



# NAVY MEDICAL NAVIGATOR

## In World News:

Mister Rogers now has an asteroid named in his honor.

"Misterogers," formerly known as No. 26858, honors Fred Rogers, creator and host of public television's "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood." Rogers died Feb. 27 at age 74.

"Misterogers" can be found between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter, and is about 218 million miles from the sun, which it takes about 3 1/2 years to orbit. It was discovered in 1993 by E.F. Helin at the Palomar Observatory in California

## In Navy News:

WASHINGTON (NNS) - Major combat operations in Iraq are over, and America and her allies have prevailed, President George W. Bush said May 1 on the flight deck of a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier.

"In this battle we have fought for the cause of liberty and for the peace of the world. Our nation and our coalition are proud of this accomplishment," Bush said aboard the deck of USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), as the sun set on the Pacific Ocean. "Yet it is you, the members of the United States military, who achieved it. Your courage, your willingness to face danger for your country and for each other made this day possible.

"Because of you, our nation is more secure," the commander in chief said to cheering Sailors. "Because of you, the tyrant has fallen and Iraq is free."

With a huge red, white and blue banner declaring "Mission Accomplished" hanging in the background, Bush told the crew that the American military's precision, speed and boldness led to "one of the swiftest advances of heavy arms in history."

## In Sports:

FIFA will consider whether to move or postpone the women's tournament because of the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome in China. The 16-team tournament is scheduled for Sept. 23-October 11 in and around Shanghai.

The women's ice hockey world championships, scheduled to be played in China, was canceled, and the world badminton championships, to be held in Birmingham, England, has been postponed because of the large number of Asians expected to compete.

## Physical Therapy puts the 'fun' in function

Story and photo by JOSN Erica Mater  
Comfort Public Affairs

**M**ost of us know where physical therapy is located. It's the room with the big metal tubs and treadmills and pads for doing sit-ups. It's the place many avid runners and hard-core workout buffs go when they want peace and quiet when working out or there just isn't any room at the other gyms. Often times, the physical therapy room is thought of as a place to workout, when, in fact, it has been the starting point for many Comfort patients and their road to recovery.

"Our goal is to improve function. We'll never save a life, but hopefully, we'll help you move better so you can live your life more fully," said physical therapist Lt. Paula Godes, MSC.

The physical therapy (PT) team is comprised of one physical therapist and five physical therapy technicians. In the



Physical Therapy Technician Petty Officer 2nd Class Jean-Pierre Turnier works with an Iraqi patient to help improve range of motion. Treatments like this are performed everyday aboard Comfort.

Since March 9, PT has conducted over 1,400 evaluation and treatment sessions. PT's main focus is to help increase mobility and function after surgical procedures. PT is also involved with the ICU and burn patients. They provide the burn patients with splints to keep ankles and hands in the position of function, as well as performing range of motion exercises on the patients so the joints won't "freeze" or become stiff after weeks of lying in a bed.

PT has also assumed the role of occupational therapy. They have made over 90 splints from thermoplast and other plaster materials using a thermabath and splinting supplies. These include various splints for hand injuries and splints for functional positioning for burn patients.

During Operation Iraqi Freedom, PT's typical day looks something like this. Mornings are often spent in the ICU assisting the nursing team with dressing changes as well as performing regular PT duties. Afternoons are usually spent down in the Enemy Prisoner of War and Iraqi civilian wards performing range of motion exercises and conducting crutch training with patients. Include several hours of splint making and writing progress notes and 12-15 hour workdays become the standard in PT. However, even with long days and time consuming tasks, the PT staff works hard and does it with a smile.

"I am very blessed to have such a phenomenal crew. They work long hours, yet they're always upbeat and positive. They love what they do, and it shows," said Godes.

Whether it is working with a quadriplegic in the ICU or working with an EPW

**Continued on page 3**

# The only day I have ever been seasick

*By LCDR Mark Koczak  
Command Chaplain*

We all now have sea stories. One of the great things about being a sailor is telling sea stories. For those of you who are new to the Navy and new to being at sea, your time and experiences on *Comfort* will provide you with many stories to tell.

So, shipmates, we have had some rough seas lately. Only one other time in our deployment have we had rougher seas, remember those of you who started out in Baltimore? Yes, our first few days and a storm in the North Atlantic in the winter.

