Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center

The APOLLO

Readying Warriors and Caring for Heroes

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FHCC Corpsman's dream comes true

Rebekah Glenn-Norris selected for Enlisted-to-Officer training program in Navy Medical Service Corps

By Jayna Legg
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

In 2014, enlisted sailor Rebekah Glenn-Norris came very close to getting out of the Navy to pursue her lifelong goal of getting a master's degree in social work.

May 7, 2018, Glenn-Norris stood proudly in the Forrestal Village Chapel and took the oath of office in front of family, friends and colleagues. She was commissioned a Navy ensign by co-worker Lt. Cmdr. Aileen Pletta, one day after graduating from Dominican University with the degree she dreamed about and worked on part-time while serving at the FHCC.

Glenn-Norris, the lead petty (non-comissioned) officer for the FHCC Physical Therapy Department, was selected for a commission after applying for the Medical Service Corps In-Service Procurement Program (MSC IPP), one of the Navy's Enlisted-to-Officer opportunities. This summer, she will attend Officer Development School in Rhode Island, before transferring to San Diego to begin her social work career.

"For three years, I've watched her grow as she has effortlessly tackled school, led sailors and run a PT department," Pletta said. "She believed she could, so she did."

Keynote speaker Command Master Chief Maurice Coffey said he remembered Glenn-Norris telling him in her career development board she was thinking about getting out to continue her education. Then her reenlistment paperwork showed up on his desk.

"In 2014, you reenlisted. In 2015, you were Sailor of the Year," he said. "That's just amazing – in that short time period, you've done great things."

Coffey, who transferred to Italy after serving as the FHCC Command Master Chief, opened his remarks saying, "It's a great honor to be here … This is the kind of invite that makes you want to cry."

Continued on page 5

Lovell FHCC Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Rebekah Glenn-Norris takes the oath of office at her commissioning ceremony in May. (Photo by Jayna Legg)

FHCC Creative Arts Festival finalists to compete nationally

By Jayna Legg
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

Army Veteran George Haasjes appreciates the irony of the name of his photo "The Fallen" and is happy to explain how he got the striking picture that won first in the Lovell Federal Health Care Center Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Vietnam Veteran John Michael, who was an Army aviator, holds a platter he entered in the Lovell FHCC Veterans Creative Arts Festival. (Photo by Israel Molina)

"I fell and broke my leg," he said, as he stood by his entry at the March 1 festival and told the story to reporters. "It was a Saturday morning. I was out with two other photographer friends at Illinois Beach State Park. I fell and was on the ground for an hour."

One of his friends fell, too, because the ground was slick that day, and getting the ambulances to their location was a "comedy of errors," he said. But all's well that ends well. Haasjes' photo of fall leaves now will be judged in the national Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Continued on page 3

Traditionally, many of the performers come together as the Windy City Wailers and sing "Sweet Home Chicago" to end the festival. Pictured left to right, back row, is Master of Ceremonies Navy Capt. Walt Dalitsch at the piano; Kerry Lee, Wayne Bolden, Anthony Sarpy, Jacob Davidson and Paul Mahoney, standing; and in the foreground, Babette Peyton, sitting center, and Angela Walker on the right. (Photo by Trevor Seela)

In this Issue...

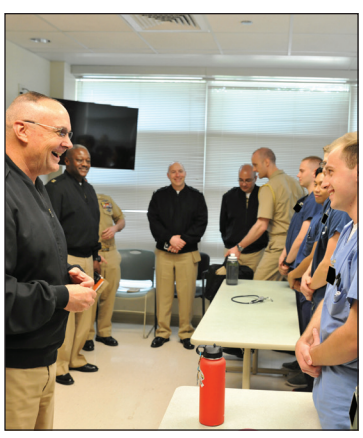
Guest Commentary, p. 2

Employee news, p. 4

Dr. Sarah Fouse reaches milestone, p. 6

Command Master Chief Moore retires

Page 3



Second Corpsman Trauma Training class graduates

Page 6

Guest Columnist

Spada: 'Continue to set the bar high. Others are waiting to follow'

By Karen Spada
Interim FHCC Senior Chief Nurse Executive

I first visited the site that is now Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center back in 2003, when the old Navy Hospital and under-utilized VA hospital sat side-by-side, each looking lonely, dated and underused.

