



The APOLLO

Readying Warriors and Caring for Heroes

We turn '4' and begin 5th year as a FHCC



More than 2,000 people gathered at the new Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center on a beautiful, sunny day Oct. 1, 2010, to celebrate the opening of the nation's first, and to-date, only federal health care center, named in honor of retired astronaut and Navy Capt. James A. Lovell. Lovell FHCC serves Veterans, Navy Sailors, other area servicemen and women, military retirees and military dependents, on campuses in North Chicago and Great Lakes, Ill., and at three community based outpatient clinics in Illinois and Wisconsin. (Photo by Mary Waterman)

Lovell FHCC opened for business; Ceremony held October 1, 2010

By Mary Waterman
Lovell FHCC Communications

October 1st in the year 2010 marked the transfer of authority, stand-up and ribbon-cutting of the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center in North Chicago, Ill.

Lovell FHCC is the nation's first integrated Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense medical facility, combining manpower and resources from the former North Chicago VA Medical Center and former Naval Hospital/Naval Health Clinic Great Lakes.

The FHCC is a landmark project that provides a transformational opportunity for federal health care, and represents the first known total integration of the health care delivery and operations of two distinct, separate health care organizations owned by different cabinet-level departments within the federal government.

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First Critical Care Skills course sets standard for future classes

FCCS course teaches non-critical care staff how to care for critically ill and injured patients when necessary

By Stephanie McCrobie
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

Pigs' lungs were an effective stand-in to simulate airway management in a human patient during Lovell FHCC's recent launch of the Fundamental Critical Care Support (FCCS) Provider Course.

"Some students had not even seen lungs before, so this was a great opportunity for them to get more training and experience," said Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Andres Ramos, who works in the pulmonary clinic at Lovell FHCC.

Ramos taught the mechanical ventilation skills station alongside Respiratory Therapist Leandra Wallace. During their skills station, Ramos and Wallace used pigs' lungs to show students how human lungs work. Ramos said students were very receptive to all the hands-on demonstrations during the course.

The purpose of the FCCS course is to train non-critical care staff, nurses and other practitioners how to manage critically ill and injured patients effectively. The Society of Critical Care Medicine, a professional organization for critical care professionals, provides resources and accreditation for FCCS courses around the country.

"FCCS is important for all medical staff," said Lt. Cmdr. Jared Bernard, course director and general surgeon at Lovell FHCC. "It provides training on the initial management of critically ill patients for staff not formally trained in critical care."

Staff from around Lovell FHCC helped lead the class lectures, small group discussions and hands-on skills stations throughout the two-day course.

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Jesusa Aquino, registered nurse at Lovell Federal Health Care Center, practices checking vital signs on a medical manikin during the Fundamental Critical Care Support Course. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Darren M. Moore)



Patient-Centered Care

We are committed to providing our patients with the very best **patient-centered care** designed for them to **achieve optimal health and well-being.**

See page 4 & 5

Leadership Commentary

Holt: 'Every staff member, every job, plays a vital role'

Dr. Stephen R. Holt brings decades of military and civilian health care leadership experience to job



By Dr. Stephen Holt
Lovell FHCC Director

This is an exciting time for me to be taking over as director of the nation's only federal health care center, and I am grateful for the opportunity to do so.

Now, more than at any other time in recent memory, all of us who have the job of serving and caring for our nation's Veterans and members of the military and their families – active duty service members and reservists of all branches – have been asked to step

up and publicly recommit to the core values that unite and guide us. Both the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense have come under question this year by the people we serve, in our case, our patients and their families who rely on us for health care that can be as minimal as a yearly physical or as extensive as cancer treatment and hospice services.

We are it – we are the ones charged with this noble mission, and our ongoing pledge to provide personalized, proactive patient-centered care tells us every staff member, every job, plays a vital role. Whether you answer the phone when a patient calls for an appointment, or you greet a patient at the Quarterdeck of the Lovell FHCC, or you meet a patient in the exam room, every second of every interaction counts.

