Veterans’ artwork showcased in Waukegan ArtWise “Those Who Serve” exhibit at Lake County Courthouse

By Jayna Legg
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

As Vietnam Veteran David Watling explains what is pictured in his painting “Wit’s End,” one feeling emerges – pain. Pain and distress is evident on the face of the stark and distorted figure of a woman in the center.

The woman is seated at a kitchen table, her nightgown crumpled with one strap falling off the shoulder. Her messy hair stands on end. Her eyes are sunken and darkly shadowed. A nearly empty bottle of wine or beer can be seen on the table. A baby screams in his high chair, a tiny frowning girl with frazzled braids stands to the woman’s side. The sink is filled with dirty dishes, and there is no food to be seen.

Watling, of Pleasant Prairie, doesn’t mince words as he points out the hidden symbolism in the painting of his daughter, including the date she has circled on a wall calendar to “end it all.”

Watling discussed his painting recently at the Lake County Courthouse, in Waukegan, Ill., where it was one of several pieces he and five other Capt. James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center Veteran artists exhibited as part of the Waukegan ArtWise 2015 Series “Those Who Serve.” The exhibit in the lobby of the courthouse and several others in the Waukegan area were displayed Sept. 11 through Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

“We were very excited to have our Veterans show their art in this exhibit,” said Tricia Stewart, Lovell FHCC recreation therapist. Stewart coordinated Lovell FHCC’s participation in the ArtWise 2015 Series.

Stewart also organizes the FHCC’s annual Veterans Creative Arts Festival (CAF) in the spring. Several of the Veterans who showed pieces at the courthouse have also competed, and placed, in the Creative Arts Festival.

“The Veterans Creative Arts Festival and events like the ArtWise exhibit are important elements of recovery for many Veterans battling PTSD and other mental illnesses,” Stewart said. “They benefit from the chance to express their feelings through the arts and have others see and appreciate what they’ve created, and it gives us, the viewers, a better understanding of their military experience.”

Other Veteran artists who showed pieces in the Lovell FHCC’s exhibit at the courthouse included Leticia Knight, Hilton Kaufman, Anthony Stetina, Joshua Brown and Richard Simmons.

Corpsman named ‘Angel of the Battlefield’

By Stephanie McCrobie
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

F HCC Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (Fleet Marine Force) Joshua Van Horn does not think he is a hero.

“I don’t feel that anything I did is something another person placed in the same situation would not have done,” Van Horn said about his recent selection as one of the Armed Services YMCA’s Angels of the Battlefield.

Van Horn, a corpsman in Lovell Federal Health Care Center’s Cardiology Clinic, was awarded the prestigious award on November 4 at a gala in Washington, D.C.

For the ninth consecutive year, the Armed Services YMCA has honored five members of the U.S. military for providing life-saving medical treatment on the battlefield.

Van Horn was selected for his heroic actions while he was deployed with a Marine unit in Helmand Province, Afghanistan in 2014. Van Horn was assigned to the 1st Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company, a unit dedicated to supporting American and coalition forces. As a corpsman, Van Horn was embedded with the unit to provide medical care and treat wounded, injured or ill Marines.

During a mounted patrol his unit was conducting one day, some of his Marine comrades were hit by an improvised explosive device (IED).

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From the Desk of the Director

What does MyVA ‘Putting Veterans First’ mean to FHCC?

MyVA connection begins when a person joins the military, lasts through Golden Years to ‘Final Salute’

By Dr. Stephen Holt
Lovell FHCC Director

You may have heard the term “MyVA” by now, or seen it in print, and wonder what it means, what it means to you as a patient here at Lovell FHCC, or a caregiver of a Veteran, staff member or even a volunteer.

The official definition is that it represents the changing, and steadily improving relationship between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Veterans it serves. This is declared in the tag line, “Putting Veterans First,” that appears below MyVA as part of the logo.

Van Horn said award honors those who were lost (cont.)

We were with a route clearance platoon, embedded with them providing support,” Van Horn said. “The truck directly in front of my vehicle struck an IED. Once the dust settled and we could see what was going on, we noticed the vehicle was blown off the road and was on its side.”

Van Horn immediately acted to treat the wounded. When asked about his quick actions, Van Horn said, “I was told by my vehicle commander that they needed me, and I went. I didn’t second guess myself at the time and was able to help the men that were injured. Training is paramount in our ability to interpret a situation and apply the skills we’ve learned in hopes of getting the best result for our patient.”

Van Horn’s training and quick actions helped him save two Marines that day. Unfortunately, three Marines were killed in action.

Van Horn said he believes this award represents more than just his work on that day. “This award has never been about me and what I did, but a representation of the men who were lost,” he said.

“This allows their memory to continue through me and the men they served with.”

