



NAVY MEDICAL NAVIGATOR

Enlisted to Officer

Petty Officer gets accepted to OCS

In World News:

The head of Saddam Hussein's Special Republican Guard turned himself into U.S.-led forces in Baghdad early Saturday, officials said. Gen. Kamal Mustafa al-Tikriti, No. 10 on the most-wanted list of Iraqi officials, had reportedly been in Syria but returned. His brother Jamal Mustafa al-Tikriti, Saddam's only remaining son-in-law, was taken into custody last month.

In Navy News:

Tired of playing countless rounds of solitaire on your computer? Freecell numbing your mind? How about putting your leadership knowledge to the test with the Center for Naval Leadership's (CNL) latest development resource. To enhance Sailors' leadership potential, CNL is encouraging all Sailors to log onto Navy Knowledge Online (NKO) and take the Leadership Challenge.

The challenge includes a two level trivia resource, modeled after the popular game show Jeopardy, where players choose from one of six categories, each containing five multiple choice questions. Designed to challenge Sailors in a unique and fun format, the online learning resource is comprised of sections from leadership basics, such as Ethics and Navy Core Values, to more advanced topics such as Resource Stewardship, Accomplishing Mission, Team Management and Working with People.

In Sports:

The "Big D" isn't just a nickname for Dallas anymore.

That moniker belongs to Dirk Nowitzki, too, after his best game of the second round put the Mavericks into the Western Conference finals.

Nowitzki had a tremendous game Saturday night with 30 points, 19 rebounds and a super-timely 3-pointer -- one of 11 by the Mavericks -- as Dallas defeated the Sacramento Kings 112-99 in Game 7 of the conference semifinal series.

The all-Texas showdown with the San Antonio Spurs begins Monday night, with the winner advancing to the NBA Finals.

*Story and photo by
JOSN Erica Mater*

When Petty Officer 3rd Class Drew Whitting joined the Navy in November 2001, he figured he would do his four years and go back to working at his old civilian job. Now, almost two years later things have changed.

In late April, Whitting, 32, found out that his package had been approved and he had been accepted for Officer Candidate School in Pensacola, Fla. In Feb. 2004, Whitting will be attending OCS for 13-weeks, and will then attend Intelligence school to become an intelligence officer.

"This is probably the best opportunity that has happened for me," said Whitting.

Whitting, who is originally from Long Island, N. Y., joined the Navy in light of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center.

"My family is very patriotic. My brother who has a wife and kids was going to join, but I decided I should do it, since I was single and did not have any kids," said Whitting.

Whitting's original inten-

tions for the Navy was to become a seal, but near the end of boot camp a Dive Medical Officer did not release him for seal training. At that point, he decided that he would be a corpsman and go with the Marines and become Fleet Marine Force qualified.

After completing boot camp and the accelerated program at corps school, Whitting found there were no available slots for FMF corpsman. He then received orders to the National Naval Medical Center.

At NNMC, Whitting works in the Rheumatology clinic. In January of this year, Whitting decided he would put in a package for OCS.

In order for someone to be considered for OCS, they must already have a degree. Whitting had graduated from Hofstra University in New York with a degree in Math in



Petty Officer 3rd Class Drew Whitting will use his degree in math to help him in the intelligence field, where he is slated to become an officer after completion of Officer Candidate School and follow-on training next year.

1998. For the next two months, Whitting worked on his package with the help of his chain of command. He sent his package off in Feb., just before he was deployed to Comfort in early March.

"After I put it in, it was like a waiting game," Whitting said. "I checked my e-mail and websites regularly to see if I had been accepted."

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Happy Homecoming: Comfort Crew Makes Mother's Day Reunion

*Story and photo by
Ellen Maurer
Journal Editor*

More than 200 National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) staff members who were deployed to the USNS Comfort came home Saturday.

With returning crew members arriving at NNMC aboard buses from the airport, families and friends waited anxiously for the reunion. Some said their loved ones arrival was timed perfectly for Mother's Day, which was the next day.

Art Williams, father of three young children under the age of six, was one

of many fathers who stayed behind to care for the family while their military wives deployed for Operation Enduring Freedom.

Of his wife, LT Ann Williams, a nurse in the Operating Room aboard Comfort, he said, "We've dated since high school and have never been apart for this long before...It's been hard having her gone and I am just really grateful we can all be together for Mother's Day."

About 300 crewmembers remain aboard Comfort and will sail home with the ship, due to arrive in early June.



Returning Comfort crew member, LT Ann Williams shares an emotional reunion with her family May 10.

Whitting, from page 1

On April 29, Whitting was called into the conference room by the XO.

"I thought I was in trouble," recalled Whitting. "The CO, XO, Capt. Dwyer, and most of the department heads were in there. The CO put some papers on the table and asked me if I knew anything about this."

It was all smiles after that for Whitting.

"I work with Capt. Dwyer back at the hospital, so it was only fitting that he officially read off the letter saying that I had been accepted into OCS," said Whitting.

