Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center

The APOLLO

Readying Warriors and Caring for Heroes

July-August 2013 | *Official Newsletter of the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center* | Vol. 5, Iss.5

Bldg. 152 staff keeps FHCC staff smiling

East campus team of 15 dental assistants and lab technicians make dental prosthetics, including crowns, bridges

By Stephanie McCrobie
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

There's a reason you see Sailors smiling as they leave Building 152. A crew of fifteen men and women, including three civilians, are hard at work as dental assistants and lab technicians, to keep Sailors' mouths in tip-top shape.

Building 152 is the Prosthodontic Dental Lab on the East campus. Active duty Sailors visit the Dental Lab for dental prosthetics, such as crowns, bridges and implants. The lab even supplies Sailors with night guards, bleaching trays and sleep apnea devices to keep them healthy.

The team creates more than 400 prosthetics a month for eligible beneficiaries at Naval Station Great Lakes, Recruit Training Command and FHCC Sailors, said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (HM1) Nathan Ko.

During a recent visit, team members were happy to talk about the great work they do, why they chose to work in this field, and the cohesiveness of their team.

Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class José Cruz, a lab technician, said that he started working as a dental assistant, which is how most of the lab techs started in the field. HM3 Cruz learned how to work with patients before he transitioned to working in the lab, making prosthetics for the Sailors.

The team said it can take up to two weeks to work on a prosthetic crown or bridge. They take their time to make sure they produce quality prosthetics using the latest technology.

HM3 Cruz said the lab techs work closely with the dentists on each individual case to make sure the patients receive the best fit and care. "We know we did a good job when we don't hear back from the dentists," he said.

HM2 Richard McDaniel said he enjoys his job as a lab tech. "You get to work at your own pace, be your own boss and create quality work," McDaniel said.

HM3 Cruz added all the team members are happy to know they are "helping fulfill the Navy mission by making sure every Sailor is prepared."

> *"We are helping fulfill the Navy mission by making sure every Sailor is prepared."*
>
> ***HM3 José Cruz***

The team faces challenges, though. HM2 McDaniel said, "Everybody's different. Every job is challenging because every person's mouth is different."

Lovell FHCC Dental Tech Tony Buffamonte works on a dental prosthetic in Building 152 on the East campus of Lovell FHCC. (Photo by Mary Waterman)

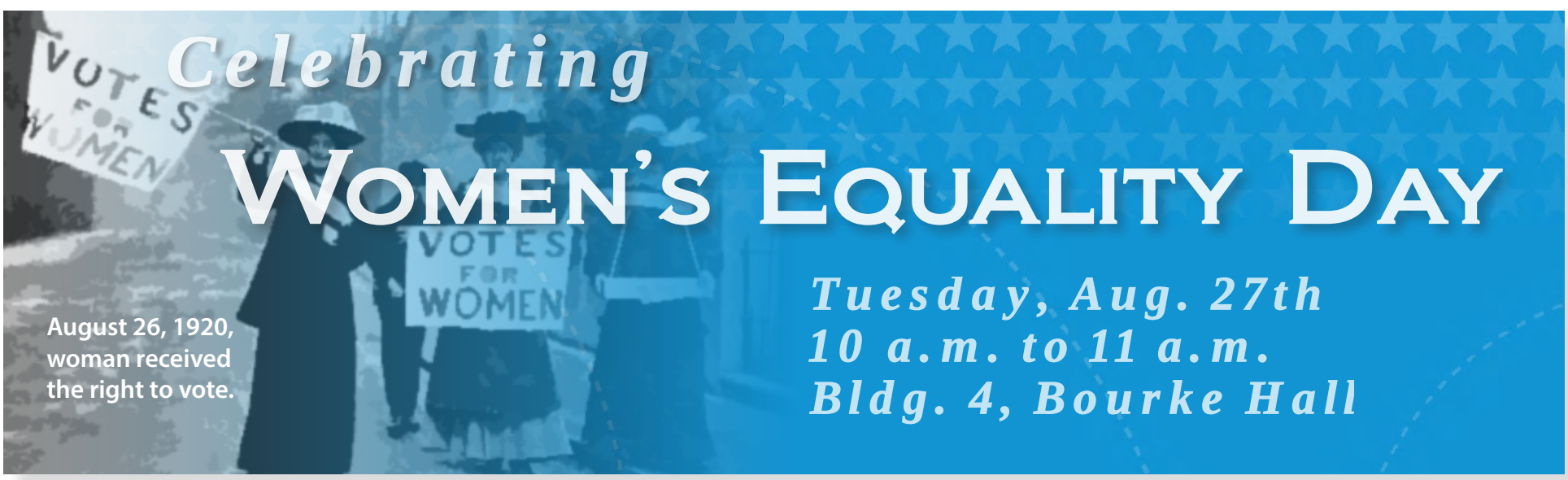
But, as HM3 Daryl Wenzel added, the challenges do not affect the team's work products or morale.

