

Tactical Combat Training Casualty Care taught in Meridian for first time

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Naval Operational Support Center Meridian on board NAS Meridian was the home to a Tactical Combat Casualty Care Course for active and reserve Navy personnel, Oct. 13-15.

Most of the personnel were assigned to Navy Hospital Pensacola and Naval Medical Branch Health Clinic Meridian.

The course consisted of field training, a team-building portion and classroom discussion.

All portions are necessary to pass the course, which is required for Navy hospital corpsmen in order to perform proper medical treatment in combat scenarios. After passing a written exam and actual performance portions of the course, the students receive a certificate of completion.

Navy Reservist Chief Hospital Corpsman Clifford Duerfeldt, one of the course instructors, said he wanted to share information and his experience in the battlefield.

"This course helps corpsmen learn how to keep people alive in certain battlefield situations," Duerfeldt said.

Lessons include hemorrhage control of the limbs, arms and legs; cricothyrotomy which is surgically opening the neck and inserting a tube to create an airway; and proper application of the intravenous (IV) solution using a syringe and catheter or tube. Students were also taught alternatives for medical treatment in situations where proper tools are not available.

In the team-building portion of the course, students partner up and apply what they have learned. Instructors find out exactly what the students have learned during this portion of the class.

"There is a very big push for corpsmen to complete this course, because they are the ones who are sent out in combat to do the very important job of saving lives," Duerfeldt said.

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Bryan White from Naval Hospital Pensacola said the course offered a lot of important facts to retain.

"We might be in chaotic and stressful situations, but we have to remain cool, calm and collected in order for the person depending on us to get the proper care needed," White said.

This is the first time the combat casualty course has been taught in Meridian. More instructors are being trained in order to continue the course in Meridian.

Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Rachel Watson, attached to Naval Operational Support Center Meridian, has been teaching the Tactical Combat Casualty Care Course for 18 years. She shares her experience with the Sailors and Marines so they can learn from her experiences.

"It's a fantastic course," Watson said. "It gives students a hands-on opportunity rather than just looking it up in a book or on the Internet. They have to go out and sweat, and feel what it is like to do their job in the worst of conditions."

Watson added she felt the course's ultimate goal is teaching Sailors and Marines how to save lives.

"We want the individuals to come back with all their limbs intact," Watson added. "It is very important to bring individuals from the battlefield back to their families. We can train these corpsmen to go out there, save lives and bring our troops back -- that's our goal."