



'Final Salute' honors Holocaust survivor, Veteran



Sailors, civilian staff salute former Korean War POW Paul Argiewicz in solemn ceremony after his death

By Jayna Legg
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

Navy Sailors in the distinctive blue camouflage uniform of the day and dozens of civilian employees lined both sides of the long hallway, heads down, hands clasped.

Dozens of family members, including his wife, Cheryl, and his young great grandson Mason, walked with him. A broad-striped red, white and blue blanket lovingly hand-knit by strangers covered him. His local rabbi, Tzali Wilschanski, in a tall black hat and dark waistcoat, led the procession.

Hands were raised in solemn salutes as Holocaust survivor and Korean War Air Force Veteran Paul Argiewicz began his last journey on Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2013.

"It was amazing, it was incredible, there were so many people, his doctors and nurses, so many in uniform ... it was such a big honor, it wasn't anything I ever expected or heard about, it was just unreal," Cheryl Argiewicz said, remembering the day her husband died at Lovell Federal Health Care Center and was given a "Final Salute."

"It was the most beautiful thing," she said.



In the top photo, Sailors wait in a hallway on the medical-surgical floor at Lovell FHCC for the body of Holocaust survivor and Korean War Air Force Veteran Paul Argiewicz to be wheeled to the elevators. Directly above, the Argiewicz family's rabbi, Tzali Wilschanski, and the funeral director walk with the morgue cart as civilian employees and Sailors pay their respect during the Final Salute. (Photos by Trevor Seela)

Continued on page 3



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FHCC works to prevent sexual assault, care for survivors



By **Captain José Acosta**
Acting Lovell FHCC Director

Welcome spring! Just like the changes you will notice outside the hospital as the grass turns green and flowers bloom, Lovell FHCC will be going through some major changes in coming weeks.

Mr. Patrick Sullivan, Lovell FHCC's first director, retired in March. I am honored to serve as acting director until a new director is named. We welcome Ms. Michelle Blakely, associate director Jesse Brown Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center, who is serving as acting deputy director.

Our organization is also changing, as we realign our organizational structure and increase the number of directorates from six to 10. Lovell FHCC is always looking

for ways to improve our services to patients, and we believe the changes will allow us to do that by improving communication and accountability from our leaders.

The month of April also holds special meaning because it is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Sexual assault is a particularly difficult and sensitive topic. As a commanding officer, I am always troubled by reports of sexual assault. The statistics tell us that one in every five women and one in every 100 men have told their health care providers they have been victims of military sexual trauma (MST).

Military sexual trauma is defined by the VA as sexual assault or harassment that occurred while a person was serving in the military. The definition includes any sexual experience that someone is involved in against their will, and includes unwanted touching, threats, offensive remarks about a person's body or sexual activities; and/or threatening and unwelcome sexual advances.

We know most cases of MST go unreported and that MST is more likely to cause PTSD than any other type of trauma, including combat. Although MST can affect a survivor's mental health in a variety of overt and subtle ways, depression and substance abuse

are particularly common. MST can also have severe consequences for physical health.

These facts are alarming. I am proud of the work that Lovell FHCC has done, and will continue doing, to respond to sexual assaults – and prevent them. Sexual assault prevention is the responsibility of all us. I encourage all staff to live our values and to step up to stop sexual assault.

Prevention efforts in place at the FHCC are numerous. Sailors complete annual General Military Training (GMT) requirements focusing on sexual assault. In addition to GMT, enlisted personnel also have completed Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Fleet training. The chief and officer communities, as well as Stay Navy civilians, have also completed prevention and response training.

The FHCC's response and support for survivors of sexual assault is multifaceted. Our sexual assault forensic examiner program (SAFE) integrates nursing science, medical science and forensic science to support the medical and mental health care needs of survivors. SAFE examiners and case-management teams help survivors start the process of healing. See the story in this "Apollo" highlighting recent SAFE training held at Lovell

FHCC for civilian and military medical providers and victim advocates.

The FHCC provides free, confidential counseling and treatment to male and female Veterans and active duty service members for mental and physical conditions related to MST. Our MST program is comprised of an interdisciplinary team that coordinates services across the continuum of care for MST survivors. The program offers mental health treatment groups that are gender-specific. MST survivors do not have to have a service-connected disability and may be able to receive health care even if they are not eligible for other VA care.

