

# MEDICAL NEWS

## SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

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SEPTEMBER 2016

By Airman 1st Class Destinee Sweeney  
20th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Approximately 42,000 Americans commit suicide annually, according to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. September is National Suicide Prevention Month, in which the Defense Department and other organizations are raising awareness to help those in need.

Currently the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S., suicide can affect anyone in the community.

“Suicide prevention is really a community effort, not something that can be accomplished by one provider or clinic alone,” said Capt. Tiffany Brakefield, 20th Medical Operations Squadron staff clinical psychologist.

Although there are no universal symptoms, some warning signs of suicidal ideation may include withdrawal from activities, appearing depressed and changes in sleep or appetite.

When friends, family and peers notice changes and choose to help, the results can be lifesaving. “If you suspect someone you know is suicidal utilize the A.C.E model,” said Brakefield. “‘Ask’ directly about thoughts of self-harm or suicide, ‘Care’, actively listen and remove any means that could be used for self-harm, and ‘Escort’, accompany your wingman to a member of your chain of command or to a professional.”

See **SUICIDE**, Page 3



(U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Charles Oki/Released)

## Purple heart

Lt. Ross Farrow (left), assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) 6, pins the Purple Heart Medal onto the chest of Chief Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician (Retired) Patrick Flanigan during a ceremony in front of Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group (EODGRU) 2 headquarters on Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek. Flanagin, formerly assigned to EODMU 2, was nominated for the medal after being injured during operations in Ar Ramadi, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



(U.S. Air Force illustration by Airman 1st Class Destinee Sweeney)

Awareness and education can help decrease the stigma of suicide and mental illness. There are many base resources available to members of Team Shaw who may be facing suicidal thoughts, such as the mental health clinic and the chaplain corps.

## INDEX

Winners announced for Excellence Award.....	page 2
Education Guide.....	pages 8-9
Career opportunities.....	pages 10-15

# Winners announced for 9th Annual Major Jonathan Letterman Medical Excellence Award

The National Museum of Civil War Medicine is proud to announce the winners of the 9th Annual Major Jonathan Letterman Medical Excellence Award. Colonel John Bradley Holcomb will be presented with the individual award while the U.S. Army Medical Materiel Development Activity, Tissue Injury and Regenerative Medicine Project (TIRM) is the winner in the organizational category.

The National Museum of Civil War Medicine, located on 48 E. Patrick Street in Frederick, Maryland, established the Major Jonathan Letterman Medical Excellence Award in 2008 to honor individuals, military units or entities, companies, organizations or project groups who are leaders in innovative efforts in combat casualty care, prosthetic technology, regenera-

tive medicine, improving outcomes for patients with traumatic brain injuries incurred on the battlefield, or drawing on today's cutting edge medical technology to develop new ways to assist Armed Forces members who have suffered severe disfiguring wounds. These innovations carry over into civilian life, contributing to the advancement of medical processes and improved patient outcomes and quality of life for all.

The award is named for Major Jonathan Letterman who is known as the 'Father of Battlefield Medicine.' Each of the nominees are modern day visionaries who keep his spirit of collaboration and problem solving alive today. The Letterman legacy continues to save lives today through the work performed by these dedicated medical professionals. Each year the award grows in stature and prestige as the importance of Civil War medical innovations becomes increasingly relevant in today's medical community. This year's presentation ceremony will be held at Strong Mansion in Dickerson, Maryland on October 6th from 6:00 to 9:00 pm.

Individual honoree, COL John Bradley Holcomb (Ret) is currently the Director of the Center for Translational Injury Research at the University

of Texas Medical School at Houston. COL Holcomb was recognized as "The Warrior's Combat Surgeon" by the Journal of TRAUMA, Injury, Infection and

Critical Care. He is a Soldier-Surgeon-Scientist who has contributed scientific literature to more than

460 publications and serves on editorial boards of multiple medical journals. He has led national and international research and policy efforts to improve the care of trauma casualties. COL Holcomb served 23 years in the military and distinguished himself as an innovator in combat casualty care. During that time, he served in Somalia, where he was on the surgical team that delivered 48-hour non-stop surgical care to the soldiers that inspired the book and film Black Hawk Down. His accomplishments are too numerous and varied to list.