That, to me, is an awesome responsibility, and an extremely satisfying one, and I look forward to working with each of you – active duty military, civilian employees, contractors, volunteers and unions – to rise to the challenge. I come to this job

from Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 7, where I was chief medical officer. Prior to that, I served as the deputy chief of staff at the VA North Texas Health Care System in Dallas. I am also a retired Air Force colonel. I am privileged to be able to draw on my experience in both departments as I take on the responsibilities of director of Lovell FHCC.

I consider myself in good company as I take on a new leadership role at Lovell FHCC. In the first days after VA Secretary Robert McDonald was confirmed earlier this summer, he asked all employees to reaffirm we care about those who we serve, about our fellow employees, about choosing the harder right instead of the easier wrong, and we care about performing our duties to the very best of our abilities.

The clear path to making that happen is a reaffirmation from all of us to the core values very aptly represented by the acronym: "I CARE."

Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, Excellence, "define our culture and strengthen our dedication to those we serve,"

Secretary McDonald has stated. "They provide a baseline for the standards of behavior expected of all staff."

I CARE aligns with the Navy core values of "Honor, Courage and Commitment," and Lovell FHCC values of "Respect, Integrity, Trust, Accountability and Teamwork," therefore, without question, apply to every one of us.

With our common values as our guide, expertly carried in the hands of the integrated, dedicated teams already in place here at Lovell FHCC, I am confident we will continue to succeed in providing the very best patient-centered care – every patient, every time, everywhere.

I look forward to meeting many of you in the coming weeks and months as we continue on our sacred mission of *Readying Warriors and Caring for Heroes.*

The Apollo

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Q & A with the new Deputy Director/Commanding Officer

'Our patients and our staff can't help but benefit' from bringing together the best Navy and VA have to offer

(Editor's Note: The "Apollo" asked Deputy Director/Commanding Officer Captain Robert Buckley to introduce himself.)

Q: Tell us a little bit about yourself and where you are coming from?

A: I've served as a physician and Medical Corps officer in the U.S. Navy since 1983, starting with medical school just down the lake from here at Northwestern, then later, on the west side, for Emergency Medicine residency, at Cook County. Most of my career so far was spent at Naval Medical Center San Diego, teaching residents and leading staff in Emergency Medicine, then gradually taking on broader leadership responsibilities throughout the hospital.

Being in the Navy, I've also had rewarding tours in operational and overseas settings. The time I've had as a ship's medical officer, at smaller hospitals in Spain and the Middle East, leading a mobile forward-deployed Shock Trauma Platoon with the Marines in Iraq and, just before coming to Lovell, overseeing the medical care of all Naval forces afloat and ashore throughout Central Command (5th Fleet, Middle East and Afghanistan) – all of these together have helped me to better understand the health care needs of our active duty forces, their families and the commands who want the best for them.

On a personal note, I've been married for 31 years to Sara Lopez. We have two great kids and an Australian shepherd. My daughter, Christina, graduated from Harvard and is getting married this November before starting further studies in clinical social work. My son, Grant, just graduated from the Naval Academy in Annapolis and has entered nuclear submarine training.



Captain Robert G. Buckley

So with the move from Bahrain, the new job at Lovell, the graduation and the wedding, 2014 has proven to be a busy year for the Buckleys!

Q: What about taking command at Lovell FHCC motivates you the most?

A: I'm totally convinced that when you bring together the best that Navy Medicine and Veterans Health Administration has to offer, that our patients and our staff can't

help but benefit. This takes hard work, years of effort and a constant spirit of encouragement, respect and patience – but the end result will be worth the effort. So, if you ask what motivates and excites me most about Lovell; it is to see us moving toward optimal integration and sharing in celebrating the hundreds of successes along the way. It takes time.

Q: Can you sum up your command and/or leadership philosophy?

A: Number one: We are here to serve our patients – all of our patients – and to make good on our promise to our patients, their loved ones and their commands, that they will be greeted with competent and compassionate care that is well-coordinated and well-communicated.

Number Two: We are here to help each other get better at number one. Lovell seems to be buzzing with process improvement and training activities and this is a great thing to keep moving forward.

