Navy Preventive Medicine Teams Embark Ships in 7th Fleet

From U.S. 7th Fleet Public Affairs

SOUTH CHINA SEA (NNS) -- Members of Navy Forward-Deployed Preventive Medicine Units (FDPMU) and Naval Medical Research Center (NMRC) embarked several 7th Fleet ships March 14 to help combat the risk of and provide laboratory batch testing for COVID-19 aboard the ships.

Teams embarked on the amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6), the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71), the U.S. 7th Fleet flagship USS Blue Ridge (LCC 19) can batch test Sailors onboard who present with influenza-like symptoms, instead of only sending samples to be tested ashore.

Batch testing provides early warning that a COVID-19 case is onboard a ship but does not individually diagnose Sailors. If a batch were to test positive for COVID-19, the medical teams would take additional measures, such as isolating the Sailors whose samples were in the batch and, depending on their symptoms, potentially medically evacuating them off the ship to a shore facility for testing.

To date, no cases of COVID-19 have been diagnosed aboard any U.S. 7th Fleet Navy vessel.

“The team here in 7th Fleet has taken COVID-19 seriously from the beginning and has many public health measures already in place,” said Capt. Christine Sears, U.S. 7th Fleet surgeon. “The FDPMU and NMRC augmentation teams provide additional depth in our ability to combat this virus.”

Teams embarked the ships to provide at-sea testing and to ensure the U.S. 7th Fleet operating forces are ready to combat a possible outbreak while maintaining mission readiness. The teams provide additional capabilities in addition to the U.S. 7th Fleet’s isolation procedures.

The teams comprise a variety of specialized Navy Medicine personnel to ensure force health protection of the fleet and may include a microbiologist, medical laboratory technician, preventive medicine officer, and a preventive medicine technician.

“As a medical service corps microbiology officer,
Navy Preventative Medicine (cont.)

this embark gives us the chance to demonstrate some of our skillsets to the fleet, and what we bring to the fight,” said Lt. Cmdr. Rebecca Pavlicek, Blue Ridge COV-ID-19 testing team lead. “This capability allows us, the Navy, to protect mission readiness and protection of our Sailors.”

To ensure force health protection of the fleet, other medical specialties or logistical components can be scaled up or down to meet mission specific requirements in the mitigation, health surveillance, and casualty prevention.

“This is the most advanced laboratory capability that Navy Medicine has placed forward deployed,” said Lt. Cmdr. Danett Bishop, leader and microbiologist for the preventative medicine team aboard America. “We can make force health decisions in real time, enhancing the health of the crew while minimizing any potential outbreak of COVID-19.”

The FDMU teams aboard the USS America and the USS Blue Ridge are from Navy Environmental laboratory capabilities.

The team embarked with USS Theodore Roosevelt is assigned to the Naval Medical Research Center based in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Currently, the teams are only authorized to perform surveillance testing and not individual testing. This means that the results cannot be linked to a particular patient for diagnostics, but would enable the team to detect COVID-19’s presence on the ship based off of the results.

“Since we are performing surveillance testing, the results of COVID-19 present, or not present can help inform the force health protection posture and provide valuable insight for the senior medical officer and outbreak response team,” said Pavlicek.

The teams are equipped with two testing capabilities, including the BioFire Film Array and the Step One RT-PCR System. The BioFire Film Array will test for a dozen different respiratory diseases, while the Step One RT-PCR System allow for complex COVID-19 tests at sea, if necessary.

As the U.S. Navy’s largest forward-deployed fleet, 7th Fleet operates roughly 50-70 ships and submarines and 140 aircraft with approximately 20,000 Sailors.
Wired for Success - NAS Whiting’s Ground Electronics Maintenance Division

*Photos and Story By Lieutenant Junior Grade Anthony Harrison*

NAS Whiting Field is the busiest air field in the United States. Combined, North and South Whiting Field and twelve Navy outlying landing fields throughout two states and four counties serve as both the launch and recovery sites for more than one million flight operations annually. Training approximately 1,200 student aviators, Whiting Field is busier than Atlanta Hartsfield airport.

Behind the scenes of the busiest Class Charlie airspace in the U.S. is a dedicated team responsible for maintaining the complex network of electronic equipment that supports NAS Whiting Field’s aviation training mission. Eighteen civilian and military personnel make up the Ground Electronics Maintenance Division (GEMD), responsible for ensuring the safety and effectiveness of air traffic control communication networks for helicopter and fixed wing aircraft.

From maintaining tower communications networks, navigation equipment (NAVAID’s), precision approach radars, and audiovisual equipment around base, GEMD is the group of professionals that keep our pilots flying safely and operating efficiently in the busiest airspace in the country.

Laying the foundation of the communication network, literally and figuratively speaking, is John Scully. Scully, a retired Chief from Salem, Ohio, is an Electronics Technician with 22 years of service is credited for hand-wiring both North and South Field’s air traffic control towers with fiber optic cables still in operation today.

Hired in July of 2005, Scully has worked in civil service at Whiting and currently maintains DRMO (Defense Reutilization and Management Office) and VIDS (Visual Information Display System) programs. When asked about the longevity of his career, Scully said, “Everyone seems to come and go, but I’m still here. Frankly, I don’t plan to retire until I’m done having fun!”