In addition to Van Horn’s selection as one of the YMCA’s Angels of the Battlefield, he received the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with Combat Distinguishing Service. The award writeup noted that Van Horn’s “calm professionalism was instrumental as he led the Marines during the triage and recovery efforts.”

FHCC Commanding Officer Robert Buckley said news of the award was “outstanding … It is quite an honor. We’re proud to call HM1 Van Horn one of our own.”

Pastoral Care Services

Sunday Services are temporarily being held in Building 134, Room C108 until main chapel in Building 4 reopens

Protestant Worship: 9 a.m.
Roman Catholic Mass: 10:15 a.m.

Weekdays

Building 134, Room C115 (Satellite Chapel)

-Roman Catholic Mass Monday through Friday at 11:30 a.m.
-Protestant Communion Service Wednesday at 10:30 a.m.

+Bible Study Wednesday at 11:45 a.m. in the Prayer/Meditation Room, Building 133E, Room 2E013

Pastoral Care Staff

Chaplain Lyle Swanson
Father Leoncio Santiago
Chaplain Lt. Cmdr. John Rudd
Military, Veterans’ health care systems have enduring value

Expert care Navy ‘Docs’ provide to Sailors and Marines cannot be replaced by insurance card

By Captain Robert G. Buckley
Lovell FHCC Deputy Director/Commanding Officer

Every few years, national government leaders question why our active duty military members, their dependents and retirees need a separate health care delivery system with its own fixed medical treatment facilities (brick and mortar hospitals and clinics).

For cost reasons, they ask why all medical care, (with the exception of that found in deployed or direct operational settings), should simply not be provided by the private sector using TRICARE. Or, to paraphrase one senior line leader: “Why shouldn’t we turn you guys into an insurance card?”

In my mind, the answer is clear, and it comes down to this: An insurance card will never provide the Navy and Marine Corps with the “Doc” they really need.

And by a Doc, I use the broader Navy term that connotes any responsible member of the Navy Medicine team. be it a Medical Corps physician, a Nurse Corps RN, a Dental Corps Dentist, a Medical Service Corps provider or administrator, or a senior Hospital Corpsman, who stands fully ready to meet, or assure that the health care needs of our Sailors, Marines and their families are met—throughout the world—in order to maintain maximal warfighting readiness and resilience.

It is for this reason, (the need to maintain a Ready Medical Force), that I call on all of our staff at Lovell FHCC to be mindful of the importance of providing our general, specialty and independent-duty corpsmen, dentists, nurses, physicians, licensed-independent providers, (such as nurse practitioners, optometrists, pharmacists, physician assistants, psychologists and licensed social workers) and health care administrators with progressively challenging duties throughout our medical center.

In the last few years, our Lovell FHCC civilian staff has made tremendous progress toward integrating our active duty staff into some of the most challenging clinical and administrative support roles throughout the medical center.

We now have corpsmen and nurses working side-by-side with civilian staff in key clinical areas such as the ICU, ED, operating rooms and inpatient wards. Our surgeons are performing challenging operations that are typically not supported in any but the largest medical centers in the Department of Defense (DOD). Our physicians, dentists and ancillary support personnel are caring for complex medical and psychiatric cases, in both inpatient and outpatient settings, that often are relegated to the private sector in most DOD multi-service markets.

At the same time, our FHCC health care administrators are grappling with some of the most challenging analytical, budgetary, logistical and information technology support tasks to be found anywhere in U.S. health care.

All of our Lovell FHCC staff members deserve special thanks and recognition for playing such a vital role as they work to more fully integrate our active duty staff into key areas of hospital operations. As we move beyond our first five years as the nation’s only federal health care facility, let’s continue to maximize such opportunities so that all of our Docs are “Always Ready: Ready to Care” wherever and whenever they are called forward to serve. You all have much to be proud of.

“An insurance card will never provide the Navy and Marine Corps with the ‘Doc’ they really need.”

Capt. Robert Buckley
Lovell FHCC Deputy Director/Commanding Officer

Expressive arts therapy at Lovell FHCC key to recovery (cont.)

Simmons served as a Navy air crewman in Vietnam. He has been an outpatient at the former North Chicago Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC) and now Lovell FHCC since 2006 and has entered Native American-inspired pieces in several past Lovell FHCC arts festivals. He showed a drum and ceremonial pipes at the courthouse, as well as paintings.

“My paintings that have to do with my military experience are a way for me to express what I did in the service,” Simmons said. “I find that if someone just talks to you question what you did, it doesn’t mean much. But if I have a painting, and I can explain what is going on in the painting, they can start understanding.”

Watling had four paintings in the show, including two realistic barn paintings his wife favors and “The Watchman,” which he painted in honor of his son, who served in Afghanistan or Iraq.

Watling’s guilt over how his daughter hit rock bottom figures prominently in his “Wit’s End” painting, which won Best of Show at a Lake County Art League competition a few years ago.