"In researching the career of COL Holcomb, it became obvious that he is indeed a 'Living Letterman,'" explains NMCWM Executive Director David Price, "The New York Times published a profile of COL Holcomb in November of 2007 that chronicled his commitment to improving medical care for wounded warriors. He redesigned the evacuation system for wounded soldiers, he advocated for the Joint Theater

Trauma Registry to help standardize medical care and identify best practices, and he continued to work on new treatments to improve care – just like Major Jonathan Letterman did during the Civil War. There are few more deserving of this award than COL Holcomb."

The Tissue Injury and Regenerative Medicine Project is the organizational honoree for the Letterman Award. Led by Ms. Kristy Pottol at the U.S. Army Medical Materiel Development Activity in Frederick, Maryland, its mission is to "make wounded service members whole by restoring form, function and appearance." Their work helps find new and effective methods to treat and sustain severely disfigured service members and civilians who would otherwise have very little hope of leading a normal life.

The TIRM is the single largest funder of Vascularized Composite Allotransplantation which is the transplant of intact vascularized body parts, such as hands and faces. The TIRM made incredible treatments possible, such as a successful face transplant for a civilian who was injured in a high voltage electrical accident and a successful double arm transplant for a wounded service member.

NMCWM Executive Director David Price states, "The Civil

War resulted in an unprecedented number of amputations and disfiguring wounds. The result was the beginning of reconstructive surgery and prosthetics. TIRM continues that work on a massive scale by managing more than 200 research projects. Their commitment to patients so severely wounded is inspiring. The impact of this organization cannot be overstated and their mission truly continues the legacy of Major Jonathan Letterman by focusing on improving patient outcomes and their quality of life."

The 9th Annual Major Jonathan Letterman Medical Excellence Award will be presented on October 6,

2016 from 6:00 to 9:00 pm at Strong Mansion in Dickerson, Maryland. The keynote speaker will be Cate Lineberry, author of *The Secret Rescue: An Untold Story of American Nurses and Medics Behind Nazi Lines*. She will share the mesmerizing tale of the courage and heroism of ordinary people and describe one of the most daring rescue attempts by clandestine American and British organizations of World War II. Tickets are \$75 for civilians and \$50 for active duty military. Sponsorships are available.

For more information please contact Meg Gauling at [Meg.Gaulding@civilwarmed.org](mailto:Meg.Gaulding@civilwarmed.org) or 301-695-1864 ext. 1014.

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## CBIRF responds to simulated nuclear detonation

Sgt. Kyle Burns, a team leader with technical rescue platoon, Chemical Biological Incident Response Force, CBIRF, helps two simulated victims that were affected by a notional nuclear explosion to a near by all-terrain vehicle to be transported out of a contaminated area during a 48-hour operations as part of Exercise Scarlet Response 2016 at Guardian Centers, Perry, Ga., Aug. 25, 2016. This exercise is the unit's capstone event, testing the levels of each individual CBIRF capability with lane training and culminating with a 36-hour simulated response to a nuclear detonation. CBIRF is an active duty Marine Corps unit that, when directed, forward-deploys and/or responds with minimal warning to a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or high-yield explosive (CBRNE) threat or event in order to assist local, state, or federal agencies and the geographic combatant commanders in the conduct of CBRNE response or consequence management operations, providing capabilities for command and control; agent detection and identification; search, rescue, and decontamination; and emergency medical care for contaminated personnel.