My hope is that we can get the word out this month, and beyond, about the many services and support available at the FHCC for our Veterans and military members who are survivors of MST and need treatment and assistance to recover. Patient-centered care such as this is central to our mission of *Readying Warriors and Caring for Heroes*.

The Apollo

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Training integrates care for sexual assault survivors

Nurses bring joint services together for new course

By **Myna Shegog BSN, RN**
SAFE Medical Program Manager

February was a busy month for the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Medical (SAFE) program at Lovell FHCC.

New 40-hour training for Navy, Marine, Army and civilian Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners (SAFEs) provided a blended curriculum of best practices for providing nursing and forensic care to survivors of sexual assault.

Retired Navy Commander Lovette Robinson, a renowned expert in sexual assault response training, facilitated the course. A mix of medical providers and victim advocates attended, from the Marines, Army, USMEPCOM (U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command), Navy and regional Department of Veterans Affairs facilities. Capt. José Acosta welcomed all to the FHCC.

Midweek, training shifted to the courtroom at Naval Criminal Investigative Services (NCIS). Each attendee had the opportunity to participate in a "mock trial" with real prosecutors and defense



Lovell FHCC Acting Director and Commanding Officer Capt. José Acosta greets attendees at SAFE training. (Photo Provided)

attorneys. Since testifying is such an important part of the role of a SAFE, the opportunity to "practice" this process was reported as "invaluable" by some of the participants, said Navy Lt. Commander Kristin Edgar, a SAFE Medical Program co-manager at Lovell FHCC.

The prosecutors and defense lawyers had the opportunity to interact with the SAFEs in a more "friendly" environment than actually prosecuting a sexual assault perpetrator. A "working lunch" allowed for the interaction of the joint services and an opportunity

to discuss the similarities and differences among their programs. This team-building was paramount to developing long-standing relationships and coordination between people who care for sexual assault survivors, regardless of the color of their uniform.

By week's end, attendees embraced the integration process and were making plans to coordinate more training and ways to improve processes for caring for survivors. The next event is Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April at the FHCC, with a theme of "Let's Talk About It."

Final Salute provides closure to staff, patients (cont.)

Continued from page 1

For more than a decade, Argiewicz, 88, of Paddock Lake, Wis., was a frequent visitor to Lovell FHCC (and the North Chicago Veterans Affairs Medical Center before 2010) for outpatient appointments and some short hospitalizations. Most knew about the book, "Number 176520," which told his harrowing story of surviving the Holocaust as a teenager.

So on a crisp December morning when staff received word of Argiewicz's death on the medical-surgical floor, many gathered for his Final Salute.

"Everybody knew him at the VA, in all the departments, everywhere we went they would say, 'Hi, Paul.' He was just friendly. He loved to talk to everyone," Cheryl Argiewicz remembered.

Minutes after Argiewicz died, Hospice and Palliative Care Coordinator Anna Abraham followed a procedure she established last year and called the hospital's quarterdeck – an information desk at the main entrance manned by Sailors – to round up Final Salute volunteers.

Abraham said the procedures are in effect for every Veteran patient, no matter what the hour or where in the hospital they die. "Our (hospice and palliative care) team wanted this – it's the last thing we can do for our Veterans who have served our country, to honor them and pay respects," she said.

Navy Hospitalman Gregory Spencer, from the optometry department, was one of the dozens of Sailors who readily volunteered to help Dec. 11. It was the second time he has participated in a Final Salute. "Any time you are able to honor someone who has sacrificed in this way, and support the family, it's a very meaningful thing," Spencer said as he waited.

Spencer said the best part about joining a Final Salute line is the appreciation shown by the Veterans' family members. "It's just a short time out of my day, and it means so much to the family ... it's a privilege," he said. "I'll do it as many times as I can."

Father Bill Vander Heyden, division officer for pastoral services, explained how the Final Salute at Lovell FHCC has evolved from a "closed-door" policy to a celebration of life for staff and fellow patients as well as family members and friends of the deceased Veteran.

"Our team decided we had to do something about the way we escorted the Veteran's body off the unit," Vander Heyden said. "It used to be that the other patients on the floor would have to go back to their rooms, and we would close

their doors so they wouldn't see and get depressed."