As the first U.S. Army Baylor resident selected to be an intern to the (then) Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Anthony Principi, I'd been invited to observe a strategic planning session around the possible merging of active duty DoD and Veterans Health Administration healthcare providers working along-side each other at a single facility. This idea had been generated by the Capital Assessment Realignment of Enhanced Care (CARES) Commission, created in 2002 to review antiquated structures, decreased demographic need, low capacity and several other criteria.

The commission's goal was to close those facilities that were "not being maximized," combine smaller with larger, and build new facilities in tandem with other agencies.

At that early meeting, the premise was to build a **true federal health care center team** … made up of both active duty and VHA personnel, working together to serve veterans, those currently in military service and their dependents.

I can remember sitting there and listening and thinking how amazing this proposal sounded. It was an idea that could change the cadence of the hospital halls as young, middle-aged and older patients shared not only a need for hospitalization, but a sisterhood/brotherhood of a shared military background.

I was personally enthralled by the possibly opportunity of working beside active duty providers, and helping them prepare to take their clinical skills into battle. My plan of becoming one of the first on this amazing new team was not to be. But, when Lovell merged as the **first federal health care center**, I watched and followed your progress with immense pride and anticipation of the remarkable things that you would teach the rest of VHA as well as the private sector.

You can imagine my enthusiasm when four years after I retired as a nurse executive, the Office of Nursing Service asked me to be the first VHA nurse executive to come out of retirement and "help" at some unnamed destination. To be honest, I was enjoying my work in the private sector as a consultant and enjoying the benefits that such a position brings, but when the name Lovell came up, I was already packing!

Since arriving, I have been in awe of what you are accomplishing. I actually get "goose bumps" when I am on the East campus and see the recruits marching with their flags and backpacks. I love going by the pediatric clinic and seeing young sailors holding their children and watching the cartoons while they wait to be seen.

The **best** – the most amazing, the most special and what still gives me a rush – is when I see these young active duty sailors pause and take the time to speak to our older veterans. When a corpsman or an active duty nurse is providing care to veterans, the veterans' smiles and stories of memories show their appreciation of being served by those who are serving!

I could stay here forever! I am so proud of each and every one of you. Thank you for sharing your expertise, your kindness and your caring. It is evident in all you do. FHCC still has some work to do but being the first is never easy! That being said, being the first means you are making history; you are a part of what is to come and what will be. So, continue to set the bar high. Others are waiting to follow your lead!

Humbly and Respectfully,
Karen Spada, Interim Senior Chief Nurse Executive, FHCC

Healing: *Recovery in their own words*

(Editor's Note: "Healing" is a series written in the first-person by veterans who have experienced significant recovery in their lives.)

Name: Ron Gaeti
Branch of Service: U.S. Navy
Dates of Service: 1974-1975

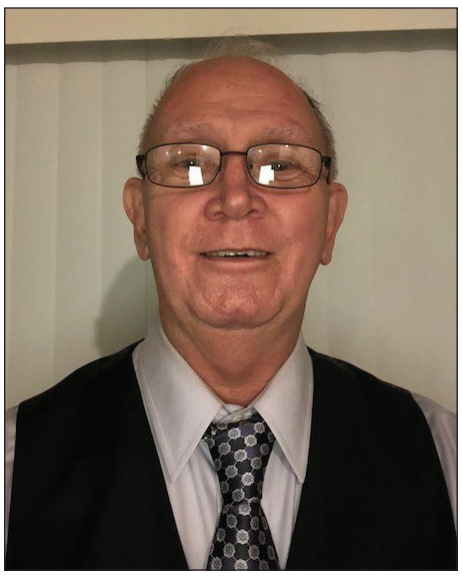
I was born in Chicago, Illinois and attended Taft High School. I played four years of varsity basketball.

I'm the father of two beautiful girls, and I have two grandchildren.

I volunteer at Lovell FHCC. I am a member of the Rotary Club of North Chicago, WTTW, American Legion Post 911, Moose Club Zion Benton, USBC Bowling Association, and I'm an animal activist.

Description of first instance of illness and substance use:
It was May, 1975, after experiencing severe trauma in the military.

Description of treatment received:
After attempting several treatment programs and failing at various hospitals, I finally went into the Addictions Treatment Program at Lovell Federal Health Care Center.



Ron Gaeti

"It won't be easy because you will be fighting for your life but your life is worth it."