Number Three: Be Ready! This means not only do our Navy staff members need to have their medical and administrative affairs in order, but the rest of our staff members need to be ready, too, for the unexpected. The current Ebola public health emergency is just one example of how an unplanned threat could quickly overwhelm us. We will need to spend more time to train and drill on all of our "all

hazard" threats to assure we are always ready.

Q: What is your top priority, then, for the FHCC under your leadership?

A: My top priority is optimal integration and harmony of efforts. I've been at Lovell for a short time, and in that time, I've met hundreds of staff across our East and West campuses. I haven't met anyone yet who wants to throw down their sea bag, or drop their papers or timecard and give up on our mission.

That said, we all sense that there is so much more work to be done to get the right mix of staff, the right layout of spaces and equipment and the right playbook, so Lovell can truly become the very best place possible for care. So I will be committing a lot of time to understanding and moving us toward an optimally integrated hospital, health care organization and command.

Q: What don't people know about you?

A: I am very stubborn. Once I get my heart set on doing something, it takes a lot for me to let go – like a dog on a bone. On the other hand, I can be very understanding and forgiving when things don't go well. In health care, we all make mistakes. But we can never stop trying to learn from those mistakes and never, ever lose our commitment to doing things better for our patients and staff.

More than 50 attend town hall; future ones planned

By Jayna Legg
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

The words "you saved my life," were heard not once but repeatedly as a line of patients approached the podium at a recent public town hall meeting to express their gratitude and compliments for the health care they received at Lovell FHCC.

"I've seen a lot of ugly stuff ... to be a part of the killing of people is disturbing," said Vietnam Navy Veteran Johnnie Johnson when he stepped up to the podium in Bourke Hall. "The hardest thing is to forgive myself.

"This hospital has saved my life many, many times," said Johnson, who turned to Lovell FHCC for residential treatment for issues including PTSD. Johnson served on the USS Blue Ridge (LCC-19) in Vietnam. Johnson and others were complimentary of Lovell FHCC's PTSD and mental health services and asked for them to be expanded.

"A lot of us didn't get the treatment we needed. We're over there in the world of death, and we weren't deprogrammed fully ... PTSD programs should be a lot bigger," Johnson said.

Another Vietnam Veteran undergoing treatment for prostate cancer said he has been coming to Lovell FHCC for three to four years. "This is one of the few places I go that I really feel comfortable," said the former Marine. "You guys are awesome, and I appreciate it."

About 50 people attended the community town hall, including special guests U.S. Sen. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), and Capt. James Lovell himself, a retired Navy captain and Apollo 13 astronaut. Lovell praised his namesake facility during a television interview before the meeting. "I really want to see this facility grow," Lovell said. "I want this to be the number one place to come."

Lovell FHCC is the nation's first and only federal health care center, stood up under Lovell's name in October, 2010. The facility is an integration of the former Great Lakes Naval Hospital and the former North Chicago Veterans Affairs Medical Center, thus combining Department of Defense and VA medical care.

Soon after he was appointed, new Secretary of the VA Robert McDonald directed leaders at all VA medical facilities to hold town hall meetings this fall to address concerns

about patient access to care. Capt. José Acosta, acting director of Lovell FHCC at the time of the town hall, led the meeting along with then acting Deputy Director Michelle Blakely.

Both Acosta and Blakely stressed the improvements made in access, including the implementation of the Veterans Choice Program, which allows patients to seek non-VA care in the community if they can't get timely appointments or have to travel more than 40 miles to receive care at a VA facility.

The new legislation provides \$5 billion for the VA to hire physicians and other medical staff and improve infrastructure. Another \$10 billion will fund additional purchased (non-VA) care while capacity is being increased. In addition, the new law, signed Aug. 7 by President Barack Obama, grants the VA the authority to more quickly remove senior executive employees based on misconduct and/or poor performance.

"We will make you proud," Acosta said at the start of the town hall. "We're all committed here."

Lovell FHCC will hold community town halls quarterly in the coming year.