Another member of the GEMD team responsible for ensuring equipment readiness is Electronics Technician 1st Class John Herscher. Originally from Salisbury, N.C., Herscher joined the Navy in 2011 and spent his first tour onboard the USS Donald Cook (DDG-75).

Since coming to NAS Whiting Field, he has taken on responsibilities often assigned to senior enlisted personnel to better his personal and professional knowledge,
Ground Electronics Maintenance Division (cont.)

thus increasing operational readiness. One achievement in particular that sets himself apart from others is earning the title of Command 3M Assistant at NAS Whiting Field, a job typically given to more senior ranking Sailors.

In addition to acquiring technical knowledge, he openly welcomes the challenges that come with solving problems with complex ground electronic equipment. “I love troubleshooting. If something is broken, I will fix it,” said Herscher. But it’s not just the nature of work that Herscher enjoys. It’s the bond shared among those working in GEMD.

“I love working with everyone here. Everybody here has served [in the military] and brings forth knowledge, wisdom, and experience from all branches. I’ve learned so much not only about my job, but leadership guidance to use in the rest of my career. For personal and professional growth, this is the best place I’ve ever experienced.”

Department of the Navy Recognizes Women’s History Month With 2020 International Women’s Day Salute

From Secretary of the Navy Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) (NNS) -- Thomas B. Modly, Acting Secretary of the Navy, hosted an International Women’s Day Salute March 5 in recognition of Women’s History Month and the March 8 global observance of International Women’s Day.

The Salute provided an opportunity for the Department of the Navy to reflect on progress made and to celebrate the acts of courage, determination, and achievement by women who contribute to their communities, countries and international society.

“This evening is a fitting tribute to all of the women who have taken to the sea, broken new ground, pursued innovation and demonstrated leadership in the service of a more peaceful and prosperous world,” said Modly. “The examples of the past inspire our dedication, while the challenges of tomorrow fuel our motivation. Let’s take advantage of this gathering to move forward together.”

The event showcased a moderated panel discussion led by NBC News National Security and Military Correspondent Courtney Kube. The panel was comprised of four trailblazing women who shared their insight into the opportunities available to and challenges facing women in support of peace and security around the world: Martha Barcéna Coqui, Mexican Ambassador to the United States; Jennifer Stewart, the chief of staff to the Secretary of Defense; U.S. Navy Capt. Jennifer Couture, a recognized leader in the Surface Warfare community; and Iowa Senator Joni Ernst.

Ernst, whose career includes 23 years of service in the Army Reserve and the Iowa National Guard, reflected on her experience and the progress she’s seen made in the area of gender inclusivity.

“When I commissioned in the Army Engineers through the Iowa State University Army ROTC program and eventually went on to Officer Basic School I was one of 12 females in a class of 180 students,” said Ernst.
“At the time, men could become combat engineers, but women didn’t have that opportunity – not because of our talent, our skills, or our abilities – because of our gender. Now, I look [at the force] today and I am thrilled that we now present women, including my daughter, the opportunities to choose.”

The more than 100 guests and participants were guided through group discussions about: inclusivity and diversity of thought in national security; empowerment through education and economic development in the U.S. and partner nations; economic and political stability in societies that empower women; and meaningful participation of women around the world in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict peace building activities and strategies.

A key discussion point during the event was The Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 that was signed into law establishing and promoting the meaningful participation of women across different facets of the peace and security process. The 2017 Act mandated the creation of a government-wide strategy to increase the participation of women in security processes.

Throughout the event, guests also viewed a wide variety of historical imagery, displays, and videos showcasing major milestones and current achievements of women across the Marine Corps, Navy and Department of the Navy civilian workforce.

“We don’t put on our uniforms every day and do what we do for praise or recognition, so it’s really inspiring to be surrounded by women and men who support the achievements women have made and continue to make,” said Senior Chief Cryptologic Technician (Interpretive) Kristina Koch, assigned to Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education Command, when asked about the importance of the night’s discussions. “We’re on ships, and in the air, and we’re now on submarines and we will continue to break down barriers – whether they are cultural or logistical – for future generations of female leaders.”

The guests represented leaders, and rising stars from the Department of the Navy, Department of Defense, Department of State, USAID, the media, U.S. Congress, International Missions to the U.S., economic empowerment organizations, security-focused think tanks in the Washington D.C. area, and the United States Naval Academy. Each person in attendance was invited due to their essential and active role in advancing female empowerment in peace and security.
By definition, the term “medical practitioner,” is “a person who is skilled in the science of medicine.” In many cases, doctors, dentists, and cardiologists, are a few specialties that come to mind when thinking about professions in the realm of medicine.

For one NAS Whiting Field Medical Corps Officer, however, being a “practitioner” isn’t just limited to one specialty.

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu gold medalist and NAS Whiting Field nurse, Lt. Cmdr. Marcello Alcantar, is a 15-year veteran and native of Corpus Christi, TX., who in 1996 enlisted in the U.S. Navy as an undesignated deck seamen.