Mr. Ron Gaeti
U.S. Navy Veteran

I stayed and completed the program in November, 2012, my proudest moment.

What was the turning point in your recovery?
Two things:
1. When I did an honest self-evaluation of myself, and the events that led me to homelessness, I realized how my life seemed to be at a dead end, and that there was so much I had not experienced in my adult life.

I admitted that wanted to live a better life. I had to let go of the past and stop blaming others for my problems.

2. Re- entering the community and work environment. Learning responsibility and being a team player and leader in my community.

Working as a volunteer at Lovell FHCC and other organizations allowed me to help others, while at the same time I was helping myself.

What would you recommend to other Veterans who have experienced the same type of situation?
Pray and believe in yourself. Stay away from toxic people and environments the you know are not good for you. Stay on course with your treatment and get involved with something positive.

It won't be easy because you will be fighting for your life but your life is worth it.

The Apollo

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CMC Thomas Moore retires, looks back on time at FHCC, in Navy

Former FHCC Command Master Chief Moore reflects with 'The Apollo' on his 30 years of service

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jacob Waldrop
Lovell FHCC Communications

At his retirement ceremony, CMC Moore, right, salutes FHCC Commanding Officer Capt. Bradford Smith. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jacob Waldrop).

Q: What is your greatest accomplishment in the Navy?
A: I would say my greatest accomplishment is our people. The thousands of Sailors who have advanced and the hundreds of chiefs I've made is the measure of my success. It's not me; it's our people. I didn't get to where I'm at, or do the things I do, because of myself. It's really our people.

Q: What was your favorite duty station?
A: I've enjoyed everywhere I've been stationed. Some of them bring their share of challenges, but everywhere I've been I've had a different job and different responsibilities. I don't have a particular favorite because they have all been rewarding for me.

Q: What are your plans after the Navy?
A: I'm going to do something. What that is, I don't know, but I'm not too concerned about it. I want it to be fun and interesting like the last 30 years have been.

Q: Favorite thing about working at FHCC?
A: The 3,000-different people I've met and worked with. Everyone brings something cool, unique and different, and that's what makes us good.

Q: Any advice for new sailors just arriving at the FHCC as their first duty station?
A: They need to learn their rate and learn their business. Don't worry about all the other things that take them away from what it is that we do. They will build a better foundation and will be better leaders in the future if they spend their first tour of duty concentrating on learning their rate and their business.

Q: Did you choose to come to FHCC? Why?
A: Yes. I knew this was going to be my last tour in the Navy so I brought my wife back to the hometown she was born and raised in.

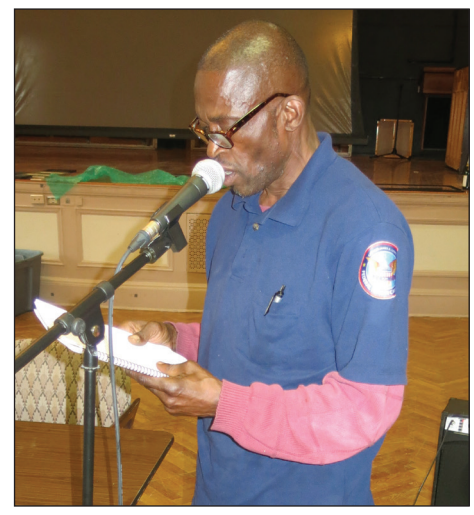
Q: What will you miss most about the Navy?
A: The camaraderie, teamwork and deployments. I think that you can get that with any organization that you are part of. Your team may not be deploying together but you will be working as a team. It's important to build that relationship no matter what you wear or where you work.

Festival recognizes importance of art, music therapy *(cont.)*

Continued from page 1

Haajes added he was happily "put back together," by FHCC orthopedic surgeon Dr. Shannon Lorimer, who also is a Navy Lieutenant Commander.

"If it wasn't for Dr. Lorimer and the FHCC, I don't think I'd be walking as well as I am," said Haasjes, who has been an amateur photographer for 10 years. This year was the first time he entered the Creative Arts Festival, which was held in partnership with the College of Lake County Student Veterans Club, March 1, at the college.

