Ambitious goal set for USNH Yokosuka blood drive

By Jennifer Savage, USNH Yokosuka Public Affairs

U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Yokosuka, in coordination with U.S. Pacific Command Armed Services Blood Bank Center Okinawa, will hold blood drives 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. aboard *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) March 30, USNH Yokosuka March 31 and the Fleet Recreation Center April 1.

Hospital officials say, anyone that holds a Department of Defense (DoD) identification card and is at least 17 years of age may participate in the blood drive. That includes active duty personnel, spouses and children.

The need for blood is great. According to the American Red Cross, every two seconds someone in the U.S. is in need of blood.

"Only about three to five percent of the U.S. population donates. If every person that donated brought along a friend, there would never be a blood shortage in America," said Deputy Director U.S. Pacific Command Armed Services Blood Bank Center 1st Lt. Edward Griffin.

The blood collected during the USNH Yokosuka blood drive will go to supporting a population of 175,000 active duty, family members and DoD civilians across the Pacific. This includes providing blood for eight medical treatment facilities and any ships or operations in the area.

The importance of blood cannot be underestimated, nor is it something that can be duplicated in a lab.

"There is currently no substitute for blood. The only way a person can receive blood is from another person," said Lt. Edgardo Guzman, Japan Area Joint Blood Program officer.

Last year, the hospital collected about 135 units, according to Guzman. He says they have set an ambitious goal of collecting 360 units this year, but is confident in this community's spirit of donating to support those in need.

"Blood literally saves lives…donating blood is one of the highest forms of community service," said Griffin.

Donating blood is a simple and easy way for the Yokosuka military community to support this area's service members and their families, in peace and in war. It costs nothing, takes one hour and one donor can save three lives.

According to www.givelife.org, the following are four simple steps to donating blood:

• Register and show identification card.

A Sailor donates blood to the Armed Services Blood Program at CFAY's Fleet Recreation Center. USNH Yokosuka will hold a blood drive 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. aboard *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) March 30, USNH Yokosuka March 31 and the Fleet Recreation Center April 1.

U.S. Navy file photo by MCSN Kari R. Bergman

• A staff member will take the donor's temperature, iron level and blood pressure to ensure well-being, and will conduct a brief, confidential health interview.

• The staff member will clean the area and insert the needle. It will take about seven to 10 minutes for the bag to collect approximately one pint of blood. Then the needle will be removed and a bandage will be placed on the donor's arm.

• Donors are encouraged to rest and help themselves to snacks to allow the body to adjust. Then, donors are free to continue with normal activity.

For more information on the blood drive, please call the USNH Yokosuka laboratory at 243-8567.

Navy revises tracking of Sailors health post-deployment

By Navy Personnel Command Public Affairs

The Navy announced recently that commands may now access online the Deployment Health Assessment (DHA) Program instruction OPNAVINST 6100.3 which cements the requirements for periodic assessments prior to and after deployments.

"When leadership takes an active role in making sure that the assessments take place then we know we are really taking care of Sailors physical and emotional needs," said Fleet Master Chief Mike McCalip, Office of the Chief of Naval Personnel.

"Sometimes Sailors in a hurry to get demobilized or back to their pre-IA (individual augmentee) job may not spend the time on the post-deployment assessment that they should and issues arise months after a deployment. The post-deployment re-assessment (PDHRA) is designed to pick up those issues," he added.

Sailors frequently rate their overall general health worse three to six months after returning than they did immediately upon return. The process is designed to identify stress injuries and other health concerns that require further assessment or treatment.

Sailors are required to undergo a Pre-deployment Health Assessment (Pre-DHA), form DD 2795 no earlier than 60 days prior to the expected deployment date. Then when the Sailor returns from deployment a Post-Deployment Assessment (Post-DHA), form DD 2796 should be completed as close to their homecoming date as possible, not earlier than 30 days before the expected redeployment.

Reserve Sailors should complete the Post-DHA before being released from active duty. The PDHRA form DD 2900 should be completed between 90 and 180 days after return from deployment.

To make life easier, Deployment Health Assessments are all submitted electronically by a nurse, corpsman or medical technician. If a service member gives positive responses to some questions, the assessment may be bumped up for review by a physician, physician's assistant (PA), nurse practitioner (NP), or independent duty corpsman (IDC). The PDHRA can only be done by a physician, PA, NP, or IDC.

For more information on the assessments and reassessments review OPNAVINST 6100.3 available in the reference section on the Navy Personnel Command Web site http://www.npc.navy.mil/channels/.

New tool improves search feature on TRICARE Web site

By Lora Sanders-VanNoy,
TRICARE Pacific Marketing Representative

Looking for information on the TRICARE Web site? Thanks to a new custom search tool, TRICARE beneficiaries can experience improved results on the TRICARE benefit information portal at http://www.tricare.mil.

The Google custom search technology directs users to the information they need with a few key words and the click of a mouse. By using the world's largest and most accessed search engine, TRICARE users can more easily find a wealth of information on topics such as finding providers, the various TRICARE health care plans, "what's covered," plan costs and much more.

The new search technology optimizes the TRICARE Web site experience for beneficiaries, providing more accurate results during a search for general TRICARE information.

The TRICARE beneficiary portal was also improved in 2007 with the implementation of a tool that delivers customized information. By entering a simple profile detailing duty status, location and plan, beneficiaries can receive a tailored Web site with the topics that most directly apply to them.

TRICARE is the health care program serving active duty service members, National Guard and reserve members, retirees, their families, survivors and certain former spouses worldwide. As a major component of the Military Health System, TRICARE brings together the health care resources of the uniformed services and supplements them with networks of civilian health care professionals, institutions, pharmacies and suppliers to provide access to high-quality health care services while maintaining the capability to support military operations.

To be eligible for TRICARE benefits, you must be registered in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS).

To experience the new search tool improvement, log on to http://www.tricare.mil or for more TRICARE information, stop by your local TRICARE Service Center or call 243-9528.