Alcantar’s first tour with the Navy was spent on the USS Bataan (LHD-5) in Norfolk, Va., where he would eventually leave the command as a petty officer third class Information Systems Technician (IT3). After finishing his initial enlistment, he left the Navy and pursued outside endeavors but was quick to reminisce about his time in the service.

“I really missed the sense of community and camaraderie. I never really experienced that outside of the Navy,” said Alcantar.

Six years later in 2006, he decided to rejoin the Navy through the Nurse Commissioning Program, eventually earning his officer commission in 2009.

Shortly after, he achieved another career milestone by earning his black belt in Jiu-Jitsu in 2011. This past February, he competed at the International Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Federation Championship in New Orleans, La., placing first in two different weight categories. He also reached the rank of professional athlete.

At 41 years of age, Alcantar believes practicing Jiu-Jitsu has benefited his health and career in several ways. “I’ve been training in Jiu-Jitsu for over 17 years now. Even at my age, it allows me to re-enter the fountain of youth and is something I can do for the rest of my life,” said Alcantar.

“Believe it or not, it’s also a great stress reliever!”

Outside the office, he can often be found hitting the mats at Pace Gracie Jiu-Jitsu in Pace, Fla., which he owns and operates with his wife. Fittingly so, his post retirement goals include both Jiu-Jitsu and continuing to help others.

“After the Navy, I plan to continue practicing and training Jiu-Jitsu, not only for myself, but to teach self-defense to families and families with special needs.”
Participants braved the cold this year during NAS Whiting Field’s annual Polar Plunge on Feb. 1. (Photo by Julie Ziegenhorn, Public Affairs Office.)

Members of the NAS Whiting Field Navy Security Forces conducted active shooter drills during Exercise Citadel Shield-Solid Curtain 2020 on Feb. 6. (Photo by Lt.j.g. Harrison, Public Affairs Office.)


Families participated in this year’s MWR Character Breakfast onboard NAS Whiting Field on Feb. 8. (Photo by Julie Ziegenhorn, Public Affairs Office.)

NAS Whiting Field’s Whiting Pines Housing completed the 2020 Navy Housing Condition Assessment, scoring at the top of the charts with a 100% on Feb. 28. (Photo by Julie Ziegenhorn, Public Affairs Office.)
The first four female U.S. Navy pilots begin training. The women are: Lt. j.g. Barbara A. Allen, Ensign Jane M. Skiles, Lieutenant (j.g.) Judith A. Neuffer and Ensign Kathleen L. McNary. (U.S. Navy).

MARCH 2, 1973
The first four female U.S. Navy pilots begin training. The women are: Lt. j.g. Barbara A. Allen; Lt. j.g. Judith A. Neuffer; Ensign Jane M. Skiles and Ensign Kathleen L. McNary.

MARCH 9, 1862
In the first battle between ironclads, USS Monitor and CSS Virginia engage in close combat in Hampton Roads, Va. Neither side could claim victory, but it eventually ends the era of wooden ships.

MARCH 15, 1947
Ensign John W. Lee, Jr., becomes the first African-American with a commission in the regular Navy and serves on board USS Kearsarge (CV 33).

MARCH 20, 1922
USS Jupiter (Fuel Ship #3) is recommissioned as USS Langley (CV 1), the Navy’s first aircraft carrier.

MARCH 25, 1822
USS Shark, commanded by Lt. Matthew C. Perry, raises the first U.S. flag over Key West, Fla., and claims the territory for the United States, calling it Thompsons Island to honor Secretary of the Navy Smith Thompson.

MARCH 31, 1992
USS Missouri (BB-63), the last active American battleship, is decommissioned. Decommissioned in June 1944, she served during World War II, notably for the location of the official Japanese surrender on Sept. 2, 1945. Today, the “Mighty Mo” is open for visitors in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, as the Battleship Missouri Memorial, under the care of the USS Missouri Memorial Association, Inc.

CONTACTING BASE SECURITY IN EMERGENCY AND NON-EMERGENCY SITUATIONS
For an EMERGENCY on base, at Whiting Pines Housing, at Whiting Park, or at any of our outlying airfields, please dial 9-1-1 and identify that you are on base to the operator. For a NON-EMERGENCY, please dial 904-542-8681. To reach the NAS Whiting Field Security Department Administrative Staff during normal working hours:
Installation Security Officer/Police Director: 850-324-4799 or 623-7725
Chief of Police: 850-623-7270
Antiterrorism Officer: 850-623-7387
Physical Security: 850-623-7649
Visitor Control Center (Pass & Tag): 850-623-7205
Whiting Field Awards and Recognition

Congratulations to Training Air Wing Five Academic Award and Commodore’s List Recipients

TW-5 Academic Award and Commodore’s List recipients received recognition at TRAWING-5 Headquarters on Jan. 17, 2020.

TW-5 Academic Award and Commodore’s List recipients received recognition at TRAWING-5 Headquarters on Feb. 7, 2020.

TW-5 Academic Award and Commodore’s List recipients received recognition at TRAWING-5 Headquarters on Feb. 21, 2020.
Whiting Field Awards and Recognition

Congratulations to Training Air Wing Five Wingers