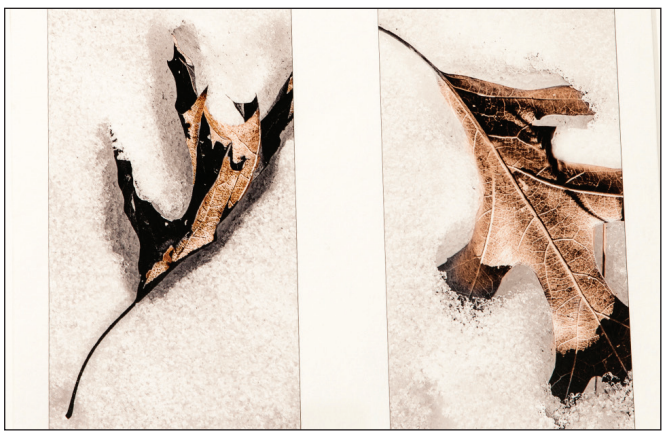


Above left, Anthony Sarpy performs his original rap song, "Domestic Violence," at the FHCC Veterans Creative Arts Festival. (Photo by Trevor Seela). Above center and right, authors Dorothy Volkert and F. Louis Williams read from their creative writing entries at the festival awards luncheon. (Photos by Jayna Legg).

This year's CAF was bigger and better than ever before, said FHCC Recreation (Art) Therapist Tricia Stewart, one of two coordinators. "We went from 96 entries to 160 this year. It's important to note that this is not all for judging purposes. We want to display everyone's creative endeavors and support their artwork."

Veterans who are enrolled for care at Lovell FHCC are eligible to enter in numerous visual arts, performing arts and creative writing categories. The festival recognizes the importance and impact of art and music therapy as a form of rehabilitative treatment to help patients recover from, and cope with, physical and emotional disabilities.

Haasjes and approximately 40 other top finishers were submitted to the national contest, which will be held in Des Moines, Iowa, in October. National CAF qualifiers will be notified later this summer.



"The Fallen," a photo entry by George Haajes, won first in the FHCC's Veterans Creative Arts Festival and has been entered in the national contest. (Photo by Israel Molina)

Artists, performers and writers who entered the Lovell FHCC CAF recently were treated to a luncheon to recognize them and announce the results. The area professional artists and performers who judged the FHCC Creative Arts Festival also were invited.

"This is a joy to be involved with," Stewart told the audience at the luncheon. "This is amazing and keeps growing every year. Thank you to all of you who entered, and thank you, also, to our judges."

Stewart and Elizabeth LaCombe, also a recreation therapist and the other CAF coordinator, said many good things have come out of the festival, including a possible recording deal for Rap performer Anthony Sarpy and a potential book deal for F. Louis Williams, who entered and won in the creative writing short story category.

Additionally, FHCC veterans who participated in a photography class last year and a show at Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods will have their photographs displayed at the Barrington library. Also, with the growing popularity of creative writing, a new creative writing workshop at Brushwood is in the planning stages for veterans and military members.

At the luncheon, both Williams and 94-year-old Dorothy Volkert, did readings of some of the pieces they entered in the FHCC's festival.

Williams' stories are about growing up on the south side of Chicago. "All these stories are true," he said, prefacing his reading. "It's a whole other universe – Englewood – and all the stories, no matter how strange, are true."

Volkert has been writing since Kindergarten and has said writing is a form of therapy for her. "It takes care of some of the sorrow," she said.

Volkert served as a nurse on the Army Hospital Ship Charles A. Stafford during World War II. At the luncheon, the Antioch resident introduced herself to those in attendance, saying, "I keep hoping I'll meet a patient from that (wartime hospital) ship, and then we'll talk about what we should have and should not have done."

ONE TEAM Extra
News Employees Can Use

FHCC staff deploy for Continuing Promise

A pharmacy technician, nurse practitioner, dentist, optometrist and five other FHCC active duty clinicians were welcomed back to Chicago at the end of April after a deployment for U.S. Southern Command training mission Continuing Promise 2018. Capt. Anna Gruetzmacher, Lt. Cmdr. Clarence Tang, Lt. Cmdr. Amy Zaycek, Lt. Amber Egbert, PO2 Donald Cousins, Hospitalman Joshua Davila, Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Tristan Cowan, Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Kevin Mandal and Hostpital Corpsman 2nd Class Glenn Soriano served on the USNS Spearhead. They helped provide medical, environmental health, veterinary and humanitarian assistance in Honduras and Guatemala during this civil-military operation. For photos and coverage of Continuing Promise 2018, go to: http://www.southcom.mil/Media/Special-Coverage/Continuing-Promise-2018/

Lieutenant Aranas is 'Junior Officer of the Year'

Assistant Nurse Manager and Division Officer of the ED, Team STEPPS Master Trainer, only active duty nurse on the Nurse Practice Council, preceptor for Navy Medicine Corpsman Trauma Training, Wardroom Secretary, Awards Board representative, Regional Medical Coverage Coordinator for the Wounded Warrior Games, Navy Nurse Corps Officer of the Year – Lt. Leonard Aranas' titles are many.

