



MAY 2020

# The Lucky Bag

RICHMOND COUNCIL, NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES

## HOSPITAL SHIP USNS COMFORT DEPLOYED TO NEW YORK



Richmond Council has had a 5-year relationship with Military Sealift Command (MSC). One of the ships we support is the hospital ship **USNS COMFORT**. Council toured the **COMFORT** in 2018 with presentations by MSC Master David Murrin (the civilian Nautical Captain) and the Navy Commander of the onboard medical facility, CAPT Kevin Buckley, MD. CAPT Buckley also spoke at our Summer Luncheon and again in Richmond in the fall for another presentation. He stated that the ship was his best assignment ever.

**COMFORT** had only recently returned in December 2019 from a humanitarian relief mission to Central and South America. Back in Norfolk, routine repairs were underway and due to be finished in time for us to tour the ship again as arranged through MSC Public Affairs on April 30.

Unfortunately, the Coronavirus overshadowed all plans. Maintenance was hurried or postponed and **COMFORT** deployed to New York City. The current Medical Com-

mander is CAPT Patrick Amersbach. His experiences and advanced degrees in Executive Nursing and Health Care policy were put to the test in New York City. **COMFORT's** original plan of using 1000 beds for "regular" hospital patients was modified to also include ill Coronavirus patients. As the crisis has eased, **COMFORT** heads home.

A logistical issue was collecting the large number of medical personnel to add to the small permanent staff on the ship. They were pulled from Portsmouth Naval Hospital and other Naval hospitals. Some of those slots were filled by reservists. We wish safety and success to the ship and her crew of dedicated mariners and medical professionals.

As Kipling said in *Patrols in Fringes of the Fleet*:

How in all time of our distress  
As in our triumphs too,  
The game is more than the player of the game,  
And the ship is more than the crew!



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Harvey V. Lankford, M.D.



### NOW HEAR THIS

The current medical events will change all of our lives in ways that were not foreseen just a short while ago. There will be long-lasting changes in many aspects of our lives: medical and health, social, spiritual, political, financial, the economy and more. This includes activities of the Richmond Council and those in the Sea Services that we support. We are all in harm's way.

**Our cancellation list is long:** in March the **Spring Luncheon**, in April the **tour of the carrier FORD and the hospital ship COMFORT** (now sent to New York), in May the **JROTC and Sea Cadets events**, in May our **Golf Outing moved to September 23**, and in June the trip to **Norfolk Harborfest Tall Ships Parade** and our **Summer Luncheon**.

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The peak spread of the virus in Virginia was estimated to be May 17 or so. But in mountaineering terms, the peak is only halfway there. It does not count until you get off the mountain. So, for that reason, Richmond Council will self-isolate. It is the prudent thing to do. Meanwhile, we will try to share occasional updates from time to time with emails by Milton with National Navy League information, Council news on our website done by myself on the 2020 Events Page and emails by John for the whole membership. Mother Nature is in charge.

Please stay home, and stay safer there. ✍

### WORDS OF WISDOM

Tibetan Buddhists say, if you are doing all that you humanly can do to improve your situation, then there's no reason to worry. ✍

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

By John A. Harler, M.D.

### NAVIGATING THE UNCHARTERED PANDEMIC WATERS –

As a health care professional, I have watched the progress of the COVID-19 pandemic with alternating measures of uncertainty, frustration, questioning, anxiety/fear and understanding. In contemplating this, I was reminded of the five stages of grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance), as outlined by psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in preparing for the death of a loved one. This seems to well describe the emotional journey we are on as we transit through the uncharted emotional waters of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In searching God's Word for wisdom on this matter, I was led to 2 Timothy 1 verse 7 – ***For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.***

When we navigate uncharted waters, we usually enlist the service of a pilot. With God as our Pilot, His Word promises:

- We are not to be fearful, because He is with us. He is also with our doctors and leaders giving them wisdom and guidance.

- He will empower us to love and care for one another even if it's from afar via social distancing. We are to stay connected by phone, internet, Zoom etc.