Whitting thinks that most of the credit belongs to his chain of command.

"I had a lot of support from my chain of command. I think Chief Bott was a key player in getting accepted for the school. I want to thank everyone for their support and help," said Whitting.

When asked why he had chosen to become an intelligence officer, Whitting said he really has no specific reason, but does think it is what will make him happy.

"Being an intelligence officer wraps everything I have ever done in my life into one job," said Whitting. "I could see myself doing intel for the rest of my life."

So, now if you ask Whitting how long he will stay in the Navy this is the reply you will get.

"I am staying in as long as I can," Whitting commented. "I have done 10 years in the civilian sector, and I have seen nowhere that can give you the same benefits or offer you the kind of opportunities as the Navy."

Whitting' uncle and brother were Green Beret medics in the Army. His family has a storied tradition of serving in the military. Whitting has continued that tradition and hopes to take it to another level as an intelligence officer.

DoD Health Chief Lauds Wartime Military Medical Support

U.S. Department of Defense

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- The Pentagon's top civilian medical official praised military doctors, nurses, medics and other healthcare professionals for their "superb job" in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) during a roundtable with Pentagon reporters April 29.

DoD medical personnel inside and outside the theater of operations were busy "saving lives, and helping people to recover from serious wounds and injuries and illnesses incurred during the conflict," said Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs.

During his meeting with report-

ers, Winkenwerder noted that he'd visited with wounded troops being cared for at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, and would soon talk to servicemembers convalescing at the National Naval Medical Center in nearby Bethesda, Md.

During such visits, Winkenwerder said he queries servicemembers about the quality of their medical care, adding they invariably reply, "It's been great."

DoD's medical people "were well-prepared" for Operation Iraqi Freedom, Winkenwerder explained, to include possible enemy deployment of weapons of mass destruction, which didn't occur.

Winkenwerder pointed out that U.

military healthcare professionals also treated many Iraqi civilians and enemy prisoners of war at field facilities and aboard U.S. Navy hospital ship Comfort (T-AH 20), which was deployed in the Arabian Sea. The vessel, with 1,000 beds, deployed to the Arabian Gulf region in support of OIF.

U.S. military medical facilities in theater, he noted, reached 50 percent patient capacity during the height of the fighting in Iraq.

Winkenwerder said DoD health officials would gather some time this summer to discuss medical lessons learned from the war.

"Although we believe our folks did a great job, there's always an opportunity to get better," he concluded.

Chaplain's Corner:

Navy Nurses

By LCDR Mark Koczak
Command Chaplain

Happy Birthday to the Navy Nurse Corps, this week 95 years old.

It is time for me to be honest with all of you. I have been in love with a former Navy Nurse for the last 46 years. She joined the Navy in 1954 after going to Nursing School in her hometown in Western Maryland. Her career only lasted a brief three years and I ended her career in the Navy. She spent the next forty years nursing, mostly in a pediatric ward and ended up in a small town hospital in western Virginia. She retired six years ago, nursing, caring for the ill and infirmed for over 47 years.

During my time in the Navy, I have known many nurses. The first one was my best friend on the aircraft carrier I served on. We were one month and one day apart in age and I went to the Surface Warfare classes with him and all the docs for months on our deployment. I was introduced to the Navy medical fixation on cleaning by this particular nurse. He was the Warrior Nurse and I was the Warrior Chaplain.

When I did my chaplain residency at Portsmouth Naval Hospital I worked with many superior nurses in pediatrics, oncology and the psychiatric wards. Finally, a year and a half ago, I made it home, stationed at the hospital where I met that first Navy nurse. The nurses on 5 Center and 5 East and throughout the hospital have often been my inspiration in dealing pastorally with our patients. Especially on 5 Center, we dealt with the aged and very ill day in day out. Many times, the nurses and the corpsmen and I would be there when our patients would die. We lived through some tough times together and had great social events during my duty times in the late evenings on the wards.

During the Baltic Challenge and now during this cruise, it has been my pleasure and honor to serve with so many fine and professional Navy Nurses. Just before we deployed I was the officer that promoted one of our nurses to LTJG. And now in a week I will help promote another. The work done here and at the hospital by all of you remains an inspiration to me every day as your chaplain.

By the way, I wore the LTJG bar of that first nurse I loved when I came into the Navy 16 years ago. Happy Birthday to all Navy Nurses and 49 years since you came in, happy birthday Mom...

Steel Beach Picnic



Photos by JOSN Erica Mater

CMC Jude Adams turns the chicken over on the grill while Chief Frank Cabrera watches at Saturday's Steel Beach picnic.



Left: Comfort Crewmembers line up at the food table, where there was a buffet of chicken, steaks, hamburgers, hotdogs and all the fixings. Oh, and some

Below: Whether you wanted to play softball, soccer, or go for a swim, there was something to do for everyone. Comfort crewmembers were treated to a long awaited steel beach picnic for their hard work and efforts during Operation Iraqi Freedom.