But, in fact, Vander Heyden said what actually happened before the change was fellow patients and staff members – who, in some cases, lived with and cared for the deceased Veteran every day in the facility's Community Living Center – didn't have the chance to grieve and say goodbye.

"So we decided to do just the opposite, to call everyone together and do this Final Salute," Vander Heyden continued. "This gives them an honorable, dignified way to leave, and it shows the other Veterans that when their time comes, the same ceremony will take place. Their fellow Veterans will have a chance to pay final respects."

An added meaningful touch to the Final Salute is the patriotic blanket that is draped over the morgue cart. Vander Heyden recounted how Nurse Manager Joyce Wadlington asked if something could be done about the stark, off-white aluminum cart. The team decided against using an American flag because they didn't want to take away from potency of the family receiving a flag at the Veteran's funeral, he said.

Vander Heyden knew about a local craft group in McHenry Township named the Crafty "Happy" Hookers, who knit lap blankets

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**Father Bill Vander Heyden,
division officer for pastoral
services at Lovell FHCC**

for Veterans. The group, primarily Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Auxiliary members, was happy to oblige. The facility now has several handmade blankets that are reused as needed in various parts of the hospital.

The Final Salute begins with the chaplain, or in Argiewicz's case his rabbi, reciting a prayer in the hall within earshot of those lined up, followed by the playing of "Taps" on a portable CD player as the body is wheeled down the hall. Those in uniform salute as the cart passes.

For Cheryl Argiewicz, the sight of her husband's nurses and doctors, including his long-time primary care clinician Julia Kizhner, standing silently as they waited to start his Final Salute was overwhelming. "She was just fantastic, so many people were fantastic because they had a personal interest in Paul, so when I saw them there, it was just unbelievable."



Korean War Air Force Veteran Paul Argiewicz shows the tattoo from his imprisonment in Nazi camps during World War II. (Lovell FHCC File Photo)

Although Argiewicz was not in hospice care when he died, he had made the decision with the help of Dr. Kavita Sharma, attending physician for hospice and palliative care – whom Cheryl Argiewicz calls an "angel" – to "stop fighting." He was hospitalized the last time at Lovell FHCC for about six months, with a multitude of problems relating to his heart and kidneys.

"It got to the point when he said, 'please don't hurt me anymore,' so we stopped all the stuff that was painful and made him comfortable," Cheryl Argiewicz said.

Argiewicz's Jewish faith dictated his body would not be embalmed and could not be buried on Friday, the Sabbath. Therefore, his body was transported from Lovell FHCC directly to the funeral home, and he had a full military funeral with a gun salute the next day. In the blur of the hours and days of Shiva, the Jewish week-long period of mourning, Cheryl Argiewicz was awed by the outpouring of love and support for her husband.

"The man was just bigger than life," Cheryl Argiewicz said. "I can't even tell you how many cards, cakes, God knows what else, came to the home ... there was a crowd gathered every night. It was amazing."

Many people knew him from the book "Number 176520," about his ordeal in German camps during World War II. It was a story he frequently recounted to schoolchildren and civic groups, and at the annual March of Remembrance in Washington D.C., over the years. The book, by Deanne Joseph, was named for his concentration camp number tattooed on his arm.

Argiewicz, born in Bielsko, Poland, was arrested at age 10 by the Waffen-SS (military force of Nazi Germany) for stealing bread for his family members, who were starving in the Jewish ghetto. More than once during his imprisonment he lied about his age and work

skills in order to survive. He was liberated from Buchenwald at the age of 15. His parents and an older sister did not survive the Holocaust.

After the war, he immigrated to the United States and joined the U.S. Air Force in 1952. He served as a crew chief in the Korean War, during which he was shot down. Seriously injured, he was captured and held prisoner for nearly a year. "He bailed out the plane, lost part of his clavicle and his hearing," Cheryl Argiewicz said. "He used to tell people that being a POW was nothing compared to the Holocaust."

After he was discharged from the Air Force, Argiewicz worked as a steamfitter in Chicago and started his own business, Argo Heating and Cooling. He was widowed from his first wife and married Cheryl Erdman in 1996. In addition to public speaking, Cheryl Argiewicz said he counseled many fellow Veterans over the years, including some who were considering suicide.