New Mental Health Council to advocate on behalf of patients, families

By Lizzie Mason, LSW
Stress Disorders Treatment Unit

Lovell FHCC's new Mental Health Council gives the people we serve a voice when it comes to the mental health care and services they receive at the FHCC.

The Mental Health Council first met in November 2013 with the goal of providing a voice and advocating for the needs of the mental health community here at Lovell FHCC, to include family members.

The council is open to anyone receiving mental health care at Lovell FHCC and is run entirely by, and for, the people we serve. A licensed clinical social worker who is also a local recovery coordinator, acts as a liaison between the council and the mental health department, ensuring the council has a direct line of communication with the mental health staff.

Current council members have shown great devotion to the council's mission and overall commitment to help ensure all Veterans and Active Duty members

are receiving quality mental health care. The council has identified its mission as the following core functions: to educate the mental health community about available services and encourage utilization of these services, to promote recovery oriented care and reduce the stigma associated with receiving mental health care, and to provide suggestions to leadership from the Lovell FHCC mental health community.

"We're trying to have communication between the departments and the Veterans to establish proactive flow of information to make people feel more comfortable with the services the VA offers and to do outreach into the community and make Veterans feel welcome to come here, and feel honored to be a Veteran," said council member Jim Robb. "The Veterans today have to know they can come here and that the hospital will help them."

The council has already accomplished several goals. Council members collaborated with staff from the inpatient acute mental health unit to



The Lovell FHCC Mental Health Council conducts a meeting. Seated at the table, starting in the center on the left side, is FHCC Social Worker Lizzie Mason. To her right is Rhonda Godfrey, Dick Davis on the end, Joe Dusa to the right of Davis, Barry Desfor in the center wearing a baseball cap, Jim Robb to Desfor's right. Seated on Mason's left, not pictured, is Joanna Rakowski. (Photo by Stephanie McCrobie)

provide their personal stories of recovery as a form of support to current inpatients. Members are collaborating with administration to change the wording of the check-in kiosks at the pharmacy department to honor Veterans as their own unique population.

Council members plan to continue hosting a monthly outreach table at the main valet parking entrance to Building 133EF to market the council and encourage more

patients to join. Robb stressed the importance of informing the hospital about the council. "We need to let people know that we're available for their problems," he said. "There is a voice representing them."

The Lovell FHCC Mental Health Council meets the first and third Wednesdays of the month. For more information, contact Lizzie Mason at 224-610-4684 or Shirley Hoffman at 224-610-5839.

Patient-Centered Care

Using an approach that honors the patient's own wisdom and innate capacity to heal, the process of personalized health planning inspires change

"Patient-centered care means supporting patients and their families to achieve their health care goals."

Eric Strong
Lovell FHCC patient



"Patient-centered care means respecting the autonomy and self-determination of all patients."

Elizabeth Morgan
Lovell FHCC Social Worker

Patient-centered care starts with the person, not their problem. It starts with the pointed, and possibly loaded, question: "How can we help you live your life fully?"

Whether that means the Veteran patient who wants to be well enough to walk his daughter down the aisle in six months, or the active duty enlisted Mom who plans to be around to rock her not-yet-born grandchildren to sleep, Lovell FHCC is committed to helping our patients achieve those goals.

Lovell FHCC doctors, nurses and other clinicians, pharmacists, nutritionists, social workers, therapists, clerks, administrators, housekeepers, technicians ... all have been asked to commit to the goal of providing the very best patient-centered care.

The personalized health approach is at the heart of patient-centered care. The patient is the key partner in the process, which is designed to achieve optimal health and well-being and ultimately serve as the overarching strategy for the patient's health. Using an approach that honors the patient's own wisdom and innate capacity to heal, the process of personalized health planning inspires change by connecting people with the ways in which their health supports their values, vision, and purpose in life. This alignment results in the patient being truly engaged in his or her health, and health care.

Sometimes we call this "cultural transformation," big words to describe a simple idea: the patient is at the center of his or her care, and we are the supporting cast. And we believe every employee in our organization plays a role in creating the physical and emotional environments that contribute to this healing atmosphere.