"This is the best team. We all get along, and we all like what we do. And we are all good at what we do," Wenzel said.

The Sailors appreciate the skills they have learned working as lab techs and dental assistants.

Continued on page 3

Bldg. 152 team, left to right, back row: HM2 Neil Johnson, HM2 Dale Daffron, HM3 Edgar Gandara, HM3 Daryl Wenzel, HM3 Robert Whitfield, Arleen Abejuela. Middle row: HM2 Richard McDaniel, HM2 Doyle Cimafranca, HN Brandi Wiley, Tony Buffamonte, CAPT John Vandercreek. Front row: HM3 José Cruz, HM1 Nathan Ko, George Prieto. (Photo by Mary Waterman)



Leadership Commentary

The FHCC is made up of successful teams, with common goal

By Patrick L. Sullivan
Lovell FHCC Director

There is an old adage that says "**T**ogether **E**veryone **A**ccomplishes **M**ore." Well, that holds true for all of the outstanding employees here at Lovell Federal Health Care Center.

Everywhere you look, teams of Lovell employees are accomplishing great things by working together to improve processes, and provide evidence-based quality care to our patients.

This month, I would like to salute you, our "Lovell Teams" for all that you do to ensure our continued success. Whether you are a member of a Lean Six Sigma Rapid Improvement Team; providing direct patient care as a PACT Team member; providing recruit and student care at our Branch Clinics; serving on the wards; working diligently to maintain the campus, or providing outstanding customer service in the Canteen, your extraordinary team efforts are why we are able to fulfill our mission of *Readying Warriors and Caring for Heroes*.

A special thank you to our Patient Stakeholders Advisory Team members for their partnership and for helping us ensure we provide excellent patient care to "every patient, every time." Please join me, too, in congratulating a team I am very proud of, our Lovell Legends. The Legends recently competed in the 33rd annual Veterans Wheelchair Games in Tampa, Florida and brought home 13 medals.

The teamwork required was extensive, from the work our recreation staff did to make travel arrangements and escort them through the challenges of cross-country travel, to the coaches and caregivers who cheered them along and offered support, and don't forget the many volunteers. These were efforts such as the Faith Lutheran Church bake sale and the American Legion Post 42 pasta dinner fundraiser, as well as many donations. Without all those team members coming together behind the scenes, the Legends team wouldn't have been able to compete.

Another notable team featured in this issue is the professionals quietly working on the East campus in our Prosthodontics Dental Lab. Building 152 staff create up to 450 prosthetics monthly for recruits, Active Duty Navy and Lovell FHCC staff, interacting directly with our dentists to ensure customer satisfaction.

Also in this newsletter, Lovell FHCC's All Hazards Team is made up of employees who train and volunteer to take care of patients and staff in emergencies.

In another story this month, our OEF/OIF/OND program, Recreation staff, PTSD providers, MyHealth*e*Vet, Telehealth nurses, and Outreach Committee participated in the Welcome Home at Soldier Field. These are individuals who regularly go out in our communities to talk to Veterans, military members and their families about the services here at Lovell FHCC.

There are too many teams here to list but I thank you all for your dedication, professionalism and willingness to work hard to benefit our patients and your fellow employees. At Lovell FHCC, we do not take the phrase "One Team" lightly. We exemplify and live by it every day as we continue on our mission of *Readying Warriors and Caring for Heroes*.

LifeWIRE uses texts to keep patients in contact

FHCC case study showed technology can be a lifeline for depressed, suicidal Veterans

By William Barshop
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

A text message could be a lifeline for some mental health patients, doctors at Lovell Federal Health Care Center have found.

It's the act of staying in contact after treatment that can make the difference, said Dr. Greg Rimoldi, suicide prevention coordinator (SPC) at Lovell FHCC. "There have been randomized controlled trials finding that short letters, brief contacts, and even postcards reduce suicide attempts and suicide," Rimoldi said. "New technology – such as text messaging – makes this form of 'stay-in-contact' suicide prevention extremely doable without a large expense."

With this knowledge in hand, the behavioral health department at Lovell FHCC this summer launched a new follow-up mental health program using LifeWIRE.