- He has given us good minds with wisdom to practice precautions such as handwashing, masks, gloves, avoiding contact with the sick and seeking medical attention when needed.

Be safe and be well! ✍

## COUNCIL DONATES \$1000.00 TO HOSPITAL SHIP USNS COMFORT

National Navy League's President, Bill Stevenson, reported that New York Council Navy League was donating food and supplies at the pier side Command Center manned by 75 deployed Marines and Sailors. On April 3, Richmond Council President, Harvey Lankford, contacted New York Council President, Frank Russo and Executive Director, Jessica Hitchens. Richmond Council was able to earmark a \$1000 donation directly for the benefit of the **COMFORT** personnel. Care Package, if you will, on our own shores.

New York Council and National Navy League will be publicizing the effort by donors. Richmond Council's small part will be our Challenge Coin image and a short audio ending with "*They Serve, We Support.*" ✍

### HOSPITAL ON THE HUDSON

Military Sealift Command Public Affairs, Lashawn Sykes, provided Richmond Council comments from Captain Kevin Buckley, the hospital ship **COMFORT** 2017-2019 Medical Facility Commander. These are excerpts about the ship and crew.

For the New York City medical mission, the ship's ready package was modified. Buckley explained, "The ship has often been used in mission sets for disaster or humanitarian support, with a different mix of capabilities". The biggest plus, he adds, is the addition of extra ICU capacity to New York's health infrastructure.

**HOSPITAL ON THE HUDSON** cont. on pg 3



## HOSPITAL ON THE HUDSON

Continued from page 2

Speaking of his experience with **COMFORT's** staff, Buckley noted that, "My job was to allow them do *their* jobs...I would go to the crew and ask, 'what can I do to help you?' And then I'd try to make it happen, remove any barriers to providing world-class care...and they would save lives. Lives that were very difficult to save at the time, or make life-impacting moments".

America is engaged in a different sort of fight against an invisible foe. Buckley says, "We have some of America's best and brightest sons and daughters on the front lines of the war against this virus...helping our fellow Americans". He concludes, "I'm incredibly proud of the ship's men and women. They are the heroes". ✍

## ARMY RESERVISTS DOUBLE COMFORT'S PHARMACY CAPACITY

NEW YORK (NNS) -- Pharmacists from the U.S. Army Reserve joined the medical team aboard the Military Sealift Command hospital ship **USNS COMFORT (T-AH 20)** nearly doubling the pharmaceutical support available to the people of New York City and local health officials in response to the nation's COVID-19 outbreak, April 13.

**COMFORT** is taking patients, regardless of their COVID status, in an effort to relieve pressure from hospitals that are near capacity.

The pharmacists aboard the ship, now five in number, ensure that the **COMFORT'S** medical staff is able to administer lifesaving medications to its patients and crew.

"During previous missions we have had six or more pharmacists onboard and the mission was much more limited in scope, treating more routine issues," said U.S. Navy Reserve LT Diana Cowell, a pharmacist on board **COMFORT**, from Operational Health Support Unit, Pensacola, FL. "Our new Army teammates both have acute care experience; they have dealt with ICU populations before. We'll be able to enhance patient care we are providing to our patients."

U. S. Army Reserve LTC John Fal-

zone works at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and is attached to the 865th Combat Support Hospital, Utica, New York. U. S. Army Reserve Capt Benjamin Yun, attached to the 804th Medical Brigade, Forest Park, Georgia embarked along with Falzone to arrive aboard **Comfort** on April 11.

"We literally doubled their capacity in one day," said Falzone. "They had three pharmacists working 24/7 for nearly two weeks straight. When the call went out that they need some in-patient pharmacists we had just arrived at the Javits Center and we both stepped up to help."

Falzone attests that this is his fourth deployment since his first during Operation Desert Storm and described the difficulty leaving his family behind.

"Everyone back home is worried about us, but we are more worried about how they are doing," said Falzone. "When your country calls upon you to serve, you serve."