The elements of patient-centered care form the framework of a patient-centered culture. In this model, we strive to enhance both the practice and the experience of care, in keeping with our "promise kept" of *Readying Warriors and Caring for Heroes*.



"It means focusing on the patient as an individual not just the illness or symptoms; I care for them as if they were a family member."

Lt. Caitlin Workman
Lovell FHCC Staff Nurse



"It's listening, acknowledging their concerns ... with individuality and understanding, to create a circle of options to best serve their needs physically, mentally, spiritually."

Missy Robel
Lovell FHCC Nurse

"To me, patient-centered care is considering the perspective of the patient compared to convenience of the provider."

Kelly Gunderson
Lovell FHCC Kinesiotherapist

"Patient-centered care means putting myself in the patients' shoes, understanding how they feel and trying to help in any way that I can."

Kim Jones
Lovell FHCC Patient Advocate



Cultural Transformation

White Cane Day highlights Visual Impairment Services (VIS)

Visually impaired Veteran patients demonstrate how technology assists them with tasks of daily living



The Ruby has many adjustments that allow visually impaired people to change text magnification, text and background colors and contrast. (Photo by Jayna Legg)

By Jayna Legg
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

What if you can't see well enough to read the instructions on your prescription? Or what if you are color blind and don't know if the outfit you want to put on in the morning is color-coordinated?

Lovell FHCC Veteran patient Arnold Weinberg can identify with those scenarios, and for that reason, he volunteered to man an information table at Lovell FHCC

in October to promote White Cane Day, which promotes public awareness of those with visual impairments.

Weinberg and Lovell FHCC employee and patient George Groff demonstrated the latest high-tech gadgets they use every day to help them live fully with their visual impairments. They showed off several text-to-voice devices, such as the "ScripTalk Station" and something they called the "color talker."

The ScripTalk Station, Weinberg explained, "reads" the text on a prescription bottle using RFID technology so the visually impaired patient can listen to it. Patients request special labels designed to work with the technology.

The color talker is a small black box that when held up against a fabric or other surface identifies the color using voice. It also has a light sensor that alerts a blind person

when they are facing a bright space, such as a window. Other devices included "talking books," and different types of magnifiers, including one that can be adjusted to various screen colors.

Lovell FHCC Visual Impairment Services Team Coordinator Eric Strong said the purpose of White Cane Day is to "get the public to recognize when they see a cane that it's a person with severe visual impairment."

The display also raised awareness about the Lovell FHCC Visual Impairment Services program, which currently serves more than 200 legally blind

patients and another 230 patients who have low vision, Strong said. "I do outreach all the time," he said. "I'm constantly finding new patients in different places."

Patients who come to the program are helped at the FHCC or Strong will link them with the appropriate community services. For more information, call 224-619-7168.



Veteran Arnold Weinberg demonstrates a ScripTalk Station to Lovell FHCC RN Linda Spriggs, who stopped by the White Cane Day display table. (Photo by Jayna Legg)

FCCS offered again in Feb. (cont.)

Continued from page 1

The course covered topics including mechanical ventilation, diagnosis and treatment of shock, basic burn support, life-threatening infections, and critical care in pregnancy.

At the skills stations, attendees – including medical residents, registered nurses, respiratory therapists and pharmacists – had a chance to practice critical care techniques on Lovell FHCC's high-tech manikins. The manikins simulate human illnesses and/or injuries, complete with fake blood, beating hearts and chests that rise and fall with simulated breaths.

Attendees found the two-day

course to be beneficial. Lt. Caitlin Workman, clinical nurse specialist, appreciated the combination of lectures and hands-on learning.

"It was a great course on immediate care of the critically ill patient," she said. "It highlighted treatments necessary to save lives."

Overall, attendees provided feedback that the course was very helpful, said Mark Bisbee, course coordinator and assistant department head for Lovell FHCC's department of education and training.

"The training was a complete success," he said. "We received very positive feedback from



Dr. Norman Lee teaches FCCS course students about assessing a seriously ill patient. (Photo by Stephanie McCrobie)

students, including constructive feedback to improve the course."