In July, the first group of mental health outpatients began using LifeWIRE, a platform for patient communication that checks in on individual patients via text messages for mental health support. The personalized program can send motivational messages or ask for a response that rates the patient's mood on a scale of 1 to 5. Certain responses then alert mental health providers and counselors to reach out to patients to provide additional support.

A 2012 Lovell FHCC LifeWIRE case study conducted by Rimoldi, Psychology Intern Dr. Peter Lewis, and FHCC Mental Health Department Head Dr. Chowdary Jampala, found the system to be strongly positive for the high-risk, suicidal Veterans who agreed to participate.

LifeWIRE also proved to be a valuable tool for the suicide prevention coordinator to accurately chart and streamline workloads. According to the study, patients using the technology received immediate responses from the SPC, before they were overwhelmed by stressful events. Even patients who missed appointments and telephone calls responded to text messages and mobile check-ins, according to Rimoldi.

The doctors reported that after the study ended, many participants commented that the motivational messages, including Bible passages, were encouraging. Most patients said they did not want the program to end, and that it should be available to more Veterans.

One patient in the study, Charles Brennan, highly recommended it to Veterans with depression and thoughts of suicide. "They gave me inspirational thoughts three or four times a day," Brennan said. "It would keep me focused on not being depressed."

LifeWIRE has been validated by Food and Drug Administration (FDA) audit and security standards, and the interactions on the platform are considered the same as paper records, thus protecting patients' privacy even when they are communicating with their doctors from home.

LifeWIRE was named one of the Top 100 Innovations of the Next Century in 2013 by the Rockefeller Foundation, and it has been recognized by the Computerworld Honors Program for advancing public welfare through mobile devices.

Section Chief of PTSD programs at Lovell FHCC, Dr. Anthony Peterson, said he sees LifeWIRE as an invaluable new asset. "We're excited about incorporating this technology," Peterson said. "It will be a vital part of after-care plans for our Veterans and service members."

The Apollo

The Apollo is the official newsletter of the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center. It is published monthly for staff members, Veterans, military family members and volunteers.

The newsletter is designed and published by the FHCC Communications Dept.
3001 Green Bay Rd.
North Chicago, Illinois 60064
224-610-3714
www.lovell.fhcc.va.gov

www.facebook.com/lovellfhcc

www.youtube.com/lovellfhcc

Director
Capt. James A. Lovell
Federal Health Care Center
Patrick L. Sullivan, FACHE

Deputy Director/Commanding Officer
Capt. James A. Lovell
Federal Health Care Center
Capt. José A. Acosta, MC, USN

Communications Chief
Mary Schindler

Public Affairs Specialist
Jayna M. Legg

Public Affairs Specialist
Stephanie C. McCrobie

Submissions to the publication can be emailed to **lovellfhcc.media@va.gov**

Factual Accuracy and Disclaimer:
Accuracy is important to us. We want to correct mistakes promptly. If you believe an error has been published, please alert us via email at lovellfhcc.media@va.gov. Use of any social media product does not imply endorsement on the part of the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs, and may not be available from all government servers. Content on these sites is not edited for accuracy and may not necessarily reflect the views of the federal government.

Healing: *Recovery in their own words ...*

(Editor's Note: "Healing" is a series written first-person by Veterans and military members who have experienced significant medical recovery in their lives and are willing to share their stories.)

Name: Paul Le Fevre
Branch of Service: U.S. Air Force
Dates of service: Dec, 27, 1997 – Jan. 27, 2007

I had many reasons for joining the Air Force, one being to provide for my family, and I have had a lot of family in every branch of service but the Marine Corps. I left the Air Force because I was trying to save my marriage, and my enlistment was up.

I have two stories, one about addiction, and the second about being homeless. My addiction story started out as any other; stealing sips of beer from my Dad. Then as I got into my teens, I started drinking a lot more and some friends introduced me to weed. I fell in love with being stoned.

Then I started taking pills; any kind of pills – painkillers, opiates, anything that would just numb my brain. It was also at this time I started mixing speed in with my weed just to be numb from life and some thoughts in my head. My drinking was also increasing at this time. I was drinking handles of Jack Daniels Whiskey and then going out and driving, not caring about the consequences. Then, when I was 18, I started talking to the Air Force recruiter, and the first thing I was told was to stop doing the drugs and I would be able to join. So, I stopped using for the 10 years I was in the Air Force, but my drinking continued to increase daily. It was nothing for me to drink a handle of whiskey and a 30-pack of beer in the matter of two days.