(Official U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Maverick S. Mejia/RELEASED)

# Retired EOD Technician receives Purple Heart

By Petty Officer 2nd Class Charles Oki  
Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group Two

NIA BEACH, Va. — Chief Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician (EWS/PJ) (Retired) Patrick Flanigan received the Purple Heart Medal during a ceremony in front of Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group (EODGRU) 2 Headquarters at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek Aug. 31.

Flanigan received the medal for wounds sustained in November 2006 during a post-blast analysis operation in Ar Ramadi, Iraq, as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Before presenting the medal, Capt. John Moulton, commodore of EODGRU 2, highlighted the bravery and sacrifice made by Flanigan.

“I’m proud we are able to recognize Chief Flanigan for service he has made after almost 10 years,” said Moulton. “On that day, then Petty Officer Flanigan knew exactly what needed to be done and because of that I am thankful for the opportunity to express gratitude for his actions that day and for the sacrifices he has made for this country and this community.”

On Nov. 15, 2006, Flanigan, then an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician 2nd Class, and his team responded to a Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle that had been destroyed by an improvised explosive device (IED). Following the IED strike, anti-coalition fighters had made several attempts to set up IEDs around the blast site. That evening, Flanigan and his team eventually arrived at the site after disarming three IEDs enroute to the site.

Upon dismounting their vehicles to conduct a post-blast analysis, a large explosion threw Flanigan to the ground, knocking him unconscious. He woke up a short time later, deaf in one ear and with swollen leg and various



(U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Charles Oki/Released)

*Capt. John Moulton, commodore of Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group (EODGRU) 2, speaks to the Sailors of EODGRU 2 after presenting Chief Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician (Retired) Patrick Flanigan (right) the Purple Heart Medal during a ceremony in front of EODGRU 2 headquarters on Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek. Flanigan, formerly assigned to EOD Mobile Unit 2, was nominated for the medal after being injured during operations in Ar Ramadi, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.*

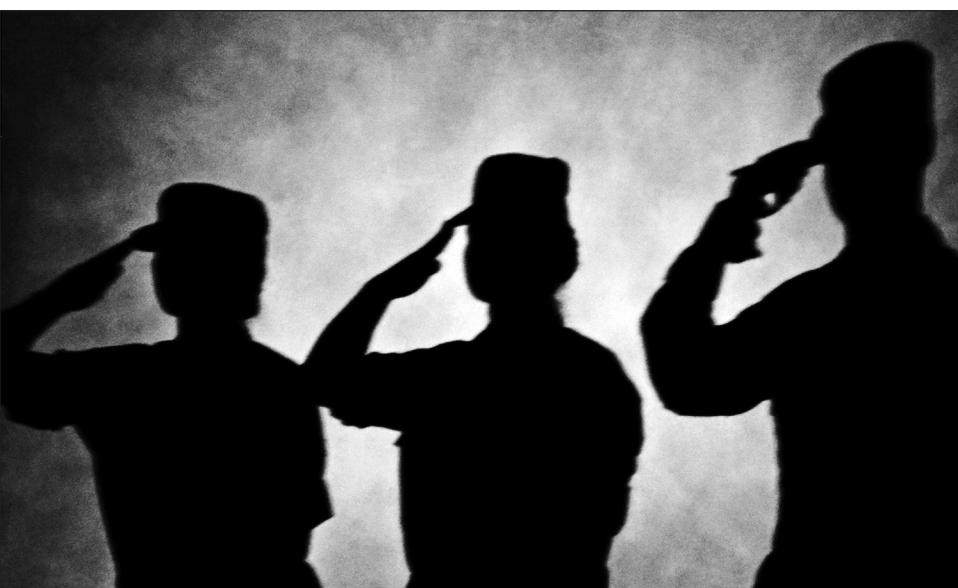
lacerations to his body after a wall had fallen on him.

“I feel a great relief in the knowledge that the military has recognized the damage done to my brain throughout that deployment,” said Flanigan. “I’m grateful to have served this nation and to be recognized for that sacrifice. I am hopeful that future generations of EOD technicians will benefit from the acknowledgement from the military of

the damage to their service members.”