Yun shares Falzone's concerns as well as his dedication to serving a greater good.

"This is a very unique medical mission and probably the first mission that the medical brigade has had a lead role in," said Yun. "While I never thought I would embark aboard a U.S. Navy vessel, I wanted the opportunity to serve my country and the people of New York City; I am dedicated to do my very best."

Regarding the differences in service between the Army and Navy, Yun and Falzone agree that the **COMFORT** medical staff has made their transition seamless.

"It has been a very easy transition because the Navy staff has been great and very professional," said Yun. "The only struggle is the communication issues due to the lack of the universal electronic healthcare system that I am used to using in a civilian job."

Falzone expresses similar sentiments, stating that, "It is more of the old-school tactics of hand-writing prescriptions and going back to paper charting, which is where I came from, but it is a newer experience for some of the younger members of the team".

**COMFORT** is comprised of sailors from around the fleet and civil service mariners from Military Sealift Command with unique capabilities to pro-

vide urgent medical support services.

"We appreciate the support from US Army's 804th Medical Brigade for sending two pharmacists to support operations aboard **COMFORT**" said CAPT Patrick Amersbach, commanding officer of the **COMFORT'S** Military Treatment Facility. "This will increase our pharmaceutical capacity as we continue to support the people of New York City, treating patients regardless of their COVID status."

**COMFORT** cares for trauma, emergency and urgent care patients without regard for their COVID-19 status. **COMFORT** is working with the Javits New York Medical Station as an integrated system to relieve the New York City medical system, in support of the U.S. Northern Command's Defense Support of Civil Authorities as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. ✍

(Navy News Service released 4/14/2020)

## REPORT FROM VFA-213 FIGHTING BLACKLIONS

Like everyone, COVID has thrown us a couple of screwballs we weren't expecting. With that said, our mission remains and finding a balance between that mission and the safety of our sailors, families, and the community is a challenge we gladly accept. Skipper Mintz sent a letter to the Command on Monday speaking to this balance and ensuring everyone remains focused both on their health and our Nation's mission.

Thanks again for reaching out and good health to you and everyone in Richmond! ✍

CDR Bryan "STAG" Pinckney  
Executive Officer  
VFA-213 World Famous  
Fighting Blacklions

### SAVE THE DATE

### COUNCIL'S ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT RESCHEDULED

WEDNESDAY  
SEPTEMBER 23, 2020



## USS NORMANDY (CG-60) - - - STAYS AT SEA

Richmond Council's adopted Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser **USS Normandy (CG-60)** is part of the **USS Harry S. Truman (CVN-75)** Carrier Strike Group's (CSG) surface action group.

Though the strike group has already conducted two deployments in a row without a major maintenance period, the Truman CSG is now the only on-call carrier strike group from the East Coast and must remain ready if needed. The Truman CSG will remain at sea off the East Coast of the United States in an effort to keep the crew healthy from the COVID-19 pandemic and ready to take on missions if needed.

2nd Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Andrew Lewis said in statement. "In the face of COVID-19, we need to protect our most valuable asset, our people, by keeping the ship out to sea". ✍

(April 13, 2020 US Naval Institute)

### ADOPTED SHIPS UPDATE

(note: these reports may be edited to fit space available)



**USS NORMANDY (CG-60)**  
**CO:** CAPT Christopher Stone  
**XO:** CDR Theresa L. Kaylor  
**CMC:** CMDCM Douglas Newman

**Adam J. Fiedler, M.D., Liaison**

AHOY Richmond Navy League!

**NORMANDY** spent the entire month of March underway, where ships belong! As noted in the media Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group was joined in Fifth Fleet by the Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group, and participated in dual carrier operations.

**NORMANDY** held multiple award ceremonies throughout the course of March, recognizing the extraordinary hard work of her Sailors. It is my honor to be able to demonstrate our Navy's gratitude for all that has been accomplished on this historic deployment.