Bisbee said the facility will offer

the course again in February and then every three months. Questions about the course can be directed to Bisbee at 224-610-4540.

Integration of two cabinet-level agencies required new laws (cont.)

Continued from page 1

The unique mission of the federal health care center means active duty military, their dependents, military retirees and Veterans are cared for at Lovell FHCC. Lovell FHCC ensures the medical readiness of more than 40,000 Navy recruits annually and 5,000 active duty service members

who receive training or serve on the East campus at Naval Station Great Lakes. It also serves Veterans from Northern Illinois and Southern Wisconsin through three Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) in Evanston and McHenry, Ill., and Kenosha, Wis.

Oct. 1, 2010, was the culmination

of years of planning between the VA and the Department of Defense. The integration of these facilities began with Phase I in 2003, when Naval Health Clinic Great Lakes transferred inpatient mental health and the blood bank to what was then the North Chicago VAMC.

Phase II was the \$13 million VA renovation and modernization project expanding the emergency and surgery departments. Naval Health Clinic transferred all medical/surgical inpatient, operating room, intensive care and emergency services in June of 2006. Soon after, the former North Chicago VAMC became the first VA to offer pediatric services.

The final phase included a \$130 million Department of Defense construction project to build a new 209,000-square-foot ambulatory care center (Building 133EF) on

the West campus, renovate more than 45,000 square feet of existing space, and build a new parking garage and surface parking area.

The integration required specific federal laws. The language was included in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2010, which was signed into law by President Barack Obama Oct. 28, 2009. President Obama also signed the Fiscal Year 2010 Omnibus Spending Bill into Public Law 111-117 on Dec. 16, 2009, officially naming the FHCC after retired Navy Capt. (and retired NASA astronaut) James A. Lovell.

Several factors drove the integration, including the 1995 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendations. The integration dramatically expanded services and programs to what is now available at Lovell FHCC.

The Naval Health Clinic Great Lakes Color Guard supported the ceremony in 2010 celebrating the formation of the first federal health care center. The ceremony took place at the main entrance of the facility at 3001 Green Bay Road, in North Chicago, Ill. (Photo by Mary Waterman)



ONE TEAM Extra

News Employees Can Use

New Daisy Awards go to top nurses nominated by FHCC patients, staff

Lovell FHCC's Daisy Award recognition program for "extraordinary" nurses has been up and running since this summer. The nurses are nominated for the award by colleagues and patients, who are asked to describe a situation involving the nurse.

The first winner was RN Aleyamma Pappachen, who has worked on the Medical/Surgical floor for more than 20 years. Her nomination praises her "constant caring and giving nature ... It is her nature to do what's best for the patient, and be a resource for her colleagues. I simply don't think a thank you is enough for all the things she does for us. She is an excellent nurse."

The second winner was RN Ruby Amodia, a nurse in Lovell FHCC's Oncology Unit. An oncology patient nominated Amodia, writing: "Ruby goes above and beyond for her patients

... she is kind and compassionate ... Ruby helped me feel like I was a person, not a diagnosis."

The Daisy Foundation started the Daisy Award program in 1999 in honor of J. Patrick Barnes, who was hospitalized for eight weeks before he died at the age of 33 from complications of an auto-immune disease. His family was "awestruck" by his nursing care. The foundation's mission is "to say 'thank you' to nurses everywhere."

The other nurses nominated to date include: Karen Brodlo, April Cook, Norman Deles, Mary Kanichirayil, Patricia O'Laughlin and Emily Ensomo. Nominations may be submitted through the GetWell Network (via computers in patient rooms), or forms are available from Lois Gault in Room 2D128 in Building 133CA (by Occupational Health).



RN Aleyamma Pappachen, center, reacts to being selected for the Daisy Award in July. (Photo by Stephanie McCrobie)



RN Ruby Amodia, second from left, won the Daisy Award in September. (Photo by Stephanie McCrobie)

Water polo team growing in popularity

How about some water polo? What started as a weekly after-work activity to improve morale at Lovell FHCC's Fisher Clinic has grown to a 14-member – and counting – team that plays water polo by the official rules and is looking for worthy opponents in the Great Lakes area.