When I went to Korea for a year, that's when my drinking really got out of control. In Korea, my friends and I would get together to see how much money we had and bought as much booze as possible ... When I came back home my wife (now ex-wife) was disgusted with my drinking habits and told me if I didn't slow down, she and my girls would be gone for good. I slowed down for a while, but it eventually got worse again. She couldn't handle it anymore so when my enlistment was coming to an end, she asked for a divorce. Then my addiction to marijuana and alcohol increased to the point of being kicked out of my parent's house.

This is where my second story begins. I had places to sleep at night, but I was another one of the homeless Veterans that we see and read so much about. I didn't care that my life was in shambles because of drugs and alcohol. I couldn't find a job; didn't want to look for a job. All I wanted was to get high and drink. Luckily, I guess, I had friends that were willing to do that for me, and I didn't have to pay. At the same time, I was starting to open my eyes and see which road I had chosen. It was the completely wrong way and I wanted and needed to get help and get sober so I could provide for my daughters and myself.

At first I didn't know where to go for help, or who to ask for help, until my parents set up an appointment for me at my local VA (Department of Veterans Affairs) hospital. I didn't want to admit I had a problem or admit that I was a user/alcoholic, or homeless.

A lot of my recovery was talking to someone who wouldn't judge me. As I was talking to my social worker and getting this burden off my chest, it made me realize I was helping myself without knowing that's what I was doing. Some of the programs I used were – talking to a social worker, going to detox, and just trying to find some people who were a better influence on me, and simply just saying 'no.' Yes, that sounds cliché, but, please believe me, it actually works.

If any other Veteran is facing any of these crises, please – for yourself, your family, and anyone you truly care about – get help by talking to someone. It can be anybody you trust: family, friends, or someone at the FHCC (Lovell Federal Health Care Center). These programs do work. You have to give it time, you need an open mind, and you have to stick to your guns by telling the bad influences to just keep away, and then start living a healthy, happy life.

Lab techs work closely with FHCC dentists (*cont.*)

Continued from page 1

HM3 Wenzel noted that the education the Navy gave him was invaluable and will help him with a career after he leaves the service in a few months.

"I appreciate that the Navy gave me all the training and education I need so I can keep working as a lab tech in the private sector," Wenzel said.

This historical photo of the clinic is from the 1940s, long before it became part of Lovell FHCC. (Photo provided)

Lovell FHCC helps "Welcome Home" military, their families at Soldier Field

By Stephanie McCrobie
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

Thousands of Veterans, military members and their families again gathered at Soldier Field in Chicago in August for a Welcome Home celebration featuring a resource fair as well as entertainment for all ages.

The Lovell Federal Health Care Center, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center, and Hines VA Hospital, in collaboration with the ISAVE (Illinois Support All Veterans Equally) Foundation, hosted the 6th Annual Welcome Home Celebration and Illinois Warrior Summit.

The free public event connected military members, Veterans and their families with resources to meet their specific needs, such as employment services, Veterans' benefits and educational assistance. There were nearly 300 booths, including businesses, colleges, government agencies and Veteran support organizations, with representatives available to answer questions and provide information.

Lovell FHCC and VA representatives helped register people for health care benefits, provided on-site physicals and health screenings, and answered questions on programs such as Women Veterans' services, Minority Veterans' opportunities, substance abuse counseling, and PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) and TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) recovery programs.

Some attendees received free sports tickets available just to Veterans, for the Chicago Cubs, White Sox and Chicago Fire. The event included giveaways and free entertainment for children. "The important mission of this annual military/Veteran celebration is honoring those who have served our country and helping them access their entitled benefits and services," said Mike Konkoly, Operations Enduring Freedom/Iraqi Freedom/New Dawn Program Manager for Lovell FHCC. "It's held every August and has been a great success every year."

Find More Online
@ facebook.com/LovellFHCC

Navy "Brass Ambassadors" return to Lovell FHCC

RN Linderman receives "Star Award" from Naval Facilities Engineering Command

McHenry CBOC nurses, FHCC Sailors help at Vietnam Traveling Wall exhibit

- "Hands and Hearts" Awards presented
- What does ACA mean for Veterans
- Another LEAD class graduates
- *... and many more stories and photos!*

Or Visit Us Online
@ lovell.fhcc.va.gov

Lovell Legends compete in National Wheelchair games

FHCC team brings home 13 medals from 33rd annual Wheelchair Games

By William Barshop
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

Lovell Legends athletes brought home the gold – and silver and bronze – from the recent annual National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Tampa, Florida.

The eight-member team won nine gold medals, three silver, one bronze and returned with good memories to last a lifetime.

Karen Fleming, one of the coaches from Lovell FHCC and a recreation therapist, said the games allow Veterans to gain strength from each other.

"The older Veterans are really encouraging to people with recent injuries," Fleming said. "And the newer generation, people with recent injuries, they kind of rekindle a spark in the older guys. They get a real kick out of it."