Finally, we hosted our Strike Group Admiral, Rear Admiral Andrew Loiselle. He spent the day meeting Sailors and recognizing them for their efforts and commitment to mission

during the 2019-2020 deployment. He also facilitated a discussion with both the Wardroom and Chiefs Mess, allowing both groups the ability to solicit guidance as we continue to operate at sea.

As we watch from afar, we wish everyone well as the nation grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your continued support and outreach. ✍

Warm regards,  
CO CAPT Chris D. Stone



**USS CARTER HALL (LSD-50)**  
**CO:** CDR Matthew R. Shellock  
**XO:** CDR LaDonna M. Simpson  
**CMC:** CMDCM Donavon Gray

**Pat Robson, Liaison**

Greetings from the FIGHTIN 5-0!

Our world has changed drastically in the last month. Although COVID-19 has changed the way our world operates, we are happy to report that **CARTER HALL** is continuing to support the mission of the Navy. Whether it be a tasking to conduct humanitarian assistance or amphibious operations, the crew of the **CARTER HALL** is standing by to execute those orders.

Just like each of you, **CARTER HALL** is taking the necessary precautions to keep our crew safe and healthy during these unprecedented times. We look forward to upcoming underways where we will continue to train, maintain, and develop the skills necessary to prepare for the upcoming deployment.

As always, we are thankful for the extensive support and friendship that Richmond Navy League has provided to each of our Sailors and Marines.

We are: *Working for Peace, Ready for War!* ✍

Very Respectfully,  
LCDR, CHC, Chaplain Williams, USN



**USS GRAVELY (DDG-107)**  
**CO:** CDR Michael O'Reilly  
**XO:** CDR Corey Odom  
**CMC:** CMDCM Dion C. Dupree

**Alan Palmer, Liaison**

No Report received at press time.



**USCGC NORTHLAND (WMEC-904)**  
**CO:** CDR Charles L. Banks  
**XO:** LCDR Joshua DiPietro  
**COB:** GMC Robert Boyer

**Thomas T. Hassell, Jr., Liaison**

Greetings from **USCGC NORTHLAND!**

March held the start of **NORTHLAND's** next Eastern Pacific Patrol and another trip through the Panama Canal. These first few weeks of patrol have kept the crew busy. From embarking our helicopter to kicking off our new training plan, all hands have been working hard to prepare for the other side of the canal.

**NORTHLAND's** crew has been hitting training hard, enhancing their deck seamanship and damage control knowledge through the Deck and DC Olympics. During the Deck Olympics, members were split into teams and competed in six different events including knot tying, making off a bit as fast as possible, and throwing a heaving line through a life ring. The DC Olympics consisted of pipe patching, firehose handling, and getting dressed in proper firefighting gear as quickly as possible. The crew had a great time honing their knowledge and bringing out their competitive side while enjoying some Eastern Pacific sun.

In addition to the training, **NORTHLAND's** crew has been staying fit and utilizing all of the workout equipment gifted by the Navy League. The bike mats have tremendously helped protect the new flight deck and stabilize the bike. All hands have put the new dumbbells to use and especially appreciate the weight rack, which helps preserve the weights and eliminates clutter on the fantail.

During the Global Coronavirus pandemic, the crew maintains a positive attitude, has adopted some new procedures and pushes on in the Eastern Pacific. Our thoughts are with those back home. **NORTHLAND** hopes to have a strong April and second month of patrol.

Thank you for your support! ✍

Very Respectfully,  
XO LCDR Joshua DiPietro



## THE GREAT INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC OF 1918

In 1918 an entirely different apocalyptic event threatened to push WWI off the headlines. In September 1918 the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* printed a small article at the bottom of the front page. It reported that thousands of soldiers in army camps around Boston had contracted "Spanish flu". Only a week later, the influenza wildfire ignited in Richmond, with 10,000 cases reported in a matter of days.