The Lovell FHCC water polo team plays every Wednesday, from 6 to 7:30 p.m., at the Great Lakes Naval Station pool. "We start with practice, then play games until the pool closes. Anyone is welcome," said team member Lt. Benjamin Mattox, who is a physician assistant at Fisher Clinic.

Members come from other area Navy commands as well as Lovell FHCC. The current team members include: Hospitalman Noah Dobbins, Hospitalman Zach Kirgis, Hospitalman Zander Gourley, Hospitalman Darien Fields, Hospitalman Justin Herbert, Hospitalman Anthony Martinez, Hospitalman Justin Delapaz, Hospitalman Scott Katreeb, Hospitalman Joseph Barban, Hospitalman Phillip Lundberg, Hospitalman Andrew Stanley, Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Morgan Greenberg and Mattox.



The Lovell FHCC water polo team has fun while keeping fit and improving morale. The team is always looking for new members. (Photo Provided)

At least one of the team members (Katreeb) has played competitive water polo before, and is "really good," Mattox said. The team is trying to find area teams to compete against and has contacted Libertyville and Lake Bluff men's water polo teams.

"It's a lot of fun," Mattox said. "We play true to the official water polo rules, only one hand on the ball, treading water the whole time, etc."

Mental Health teams praised by inspectors

Congratulations to our Lovell FHCC employees who played key roles in the recent highly successful Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) survey.

Lovell FHCC Director Dr. Stephen Holt and Deputy Director/Commanding Officer Captain Robert Buckley visited the Mental Health Department to recognize several staff members.

Holt and Buckley presented coins to Section Chief, PTSD Programs, Dr. Anthony Peterson; Program Manager, Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program/Addictions Treatment Program (SARP/ATP), Dr. Laura Trakhtman; Section Chief, SARP/ATP Teams, Dr. Ronald Braasch; Transitional Residence Program Manager Stephanie James; Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC) Section Chief Jan Callahan, and Division Head, Mental Health Special Programs Bill Flood. Local Recovery Coordinator/Section Chief Shirley Hoffman was recognized but wasn't present. "I'm not surprised by these results, but I'm very happy," Holt said. "Thanks to you all for taking care of patients."

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Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky attends Evanston Clinic open house



Lovell FHCC thanks former Acting Director Michelle Blakely for her service during transition



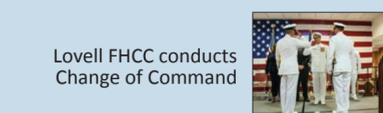
FHCC holds first PTSD Awareness Walk



Monthly awards ceremony honors staff for years of service, military achievements



Navy's 239th Birthday celebrated



Lovell FHCC conducts Change of Command

Or Visit Our Website
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POW/MIA event honors former prisoners, those still missing

Air Force Veteran Ernest Shavitz told of the time he feared being shot by guards holding him prisoner in 1945



World War II Air Force Veteran and former prisoner of war (POW) Ernie Shavitz, of Skokie, Ill., speaks at Lovell FHCC's annual POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony Sept. 18. (Photo by Mary Waterman)

By Jayna Legg
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

Air Force Veteran Ernest Shavitz's wife, Evelyn, nudged him and reminded him to talk about the time he feared he would be shot by his Russian guards when he was a prisoner of war in 1945.

"Yeah, I thought I was next," said Shavitz, recounting the story of what happened to the benevolent Russian guard he bribed with cigarettes so he and his fellow prisoners could slip out and barter for bread, eggs and wine with the villagers.

"His commander caught us one night, and he (the commander) pulled out his gun and shot the guard," Shavitz said, shaking his head. "He shot his own guy."

Shavitz told the story about the guard during an interview after Lovell Federal Health Care Center's (FHCC) recent POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony, where he was the guest speaker. He spoke about his service in World War II and time as a POW in Odessa, Russia (today part of Ukraine). It was a repeat appearance for the 94-year-old, who spoke at the same ceremony in 2005.