Here is a story for all of you. In January 2001, I was Chaplain for the 17<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District in Alaska. I flew up to Homer to ride one of our 57 year old buoy tenders for a while. We went up into Cooks Inlet for a day to work on a buoy then south to go into the Gulf of Alaska. The first day in the Gulf we hit very heavy seas. So heavy, me and about 99% of the crew were seasick. Not a pleasant feeling. I was sick for only a few hours and as usual on sea going vessels the cooks always have some spicy food during

rough weather. I did not eat much that day.

The second day out the seas increased. This buoy tender was only 180 feet long with a 60 man crew so pretty small for us Navy folks. A very large wave hit us and we took on water in the engine room. All the power and the engines on the ship went out. The only thing we could hear was the sound of the waves hitting the ship and a 10,000 pound buoy on the deck that was loose. Silence at sea is a very scary thing. The training of the crew in drills and the experience of the senior folks came into play. It took three and one half hours to get the generator and the engines back, partially. We came into port the next day.

I spent the next six days on the tender going down to the Inside Passage in Southeast Alaska. When I returned to my office in Juneau, the Admiral pulled me into his office and told me about where the ship was drifting to and what would have happened. This was a life changing experience for the crew and me. We are bound together for life in this

event. My outlook on life changed that day. I will always remember the day before too. It was the only day I have ever been seasick.

So what did I learn as the oldest guy on that tender back in January 2001? Good leadership, good skills learned from experience, good training, but most importantly how a good crew can come together in any true emergency. While we were adrift I helped the corpsmen with any injured. Fortunately, we only had one injury from a sailor who fell down a ladder in the engine room. The corpsman and I held him down for hours on the wardroom table trying to stabilize him. Other sailors came in from the freezing cold trying to tie down the buoy and reduce the flooding in one of the forward spaces. Was I scared, you bet I was!

Cherish your stories on this deployment. Remember the wider role we play in the conflict around us. Most importantly, remember the work you did here and the people you cared for and worked with. You will have lots of sea stories!!

## NNMC Implements New Patient Sponsor Program

*By Journalist 2nd Class Erik Hoffmann,  
National Naval Medical Center Public Affairs*

BETHESDA, Md. (NNS) -- The chaplain staff and several volunteers from the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) are doing their part to put Marines and Sailors returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom a bit more at ease through the Adopt-a-Hero program.

According to Lt. William McCandless, staff chaplain and program coordinator, everyone benefits from the program.

"The program was designed to give active-duty (personnel) here a collateral duty to facilitate the needs of the war injured and their families," he added.

The most important role of the sponsor is to provide care and compassion to the patients and their families.

Before a sponsor is assigned a patient, he or she must go through a training program. The training teaches volunteers how to make the patients more comfortable during their stay at NNMC. It also shows volunteers how to make the families' time here less stressful by setting up lodging and transportation.

"The sponsor does all the leg work, so the families

can spend more time with their servicemember," McCandless said. "Patients and their families should not be in need of anything."

Such is the case with Army Pfc. Don Shafer, who arrived at NNMC April 15 at 4 a.m. His mother and grandmother were here for him, but really weren't sure what needed to be done for Shafer.

Around 9 a.m., Shafer and his family not only found out what things were needed, but found out someone would take care of everything for them.

Shafer said it's good to have someone to speak to who can relate to how servicemembers think, and he thinks it will help his parents, also.

"It will also give that bridge for the parents. It will give the parents someone to talk to about what's going on with their (servicemember)," he added.

It's statements like that which have McCandless extremely excited about this program.

"This program has worked out a whole lot better than I anticipated. I expected sponsors to come back to me for everything. These [sponsors] have been very proactive. I've been on cloud nine with how this has turned out," he boasted.

# Returning Comfort Crew Get Warm Welcome Home



It was red, white, but not at all “blue,” at yesterday’s patriotic and much-anticipated homecoming of more than 400 USNS Comfort crewmembers returning from the Arabian Gulf.

Story and photo by Ellen Maurer  
Journal Editor

More than 400 Sailors regularly assigned at the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) returned home Wednesday, after serving aboard hospital ship USNS Comfort in the Arabian Gulf.

They were the first of several hundred Sailors slated to fly back to the U.S. ahead of the ship.

Comfort, which deployed from Baltimore Jan. 6, originally brought only a small crew of around 300 Sailors. Most of the ship’s 1,214 crew flew over and met the ship in early March after it repositioned in the Gulf region.

For those who deployed in March, the two-month mission was short by Navy standards. However, as many families said at last week’s emotional reunion, it wasn’t the length of time but, rather, the separation.