"He put a real value on life ... he touched thousands of lives over the years," Cheryl Argiewicz said.

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Veterans show off their artistic talents

FHCC holds Annual Veterans Creative Arts Festival

By Stephanie McCrobie
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

Anthony Sarpy rapped, “I’m not trying to scare you with this stuff ... it’s a reality check ... how soldiers in combat gotta deal with this mess ... the reality of combat.” Sarpy, an Army Veteran, was competing in Lovell Federal Health Care Center’s 2014 Veterans’ Creative Arts Festival.



The annual festival in February was a day-long event, with the visual arts competition in the morning and musical performances in the afternoon. Many patients entered in more than one category, including paintings, sculptures and original songs.



Sarpy, a patient of Lovell FHCC’s Stress Disorder Unit, wrote and sang a rap, “The Realities of Combat,” about his experiences following his three tours of duty in Iraq and one tour in Afghanistan. Like some of the other artists, Sarpy’s submission was created well before he saw posters advertising the event.

the original vocal song category.

Jim Frohnapfel, a Navy Veteran of both World War II and the Korean War, also created his pieces before seeing posters for the event. He submitted several entries, including a hand-made leather cell phone case and a hand-made board game. Frohnapfel’s entries both placed second in their categories. Although he did not win, Frohnapfel, who currently resides in Lovell FHCC’s Freedom Square, is not discouraged from entering future contests.

“I wrote this song about two years ago, when I was facing some tough issues. I wasn’t ready to share it until now,” Sarpy said. At the urging of his peers and providers in the Stress Disorder Unit, Sarpy entered his song and performed at the festival. Sarpy won first place in

“I’ve done this event in the past,” Frohnapfel said. “It’s fun. I like working with my hands, and it’s nice to show people what I can create.”

Sarpy said it was a positive experience for him, also. Many of his peers from the Stress Disorder Unit cheered him on in the audience. “It was really great to look out and see all the guys there,” Sarpy said. “I appreciated their support.”

Festival organizer Sean Gartland,



“Peaceful Tranquility,” by Leticia Knight, a Veteran employee of Lovell FHCC, won first in the oil painting category. (Photo by Mary Waterman)



Above left, Anthony Sarpy performs a rap song. Above right, Angela Walker belts out “You’ve Got a Friend.” Below, Richard Simmons on the right in a partial desert uniform, performs “Quiet Eagle Patriotic Drum Healing,” with help from members of the audience playing instruments he made. Simmons also entered an acrylic painting and a piece in the Military Combat Experience category. (Photos by Mary Waterman)



recreation therapist supervisor, was pleased with the event. “I think it is great that so many Veterans participated,” he said. “We had some beautiful artistic submissions. The paintings were very unique, and the hand-made pieces were incredible. The crowd was especially pleased with the performances ... lots of people were tapping their feet and clapping their hands!”

First-place winners from each category will be eligible to advance

to the national Veterans Creative Arts Festival this October.

Gartland said the festival is beneficial for Veterans, regardless of whether they place. “This is an excellent outlet for our Veteran patients,” he said. “They use artwork and performance to be expressive about their experiences, and they have the opportunity to be recognized. We wish all of our winners the best of luck as they advance to the national contest.”



Director Patrick Sullivan retires after serving 35 years

Patrick Sullivan is shown receiving an award from Rear Admiral Elaine Wagner, Commander of Navy Medicine East, at his retirement ceremony March 21. Sullivan led the creation of the nation’s first federal health care center in 2010 when the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the U.S. Department of Defense integrated health care services for active duty service members, their families, and Veterans at the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center in North Chicago, Ill. Prior to serving as the first director of Lovell FHCC, Sullivan served as director of the former North Chicago VA Medical Center from 2003 to 2010. Sullivan retires with 35 years at the VA, having also worked at VA medical centers in Oregon, California and Arizona. Sullivan received many commendations throughout his years of service, including the Distinguished Presidential Rank Award in 2011 and the Meritorious Presidential Rank Award in 2008. “I will miss all of the great staff and volunteers we have here at Lovell FHCC. I will especially miss our patients – Veterans, our Sailors and their families. After more than 30 years of service to the VA, I am looking forward to the next chapter in my career and spending more time with my family,” Sullivan said in his retirement announcement. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Darren M. Moore)