Now he can add "Junior Officer of the Year." That title was bestowed on him at a recent employee awards ceremony. "Lieutenant Aranas is, without a doubt, our directorate's top choice for Junior Officer of the Year!" wrote his nominator Cmdr. John Sinclair.

Aranas oversees 40 nursing staff members, and assists to lead the 12 ED providers as the assistant nurse manager and division officer in the Emergency Department. He recently completed Certified Emergency Nurse certification. He was featured, along with his civilian counterpart, RN Christine Barassi-Jackson, in a national Defense Health Agency story "Military, civilian nurses learn, teach in unique DoD-VA collaboration" in May 2017.

Aranas has led many process improvements in the ED, including the realignment of the ED under the Chief Medical Executive. "His reputation for integrity made him first pick to meet with VA Office of Nursing Services, VA Inspector General and Navy Medicine East (for) interviews concerning facility operations," Sinclair wrote in the nomination. "As an RN, he maintains tracking on several Clinical Nurse Specialist-level process improvements."

Command Master Chief Jonathan Crisafulli, Interim Director Dr. Daniel Zomchek, on the left and Commanding Officer Capt. Bradford Smith, right, award Lt. Leonard Aranas "Junior Officer of the Year."

Under his leadership, the ED "levied zero major hits during the 2017 Joint Commission Readiness survey, 'unheard of' according to inspectors for such a high-risk area," Sinclair said.

New team Daisy Award goes to McHenry CBOC

On May 7, a special Daisy team award went to the "McHenry CBOC Veterans of Valor." The McHenry Community Based Outpatient Clinic team, led by RN Missy Robel, identified a gap in care for veterans in need of dental care.

Three years ago, they discovered that a large number of McHenry area patients couldn't afford necessary dental care and were not eligible for that benefit through the Veterans Health Administration. The team engaged CBOC nursing staff and involved the community in significant ways for support to help solve the problem, and they continue to find ways to help veterans today.

The team was celebrated for its "amazing compassionate care" during a video tele-conference that enabled the hospital and the CBOCs to help celebrate the special recognition. In the future, the Daisy Award presentations will continue to allow VTel Video conferencing for our CBOC's, East Campus, and other FHCC locations. The team members include: Ann Juska, LPN; Kirsten Ibarra-Delgado, LPN; Marlene Trausch, RN; Carrie Jimenez, LPN; Debra Richards, RN; Melesa Robel, LPN; Catherine Celeski, RN, and Ray Tierney RN (not pictured).

Left to right: Ann Juska, Kristen Ibarra-Delgado, Marlene Trausch, Carrie Jimenez, Dr. Sarah Fouse, Karen Spada, Melesa Robel, Catherine Celeski, Capt. Deborah Kumaroo. (Photo provided)

- Ray Tierney

Congratulations!

- **FHCC Endocrine section** wrote nine chapters in the book "Atypical Diabetes," published by the American Diabetics Association.
- **Jose (Tony) Colon** was named Senior Civilian of the Quarter for 3rd Quarter, FY 2017.
- **Zosima Murakami** was named Junior Civilian of the Quarter for 3rd Quarter, FY 2017.
- **Shaiza Khan** was named Senior Civilian of the Quarter for 1st Quarter, FY 2018.
- **Donna Meer** was named Junior Civilian of the Quarter for 2nd Quarter, FY 2018.
- **Megan Ballantine** was named Senior Civilian of the Quarter for 2nd Quarter.
- **HM1 Ellasan Roe**, Senior Sailor of the Quarter, 1st Quarter, FY 2018.
- **HM2 Kenitha Harris,** Sailor of the Quarter, 1st Quarter, FY 2018
- **HM3 Tyler Smearsky,** Junior Sailor of the Quarter.
- **HN Aaron Lewis**, Blue Jacket of the Quarter
- **LT Erick Gohdes**, NC, USS Tranquillity, was named Junior Officer of the Quarter, 4th Quarter, FY 2017.
- **ICU RN Jeniffer Binuya,** received the March, 2018 Daisy Award for nursing excellence.
- **ICU RN Liezl Payawal,** received the May, 2018 Daisy Award for nursing excellence.
- **Jessica Pinder** was selected as Social Worker of the 1st Quarter by the Association of Department of Veterans Affairs Social Workers for her exceptional work with the Veterans Justice Outreach program. Pinder was featured in the Spring issue of "VA Social Work Connection," newsletter, available online: http://www.vasocialworkers.org/SocialWorkerofQuarter_2018.html