“She was having a lot of difficulty,” he said. “She made some bad decisions, and I think it was due to me. I had PTSD. I was raising my kids, had trouble with that divorce, there were a lot of stressors, and I think I wasn’t there like I should have been.”

Painting for Watling is cathartic, and he does it for about two hours every day. He credits his mother with getting him into painting as a child. But after serving in Army aviation in Vietnam, Watling said he “lost all direction” and didn’t paint anymore.

It wasn’t until 1994, when he got involved in expressive arts therapy through the VA, that Watling started painting again. Today, he participates in expressive arts therapy with Dr. John Bair at Lovell FHCC, along with Simmons. Both Simmons and Watling have murals on display in the FHCC mental health clinic.

“I believe in God, and that he pushes you in directions and allows things to come into your life,” Watling said. “I needed help with my thought processes and how I adapt. I learned that at the VA through therapy.”

A bedroom in Watling’s house functions as his studio. “I can go into my room and isolate myself and no one gets hurt,” he said. “I can focus on my painting… It helps me to relax and to process. I can sit there and get lost in the painting, and it helps me to think good thoughts instead of negative ones.”

For information on the 2016 FHCC Veterans CAF, which is open to Veteran and military patients of the FHCC, email Stewart at tricia.stewart@va.gov, or call 224-610-3617.

Continued from page 1
Lovell FHCC holds October dress blue uniform inspection

Top left photo: Chief Hospital Corpsman Manuel Valle stands at attention during the command uniform inspection. (Photo by Hospitalman James Stewart.)

Bottom left photo: Sailors form up for a command photo. Top right photo: FHCC Deputy Director/Commanding Officer Capt. Robert Buckley, center, and Master Chief Hospital Corpsman Yvette Pryor to his left, inspect the line. (Photos by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Darren M. Moore)

2015 Sailors of the Year (SOY) named

Senior SOY HM1 Andrea J. Anderson

SOY HM2 Rebekah E. Glenn-Norris

Junior SOY HM3 Rene P. Marfil

Blue Jacket of the Year HN Amber J. Pinchback

Congrats go to ...

- The FHCC Blood Donor Processing Division was recognized for an outstanding Technical Assist Visit by the Navy Blood Program Office.
- FHCC staff volunteers won a Community Service Award from the Health, Safety and Physical Fitness Flagship, Naval Education and Training. From July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2015, staff contributed 4,583 hours valued at $107,517 to improving quality of life of 123,020 people.
- HM1 Mary I. Schlunsen was named Senior Sailor of the 4th Quarter FY 2015.
- HN Joshua A. Ireton was named Blue Jacket of the 4th Quarter FY 2015.
- Melvin Tolbert was commended by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Office of Client Relations for outstanding service while he was detailed to Washington, D.C.
- FHCC Communications won two VHA Communications Awards: Third Place, Communicating Patient-Centered Care Outreach/Marketing; Award of Merit, The Apollo newsletter.
- Stephanie McCrobie won “New Professional Communicator,” VHA Communications Awards.
- David Lash was named National Program Manager for the VA Corpsman and Medic Vocational Education and Training (CAMVET) program, also known as “Grow Our Own.” ED Intermediate Care Technician Joe Carney is the first selectee for the program.
- Master Chief Yvette Pryor and ED RN Jonald Recana competed in the Ironman in Madison.

One Team

News Employees Can Use

Senior, Junior Sailors and Blue Jacket of the Year honored at luncheon

Congratulations to four Sailors from Lovell FHCC, who were honored in October at the 2015 Sailor of the Year luncheon.

The Lovell FHCC Senior Sailor of the Year is Hospital Corpsman 1st Class FMF (Fleet Marine Force) Andrea J. Anderson, who is assigned to the Directorate of Specialty Care.

Anderson was deployed at the time of the luncheon in support of Joint Task Force Gitmo (Guantanamo).

The Sailor of the Year is Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Rebekah E. Glenn-Norris, who is assigned to the Directorate of Clinical Support Services. (Glenn-Norris also won Sailor of the 4th Quarter FY 2015.)

The Junior Sailor of the Year is Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class (FMF) Rene P. Marfil, who is assigned to Fleet Medicine. (Marfil also won Junior Sailor of the 4th Quarter FY 2015.)

The Blue Jacket of the Year is Hospitalman Amber J. Pinchback, who is assigned to the Geriatrics and Mental Health Directorate. (Pinchback went on to win Blue Jacket of the Year for Navy Medicine East Nov. 17.)

“The winners were selected from an extremely competitive group of Sailors,” said FHCC Deputy Director/Commanding Officer Capt. Robert Buckley. “Congratulations to our award winners, and all the outstanding Sailors who were nominated. Well done!”

- Jayna Legg