A first wave of the epidemic in the spring had been mild, but by fall the virus had mutated into a far more virulent strain, striking both sides of the Atlantic simultaneously, first in army camps and then quickly spreading to civilians. It overwhelmed public health services. Unlike past flu epidemics, this one tended to spare the very

young and very old and instead afflicted those in the prime of life with horrific lethality.

Richmond's chief health officer shut churches, schools, theaters, dance halls, and all other indoor public gatherings. The Instructive Visiting Nurses' Association (IVNA) and the health department divided the city into districts and tried to visit stricken households. Westhampton Hospital was quarantined for flu victims only. John Marshall High School became the base hospital and headquarters for mobilizing resources against the threat. The state health commissioner drafted MCV medical students as doctor-assistants. Churches opened soup kitchens for families in need. Impressed inmates from the city jail delivered milk. The state health commissioner, Dr. Ennion Williams, confirmed that at Hollywood Cemetery, "the un-

dertakers had informed him they were experiencing difficulty in securing coffins".

The Richmond Academy of Medicine warned against premature lifting of restrictions. Finally, in November 1918 the city lifted the ban. City officials had accurately predicted 900 to 1,500 deaths; the actual toll from September 1918 to March 1919 was 1,014. The pandemic would kill 600,000 Americans and about 50 million worldwide. The worst was now over, though lesser, intermittent spikes of contagion cropped up through the spring. Today, Coronavirus reminds us that there are lessons to be learned from our own history. 🍷

(Excerpts from Nelson D. Lankford, Ph.D.,  
Board of Directors, Hollywood Cemetery)

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## RICHMOND NAVY LEAGUE COUNCIL SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES 2019

The Richmond Virginia Council Navy League is a civilian, volunteer, 501(c) (3) non-profit charitable educational organization. Our primary mission is to support the men and women of our Sea Services: the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Merchant Marine and Military Sealift, their families, and our related Naval Sea Cadets and JROTC Youth Programs. We support all branches of active duty military personnel and their families with care packages and monetary contributions to Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs. Through the National Navy League, we are advocates for legislation regarding the Sea Services.

The Richmond Virginia Council Navy League motto is, "They Serve, We Support".

In 2019, our 250 members:

- Supported five ships, one naval fighter squadron and three naval support units representing 2,200 sea service personnel.
- Participated in 16 events with our Adopted Ships and Supported Units.
- Provided \$8,075 in donations to support service member Morale, Welfare and Recreation funds and to recognize outstanding service members.
- Shipped nearly \$2,000 worth of care packages to forward deployed military personnel in Kenya and Somalia.
- Provided \$6,410 to support two sea service youth programs. The Naval Sea Cadets American Division which serves 50 Richmond area youth, five Navy and four Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) Programs that serve 600 youth in nine Richmond area high schools.
- Sponsored nine events and activities that generated \$20,279 in donations to support our sea services.
- Generated an additional \$12,972 in donations from our Anchor Club, 88 of our members who donated \$100 or more to support our programs and activities.



## Thank You Sponsors!

Your Financial contribution to the Richmond Navy League provides Funds for programs supporting those serving in the United States Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Council's Youth Programs; The Naval Sea Cadet Corps and the Local Navy and Marine JROTC Units.




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## RICHMOND NAVY LEAGUE COUNCIL SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES 2019 continued from page 5

- Published *The Lucky Bag*, our monthly newsletter, to inform members, donors and other supporters in the Richmond area of the opportunities to support the sea services and related youth programs.
- Our webpage [navyleague-richmond.com](http://navyleague-richmond.com) and Facebook page [facebook.com/NavyLeagueRVA](https://facebook.com/NavyLeagueRVA) inform our members and the Richmond area of the activities of the Richmond Council Navy League.

Our success as Citizens in Support of the Sea Services depends on our Membership. Please join us.





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*Thanks for jumping on board !!!*



## **2020 ANCHOR CLUB MISSION:**

**YOUR DONATION OF \$100 (OR MORE) WILL PROVIDE FUNDS FOR THE SUPPORT OF OUR SEA SERVICES AND THEIR RELATED YOUTH PROGRAMS.**

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