The Purple Heart is the oldest military decoration still being awarded today. Originally, it was called the Badge of Military Merit and was designed by Gen. George Washington during the American Revolution. It was only awarded to soldiers serving in the Army. Eventually, President John F. Kennedy extended the medal to cover all service members in all future wars.

EODGRU 2, headquartered at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story (JEBLCFS), oversees all East Coast-based Navy EOD mobile units, including one forward deployed mobile unit in Spain, as well as EOD Expeditionary Support Unit 2, EOD Training and Evaluation Unit 2, and the only East Coast-based mobile diving and salvage unit, Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit 2.



(U.S. Air Force illustration by Airman 1st Class Destinee Sweeney)

*Within the Air Force, first-term Airmen grades E1-E4 are at highest risk for suicide. Common stressors that may lead to suicidal thoughts include relationship, financial or job problems.*

## • Suicide

*Continued from page 1*

The stigma associated with suicide, suicidal thoughts and mental illness may often be attributed as to why individuals do not receive help.

“Many active duty members are afraid talking to someone will negatively impact their career,” said Brakefield. “However, for the majority of mental health patients, chain of command is not typically contacted and no changes in duty status are needed, especially when someone comes for help early on.”

There are various ways to receive help for thoughts of suicide such as contacting the Behavioral Health Optimization Program clinic, mental health clinic or chaplain services.

“We’re 100 percent confidential and non-judgmental,” said Capt. James Finley, 20th Fighter Wing chaplain. “Our Religious Support Teams are here

to care for you; 24/7 there’s a chaplain on call.”

In addition to the chaplain corps, other services include Military OneSource, the military family life consultant, and the Military Crisis Line at 1-888-273-8255. During an emergency, call 911.

“No one should feel like they have to fight this battle alone,” said Brakefield.”



# CBIRF responds to simulated nuclear detonation during Exercise Scarlet Response 2016

By Lance Cpl. Maverick Mejia  
Chemical Biological Incident  
Response Force (CBIRF)

On the morning of Aug. 22, 2016, at approximately 9 a.m., a nuclear bomb detonated near Houston. The explosion rendered massive damage to the infrastructure of the city including a complete shutdown of a highway leading to Houston forcing part of the city into isolation.

This was a simulated detonation during a training exercise, during which Marines and sailors with Chemical Biological Incident Response Force, CBIRF, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command, deployed as part of an Initial Response Force, IRF in support of this simulated nuclear detonation as part of Exercise Scarlet Response 2016 at Guardian Centers, Perry, Ga., Aug. 22-26, 2016.

Scarlet Response 2016 provided the unit with three days of section-specific training. Each element of the IRF responded to different scenarios under instructor supervision to better understand and prepare for a real world event, all leading to a final 48-hour, non-stop simulated response to a nuclear detonation.

“Scarlet Response’s purpose was to give us a venue where we could utilize all of the IRF’s capabilities,” said Gunnery Sgt. Matthew Weiland, IRF B mission chief. “It allowed all of the sections to work hand in hand, allowing us to see what the IRF would look like if it were deployed in a real life scenario.”

The exercise solidified CBIRF’s capability to respond to a catastrophe inside the United States and anywhere in the world.

This large scale exercise provided the alert command element, ACE, to be fully engaged from the beginning to the end of the mission. The ACE is the forward command and control node supporting IRF operations down range.

The command and control aspect of any operation is essential to the success of the mission, said Weiland.

“If the IRF needs something down range, whether it is intelligence or more water or [protective] suits, the ACE can provide it while simultaneously reporting to higher headquarters everything that is going on,” said Weiland.

During Scarlet Response, CBIRF also had an opportunity to work alongside soldiers with 911th Technical Rescue Engineers Company stationed at Fort Belvoir, Va., training with technical rescue platoon Marines during lane training and the multi-hour simulated response exercise.