For HN Melanie Charboneau, who works in NNMC’s Mother and Infant Care Center and is married to returning crew member, HN Nathan Charoneau, the return couldn’t have better timing. The couple is due to have their first child at the end of this month.

“I told my husband I wasn’t going to get too excited until I actually saw him,” says Charboneau. “But, I have to admit that I couldn’t sleep last night. It was like Christmas when you’re a little kid... I just kept rubbing me belly and telling our son that his daddy was going to be home soon.”

During Comfort’s deployment to the Gulf, the ship’s crew cared for hundreds of patients and performed more than 500 surgeries, mostly treating combat related injuries, such as gunshot wounds, shrapnel wounds, burns and head injuries.

## PT, from page 1

down in the ward, the PT staff is always looking at the brighter side of things. Sometimes that is as simple as talking to a patient in a soothing voice, or holding their hand in comfort during a painful burn treatment.

The PT department ranks right up there with nurses when it comes to how much time is spent with the patients. Until the patients depart Comfort, PT continually works with the patients with various treatments and exercises. PT sees patients on a daily basis, and this daily interaction has helped to break down any barriers that use to be a problem in the early stages of PT care.

“Dealing with the verbal aspect of communication, in the beginning, seemed to be very difficult and frustrating for not only the patients, but the providers as well,” said Physical Therapy Technician Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> class Bobbi Bowman. “Basic instructions seemed impossible.”

However, as time wore on the PT technicians began to pick up and understand words of the patient’s language. Typically, the first word learned is for pain, but other words

like please, thank you, and you’re welcome, soon followed.

The language barrier also prolonged most treatments and exercises.

“With no language barriers, a session of crutch training may take 10-15 minutes; however, with the language barriers it has been taking up to 40 minutes,” said Physical Therapy Technician Chief Petty Officer Michael Howard.

But, Howard is quick to note the way PT has been handling these obstacles.

“It is a big challenge for a simple task, but we make it look easy,” Howard said.

The fun doesn’t stop with the treatments. For the female Iraqi civilians and female physical therapy techs, they have built a special bond. On many occasions, the PT techs will just sit with the young teenage girls and brush their hair for them. It is this kind of interaction that the PT’s have been able to use to build trust.

“After several treatments and taking the time to learn about them and their culture, you become closer to the patients and you learn more spe-

cial terms like ‘princess’ and ‘bosa’, which means ‘kiss’,” said Physical Therapy Technician Petty Officer 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Erin Murphy. Murphy also says that working with the patients and gaining their trust helps during painful burn treatments and exercises.

Bowman agrees with Murphy and says it is a satisfying experience when you gain the patients trust.

“It is a great deal more rewarding when the patient teaches you versus an interpreter, as well as quite humorous to the patients,” said Bowman.

For the male PT techs, they are often found working in the EPW ward where there is never a dull moment.

“In dealing with Iraqi patients, one must be creative and or able to improvise at any given situation,” said Physical Therapy Technician Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Jean-Pierre Turnier. “It is definitely a learning experience.”

Some people may walk into PT and see them laughing and smiling and wonder what was the joke. But, for the PT there doesn’t need to be a joke. They enjoy their job out here and make the most of it by having a good time.

# Ceremonies on Comfort



Above: Hospital Corpsman Chief Petty Officer Seconda Hollinger (center) was promoted to Senior Chief Petty Officer Thursday evening in Casualty Receiving. Hollinger was pinned by her brother, Lt. Cmdr. Donald Shortridge (left) and Senior Chief Petty Officer Condon Reubeltery. Shortridge, the chief engineer aboard USS Dubuque, which is also deployed in the Persian Gulf, came to help witness his sister's special moment.  
Below: Lt. j.g. Jody Rich, NC, (right) was promoted to the rank of Lt. Thursday. Rich was pinned by Cmdr. Sandra Thomas-Rogers, NC, (left), who also administered the oath of office.

Above: Dental Technician Chief Petty Officer William Glascoe (right) was promoted to Senior Chief Petty Officer Wednesday. Glascoe was pinned by Command Master Chief Jude Adams (center) and Senior Chief Petty Officer Stanley Blake (left).  
Below: Ensign Angelica Pucha, NC, (left) was promoted to the rank of Lt. j.g. Thursday. Pucha renewed her oath of officer, which was administered by Cmdr. Maryalice Morro, NC.