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FHCC celebrates Nurses Week with awards, events

Navy's "Top Doc," Surgeon General Vice Adm. Faison, visits FHCC

- Asian Pacific American month marked
- Memorial Day observed
- "Lovell FHCC Tips" provide helpful info

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Glenn-Norris' dream is to become a social worker *(cont.)*

Continued from page 1

Coffey urged Glenn-Norris to "lead leaders, not just followers," and to never be afraid of failure "because success is coming. And if you don't know, ask."

Glenn-Norris' long-time friend and mentor Chief Sharron Barker stepped up to the podium after Coffey's remarks to make a special tribute. After explaining how the two met while serving in Japan, Barker placed a large framed photo of Glenn-Norris' late mother, Sharon, on a chair in the front of the chapel.

There was not a dry eye in the chapel as Barker read a narrative written as if Glenn-Norris' mother was speaking. She ended by saying, "You have exceeded all expectations … taking on the world with your calm, welcoming demeanor and your desire to care for God's children."

When it was her turn to speak, Glenn-Norris told the story of losing her mother to cancer. Glenn-Norris was just 14 at the time. "I was always encouraged by her to volunteer, go to school and be involved," she said.

A cousin and her husband became Glenn-Norris' foster parents and eventually adopted her - all with the help of a social worker. "In a world of darkness, my social worker was the light that guided me," Glenn-Norris said.

Glenn-Norris decided then she wanted to be a social worker. When the Navy beckoned in 2007, she decided military service would pave the way to reach that goal. In her bio, Glenn-Norris explained her decision.

"I joined the Navy because I believe my Mom invested so much into my education as a child that she would have wanted me to reach my highest potential as an adult," she wrote.

Glenn-Norris' Navy career includes service as a dental technician before she completed Joint Services Physical Therapy Technician "C" School. She was a physical therapy technician at Naval Hospital Yokosuka, Japan when the country was rocked by a devastating earthquake in 2011. Glenn-Norris took an immediate role in Operation Tomodachi, creating temporary duty orders for hundreds of military spouses and children.

After Japan, Glenn-Norris served in Kabul, Afghanistan as the only physical therapy technician at a forward operating base. During her off hours, she volunteered with Operation Outreach, an organization that collected school supplies and clothes for local children.In 2013, after another tour in Japan, Glenn-Norris was assigned to the FHCC.

During her remarks, Glenn-Norris thanked her boyfriend and his child for their ongoing love and support during the long hours and late nights she spent studying while pursuing her degree.

The FHCC sailors Glenn-Norris led in the physical therapy department "made my job easy," she said. She urged all sailors to take advantage of the tuition assistance offered by the Navy. "And to all my leaders, chiefs, thank you for your support and guidance and mentorship," Glenn-Norris said.

Above, Rebekah Glenn-Norris' ensign rank is pinned on by friend Brittany Watson and her adoptive mother Twyla Norris, while adoptive father Tom Norris looks on. The portrait is of Glenn-Norris' deceased mother, Sharon Glenn. Below, Glenn-Norris' officer cover (hat) is placed on her head. (Photos by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jacob Waldrop)

After thanking her Dominican University "family," Glenn-Norris paid an emotional tribute to her parents, Tom and Twyla Norris. "You came into my world when I thought it was ending," she said.

Tom Norris was joined by Glenn-Norris' friend Brittany Watson to place the shoulder boards on Glenn-Norris' uniform, signifying her new rank. "She started out as a great follower and turned into a great leader," Watson said of Glenn-Norris.

Petty Officer Celina Thompson then stepped up to give Glenn-Norris her first salute. Master of Ceremonies Chief Joe Falcone explained that an officer's first salute is traditionally paid for with a silver dollar. "You have to buy the first salute, and then you earn the rest," he said.