Lovell FHCC patients, staff and volunteers including members of the 9th Marine Corps District, gathered in Bourke Hall on the facility's North Chicago campus to honor former and current POWs, those missing (MIA) and killed in action (KIA), and their families.

"Particularly for our staff, this ceremony helps us to really understand and appreciate our mission here at Lovell Federal Health Care Center," said Michelle Blakely, then acting Lovell FHCC director.

Blakely said she will always remember attending her first

POW/MIA ceremony more than two decades ago, when she was a young career employee in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). "I realized my mission was so much bigger than I thought it was."

The sacrifices of POWs, servicemen and women still missing in action and their families, "are not forgotten," Blakely said. "We are all indebted to them."

Blakely stressed the importance of Lovell FHCC's mission to provide health care to former POWs as well as all Veterans, Navy recruits and students, other active duty military members, and military families in Northeast Illinois and Southeast Wisconsin. Lovell FHCC is the nation's first and only federal health care center, an integration of Department of Defense and VA medical services.

Shavitz, of Skokie, Ill., is an outpatient of Lovell FHCC. He was a bombardier on a B24 Liberator in Europe during the war. He enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Forces (precursor to the Air Force) on Pearl Harbor Day, in 1941, hoping to become a flier, but instead became a bombardier.

"I was immediately washed out," he said of the intense pilot training in Marshfield, Calif. "I didn't want to give up on flying, though, so I asked, 'can I go to gunnery school?'"

He was assigned to the 747th Bomb Squadron, 456th Bomb Group, 15th Air Force, and ended up in Italy. In March, 1945 – the month Shavitz's plane crash-landed – records show the 456th Bomb Group hit 16 targets. The group bombed airfields and rail yards in Germany with the intent of destroying German supply lines and slowing troop movements.

"Our first two missions scared the Hell out of us," Shavitz said. "I remember the sky was black with flak." After that, the missions weren't quite as dramatic, he said – until his last one. On the 14th mission, Shavitz saw the oil pump get hit, and the subsequent gush of oil.

"It was the number three engine, which controls all the hydraulics." He tried to contact the pilot, but the communication equipment wasn't functioning, so he took himself off oxygen and made his way to the front of the plane to hit the "feathering switch," which adjusts the propeller blades, a measure typically taken when the engine has suffered a serious problem and must be shut down.

"Had I been five seconds earlier, we wouldn't have crashed," he said.

Now the crew had to prepare for a crash landing on a landing strip that was about 400 feet long. They landed in a Hungarian college town that had just been liberated by the Russians a few days before. They

guards let them sneak out.

At the beginning of May, 1945, his crew and other imprisoned airmen were liberated along with British POWs who had been held since they were captured in Dunkirk in 1940.

"Particularly for our staff, this ceremony helps us to really understand and appreciate our mission here at Lovell Federal Health Care Center."

(Then) Lovell FHCC Acting Director Michelle Blakely

"They sent a steamer to pick us up, and the Americans then went to Naples, Italy," Shavitz said.

The ceremony included a reading of the "Remembrance Prayer," by Tara Goshorn, Lovell FHCC's advocate for former POWs. The prayer explains the tradition of the setting of an empty table to represent "all who have paid the supreme price for the freedoms we all share."

Lovell FHCC's canteen has a permanent table set in honor of servicemen and women who haven't returned.

A Navy brass quintet from the Great Lakes Navy Band concluded the ceremony with the playing of taps.

were taken into custody and put on a train to Russia. While on the train, "the train commandant let us know we were prisoners," Shavitz said.

When they arrived in Odessa, their accommodations were primitive. They slept on wooden racks and ate boiled squash three times a day. Luck would have it that before they were captured, they hid away some money. They used the secret stash to get provisions whenever the



Above, Veterans salute during the annual POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony in Bourke Hall at Lovell FHCC. The Lovell FHCC color guard also participated in the ceremony. (Photo by Mary Waterman)



Above, left, a brass quintet from the Naval Station Great Lakes Band provided music. Above, right, Marines from the 9th Marine Corps District bow their heads during the recent POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony at Lovell FHCC. (Photos by Mary Waterman)