“I think is a great way to show that the services can work together,” said Army Staff Sgt. Michael Christensen



(Official U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Maverick S. Mejia/RELEASED)

**Petty Officer 2nd Class Robert Whitney (left) and Seaman Markus Smith (right), hospital corpsmen with Chemical Biological Incident Response Force, CBIRF, escort a casualty after a simulated explosion as part of a medical training during Exercise Scarlet Response 2016 at Guardian Centers, Perry, Ga., Aug. 22, 2016. This exercise is the unit’s capstone event testing the skills of each individual CBIRF capability with lane training and culminating with a 36-hour simulated response to a nuclear detonation. CBIRF is an active duty Marine Corps unit that, when directed, forward-deploys and/or responds with minimal warning to a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or high-yield explosive (CBRNE) threat or event in order to assist local, state, or federal agencies and the geographic combatant commanders in the conduct of CBRNE response or consequence management operations, providing capabilities for command and control; agent detection and identification; search, rescue, and decontamination; and emergency medical care for contaminated personnel.**

with 911th Technical Rescue Engineers Company.

911th soldiers provided great assistance in the final exercise dividing the workload and allowing the IRF technical rescue platoon to develop a rest cycle.

The final exercise began at 9 p.m. in a mile long highway blocked off by vehicles flipped over and simulated victims trapped inside located on the training grounds of Guardian Centers.

“The highway clearance mission we were given on the first night was a unique challenge that we have never executed before,” said Capt. Zachariah Dentes, Reaction Force Company executive officer and IRF B commander. “Instead of having a static zone to work with, we had to continuously move our elements forward down the long highway.”

Identification and detection platoon, IDP, was the first section to go into the “Hot Zone,” a term used to describe the contaminated area.

IDP geared up in level “B” protective equipment including sealed suits and

a Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus, SCBA, to prevent from inhaling unknown agents. Technical rescue platoon and search and extraction platoon worked together to free the victims trapped inside vehicles using extrication and heavy machinery to work through the mangled vehicles.

The casualties coming out of the hot zone were transported to the decontamination area where ambulatory casualties were given instructions to wash themselves with special detergents to neutralize and decontaminate radiation exposure. Non-ambulatory victims were decontaminated by decontamination personnel. CBIRF’s Navy corpsmen were on standby to examine and treat every victim coming out of decontamination.

IRF B was able to incorporate two additional task forces to accomplish the mission. 911th Technical Rescue Engineers Company and Georgia Search and Rescue allowed for each task force to work 12 hours shifts and continue operations for the 48 hours of the exercise.

Exercise Scarlet Response ended with the IRF successfully clearing out 75-acres of town on the Guardian Centers’ training ground rescuing victims, clearing a mile long highway of overturned and damaged vehicles, extricating victims from vehicles and building support mechanisms for collapsed building to properly help trapped victims, decontaminating victims and providing medical care.

“The [primary assessment] teams searched and cleared a total of 58 buildings in 95 plus degree heat in level B gear [sealed suits and SCBAs],” said Dentes. “Everyone was impressed with the Marines’ abilities to press on through the heat.”

“The Marines at all levels did an excellent job,” said Weiland. “The motivation, dedication and work ethic was commented on by Georgia Search and Rescue, Guardian Centers’ staff and instructors with years of experience in the first responder’s field. We received nothing but positive feedback on how hard the Marines worked on this operation.”

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# New SCNG Health and Wellness Program changes everything

By Sgt. Brad Mincey  
South Carolina National Guard

FORT MILL, S.C. — South Carolina National Guard Soldiers have a new program that is changing the way they train, workout and recover from injuries.

Soldiers from the 1222nd Engineer Company got to hear about the program and meet the fitness trainers Sept. 10, 2016 at their armory in Fort Mill, South Carolina.