Vietnam veterans find thanks, and help, at FHCC town halls

By Julie Ewart
FHCC Communications Chief

Fifty years ago, the Vietnam War was at its height. Approximately 9 million Americans served during the era, from 1955-1975. More than 58,000 U.S. military members lost their lives, and 153,000 were wounded. The remainder were forever impacted by their experiences, often in ways difficult to share with non-military family and friends.

"When we came back, soldiers were shunned. The 'cold shoulder' effect has finally melted," said Kenosha resident Charles Sichmeller, a Marine Corps veteran who served in Vietnam from 1966-1969.

Alongside family members and friends, Sichmeller and more than 35 other local Vietnam-era veterans were honored for their service at a March 22 ceremony, held in conjunction with national observances of the war's 50th anniversary.

The event in Kenosha was hosted by the Kenosha County Veterans Services Division in partnership with Lovell Federal Health Care Center. Vietnam veterans received commemorative pins at the beginning of a Veterans Town Hall. Representatives from the FHCC's Kenosha Community Based Outpatient Clinic, Kenosha County Veteran Service Organizations and Veterans Benefits Administration answered questions.

Veterans attend a Kenosha FHCC Town Hall. Vietnam veterans received special recognition at the meeting. (Photo courtesy of Kenosha County Veteran Services Division.)

"I want to add a humble and sincere 'welcome home' and thank you for your service (and), to your families thank you for your sacrifice and supporting your veteran," said Michael Kiefer, former FHCC interim director, whose U.S. Marine father served two tours in Vietnam.

Sichmeller said commemorations are helpful. "Events like this allow veterans to talk and to bond with each other."

Asked about the potential impact of anniversary activities on Vietnam veterans, Dr. Thomas Martin, program manager of FHCC Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Programs, agreed they can have a positive effect as long as resources are provided at the same time. "What veterans with PTSD tend to do is avoid things related to the war," Martin said. "We encourage them to attend events like this, that honor them for their service. Hopefully, they'll see that it doesn't have to be an overwhelming experience."

FHCC is partnering with the Lake County Veterans Assistance Commission (VAC) for a Veterans Town Hall and 50th Anniversary Commemoration June 20. All veterans, service members and families are invited to the event, which will follow the regular VAC meeting. Veterans who served between 1955-1975 are encouraged to be recognized at the meeting. A discussion about veteran benefits, resources, and services will follow.

You're invited:
FHCC Town Hall Meeting
with Lake County Veterans
Assistance Commission
June 20
11:15 a.m. to 1 p.m.

- *Vietnam Vets honored*
- *Learn about services*
- *Ask questions*

Great Lakes Community
Center (Forrestal Village)
2007 Virginia Ave.
North Chicago, Ill. 60088

Second class of hospital corpsmen completes trauma training

By Petty Officer 1st Class John Kotara
U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

Fifteen hospital corpsmen completed the Navy Medicine's second iteration of trauma training June 1 in North Chicago.

The latest iteration of the hospital corpsman trauma training utilizes a partnership between Navy Medicine, the Capt. James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center (Lovell FHCC), and John A. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook County (Cook County). The hands-on training comprises eight days of classroom training and six weeks of trauma training focused on Trauma Resuscitation, Trauma Intensive Care Unit, Burn Unit, and the Emergency Department.

"At my clinic on base, I was trained in the basics, such as taking vitals, how to do small procedures and how to administer medication," said Hospital Corpsman Mardi Artis, who participated in the training. "I have worked with patients, but start-to-finish, to actual trauma – I can't get that in a clinic setting."

The first class graduated Jan. 18, 2018 at Lovell FHCC after 12 weeks of classroom and trauma training. This most recent iteration is built on several lessons learned to maximize the educational experience the corpsmen received.

"The class went from a crawl to run speed within a week," said Artis. "We went from learning about it to a hands-on experience – it was a very quick transition."

Vice Adm. Forrest Faison, U.S. Navy surgeon general and chief, U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, talks to students participating in the Hospital Corpsman (HM) trauma training. He visited the students at John H. Stroger Hospital of Cook County in Chicago, the primary training site. Photo was altered for security reasons. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jacob Waldrop/Released)

Unlike the initial proof-of-concept, the recent 15 corpsmen had previously completed their first tour at a medical treatment facility. Upon completion of the trauma training, the HMs will be assigned to an operational assignment, allowing them to implement their new knowledge and experiences.

