or treatment program.

So how much calcium do you need? The National Institutes for Health (NIH) reports that adults need 1,000 milligrams a day; adults over 65 need 1,500 milligrams a day; pregnant and nursing women require 1,200 a day; young adults need 1,200 to 1,500 a day; and children under 11 need 800 to 1,200 a day.

According to the NIH, it is possible to have too much calcium. It is safe for adults to consume up to 2,000 milligrams a day without side effects, but going over that may lower the absorption of certain medications, such as tetracycline, and nutrients, such as iron.

Maintaining a calcium-rich diet does not necessarily mean that you need to drink four glasses of milk every day or eat four cups of cottage cheese. Moe says dairy choices of milk, cheese and yogurt are the foods we most associate with calcium, but there are a variety of non-dairy foods that contain calcium. The non-dairy variety includes many types of nuts, beans, vegetables, fruits, rice, fish, and soy. There are also many foods that are fortified with calcium, such as orange juice, cereals and breakfast bars.

An easy way to boost calcium content in your foods is to add dry milk to puddings, baked goods, soups, gravy, cereals, casseroles and even a glass of milk. A tablespoon of powdered milk adds about 50 milligrams of calcium.

A calcium supplement may be appropriate for those who feel they cannot consume enough in their daily diet. There are several different types of calcium supplements available. Discuss your choice of calcium supplement with your doctor.

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Correction from MEDNEWS story 01250: LT Anthony Winston of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, VA, winner of the Navy-wide Medical Academic Research Competition, is a member of the Nurse Corps, not Medical Corps.

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