Dan Dorsch, a Lovell Legends team member with multiple sclerosis, won two gold medals in swimming and track events, and a bronze in the javelin throw. He said he always looks forward to the annual trip. "You meet people from around the country with similar illnesses," Dorsch said. "It gives me the ability to gauge how I'm fighting my disease."

The competition venues included Raymond James Stadium, where the Tampa Bay Buccaneers play football. The stadium held the motor rally, a wheelchair obstacle course. Buccaneers cheerleaders and volunteers dressed in pirate costumes cheered on the athletes as they each made a 40-yard dash to spike a football in the end zone.

The team had a nonstop flight both ways, and transportation all around went smoothly, Fleming said. That's a big plus for the wheelchair athletes, she added. The city of Tampa converted 22 buses to fit up to six wheelchairs each for the week, allowing the Veterans and their coaches to travel between venues.

Nate Davenport, a five-time Lovell Legends team member, said the prospect of the annual trip inspires him to "get stronger" in times of medical crisis. Davenport resides in the Community Living Center at the FHCC, and won a silver medal in the motor rally event. "It's an adventure, that's for sure," he said. "There's nothing like it."

Veteran Karen Van Benschoten competes in nine-ball, one of her gold medal events. (Photo courtesy Karen Fleming)

Lovell Legends member Bill Watson competes in the discus. (Photo courtesy Karen Fleming)

The other athletes who represented Lovell FHCC are Steve Aoyagi, Ramon Calderon, Karen Van Benschoten, William Watson and David Wells, Sr.

Aoyagi won gold in table tennis and nine-ball, and silver in bowling; Watson won silver in motor rally; Wells won bronze in basketball; Van Benschoten won four gold medals in table tennis, nine-ball, slalom and motor rally; and Calderon won a gold in weightlifting.

The competitors come from the United States, Great Britain and Puerto Rico. The event is the world's largest annual multi-sport wheelchair event for military Veterans who use wheelchairs for sports competition due to spinal cord injuries, amputations or neurological problems. The Games feature 18 different medal-awarding events and two exhibition events with athletes competing against their peers according to wheelchair sports experience and agility. The Games are presented by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Ed Tolliver competed with the Lovell Legends team for the first time in Tampa, Fla. (Photo courtesy Karen Fleming)

Lovell FHCC All Hazards Team trains to care for patients in emergencies

New members needed; mission not limited to decontamination

By Veronica Watkins
Lovell FHCC All Hazards Team Decon Coordinator

Do you have what it takes to help Lovell FHCC respond to an emergency? The Lovell FHCC All Hazards Team is looking for employees to volunteer to respond and care for patients and staff in a variety of emergency situations.

New volunteers will join an elite team that trains to react quickly and implement the Hospital Incident Command System.

Lovell FHCC's All Hazards team was deemed "mission ready" after it successfully completed a Navy Bureau of Medicine-sponsored Medical First Receiver Operations Training (FROT) event in the spring. The event was aimed at mastering lifesaving skills required to triage, initiate field treatment, decontaminate and save victims from Chemical, Biological, Radiological/Nuclear (CBRN) and other hazardous materials.

The hands-on initiative prepared the team in the event of a CBRN attack or accident occurred in the surrounding area. The team earned a "mission ready" status after the decontamination tent was set up and fully functional – and six team members were suited up and ready to receive patients – within 13 minutes, which was well under the 20-minute target.

After the exercise, students said they, "felt ready to handle a real world incident."

The team, however, is currently undermanned and is actively looking for driven individuals who are motivated by core values centered on providing the best possible care to patients in emergency situations.

FHCC All Hazards Team, left to right, top to bottom: Michael Edwards, Veronica Watkins, Jaqua Kelly, Robert Peterson, Nicholas Dube, Celia Tuey, Nicole Rios, Eric Chrostowski, Santiago Reyes, Brandon Lentz, Tim Harmon, Douglas McDaniel, James Stewart, Brent Fenton, Soledad Salinas, Katherina LeFlore, Nancy Brann, Imran Faizi, Merrily Grant, Deemarces Hester, Jesus Santiago. (Photo Provided)

The All Hazards mission is not limited to decontamination. The team also is involved in mass casualty exercises, search and rescue, and labor pool functions, just to name a few missions. Training exercises engage the team in the Hospital Incident Command system and foster a spirit of preparedness for the facility.

If you are interested in becoming part of the team, please e-mail veronica.watkins2@va.gov or Doug McDaniel at douglas.mcdaniel@va.gov to get information on the next training event.