"Because these students are arriving from medical treatment facilities and naval health clinics, unlike the first group, many of them have had some form of patient care experience," said Chief Hospital Corpsman Yesenia Minaya, who supervised the working group that designed both iterations of training and was the senior enlisted instructor for both. "Therefore, we removed the first five weeks of clinical non emergent training and focused on trauma. One of the goals of this training is to equip HMs with trauma knowledge and skills to better prepare them medically to serve on operational platforms. This experience will help them become more familiar and comfortable handling emergent situations in operational platforms where the number of medical assets and resources may be limited."

While attending, the students assisted trauma surgeons with a range of life-threatening injuries, helping to stabilize the patients. Active duty senior independent duty corpsmen and civilian providers supervised all student work while in the clinical trauma environment.

"We have seen a wide variety of conditions while attending this training," said Artis. "We have seen trauma patients who are unconscious when they come through the door and have been treated and released. We also see the unfortunate side when the patient doesn't make it, but knowing we gave it our all makes me proud."

The trauma training experience was one of several Hospital Corps initiatives developed to meet the U.S. Navy surgeon general's goal of achieving maximum life-saving capabilities through educational programs.

"The training is building the confidence of the students," said Larry Griffis, Navy Medical Education, Training and Logistics Command instructor. "The doctors and nurses are taking them in like parents, and the students are absorbing all that knowledge. The engagement and initiative is 100 percent on both sides – it is phenomenal."

Navy Medicine is a global health care network of 63,000 personnel that provide health care support to the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, their families and veterans in high operational tempo environments, at expeditionary medical facilities, medical treatment facilities, hospitals, clinics, hospital ships and research units around the world.

- Lovell FHCC Public Affairs contributed to this story

Fifty years and counting, FHCC's Dr. Sarah Fouse paves her own path

By Chanda Johnson
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

Dr. Sarah Fouse started as a nursing assistant in 1968, transporting patients within the hospital to their recreational therapy appointments at what was then the Downey Veterans Affairs Hospital. Fifty years later, she is associate director of nursing practice at the same location, now known as Lovell Federal Health Care Center.

As the VA nurse executive at the FHCC, she is responsible for all nursing practice, Sterilization and Processing Services, Patient-Centered Care, and Safe Patient Handling.

Fouse decided on a path and paved her way to achieve it. She went to school evenings and on weekends to obtain her nursing degrees - all while working a full-time job.

"I did it the hard way," she said, listing all the schooling she fit in while raising a family and working full time. "My whole life, I've been going back to school."

On the left, Dr. Sarah Fouse holds her Daisy Award. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jacob Waldrop) The provided photo is of Fouse early in her career.

She started with schooling to become a licensed practical nurse and went from there to a bachelor's degree and then a master's. She currently has a doctorate in nursing and has held many positions at the facility along the way, including associate chief nurse of mental health services and clinical coordinator for mental health.

The nurses and other staff members she manages at Lovell FHCC know they can call on her for anything, day or night. Fouse said she is always willing to go the extra mile for her staff and patients, and she makes it her business to mentor as many nurses as she can. "You haven't made it, until you reach back to bring someone else up," she said.

Fouse recently was honored for her ongoing support of the national Daisy Award program, which recognizes nursing excellence. Under her leadership, there have been 100 nominees and 22 winners since the program began four years ago at the Lovell FHCC.

Fifty years and counting, Fouse continues to share her knowledge - on duty and off - with up and coming nurses. It's been a journey but she thanks her biggest supporter – her husband – as well as her co-workers and religious beliefs. When things go wrong, and they will, she always has a place to seek refuge. Her church is the Greater Grace Temple Church of God and Christ in Racine, Wis., where she is a long-time resident. At church, she mentors women and nursing students outside of work. She also volunteers on Saturdays at a local jail, where she leads Bible studies and anger management programs.

Fouse said patients have always come first for her, long before "patient-centered care" became the mantra of the Veterans Health Administration. She believes the key to a successful patient relationship is to make sure to listen to patients. "Listen to the words they say and the ones they don't say.

"I sit like a mild-mannered Clark Kent but if you mess with my patients, you'll see a different side me," she said. "The patients are my heart, and that's one of the reasons I've stayed so long. I tell everyone, 'I'm having fun,' and I am … I really am."