“We can train you to live longer and fuller lives,” said Ron Doiron, Health and Wellness Program coordinator, who also served 26 years active duty in the Army. “Often, Soldiers come to us in a state where we can’t focus on fitness. The first thing we have to do is work on weight problems. Because if they have too much weight for their frame, and I take them running, I am exposing them to injury. And we can’t train an injured Soldier.”

Past programs have been designed to try and resolve as many problems as possible, but have mainly focused on getting Soldiers to pass their Annual Physical Fitness Test (APFT). This program is very different in that it offers an individualized regimen designed specifically to fix, repair or improve the areas a Soldier wants or needs to resolve.

“We conduct an initial consultation and find out, ‘what do you do?’ and ‘how much time do you have to devote to the program?’” said Doiron.

He and his team then come up with

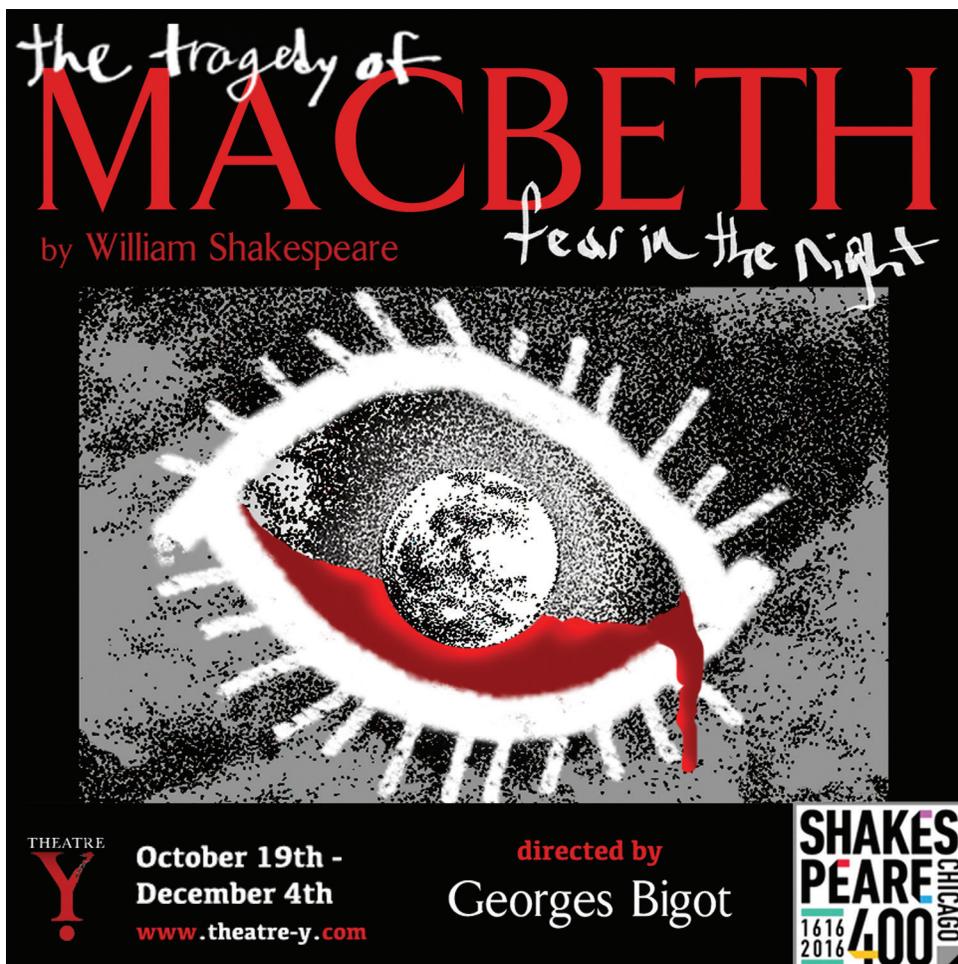
**See WELLNESS, Page 9**



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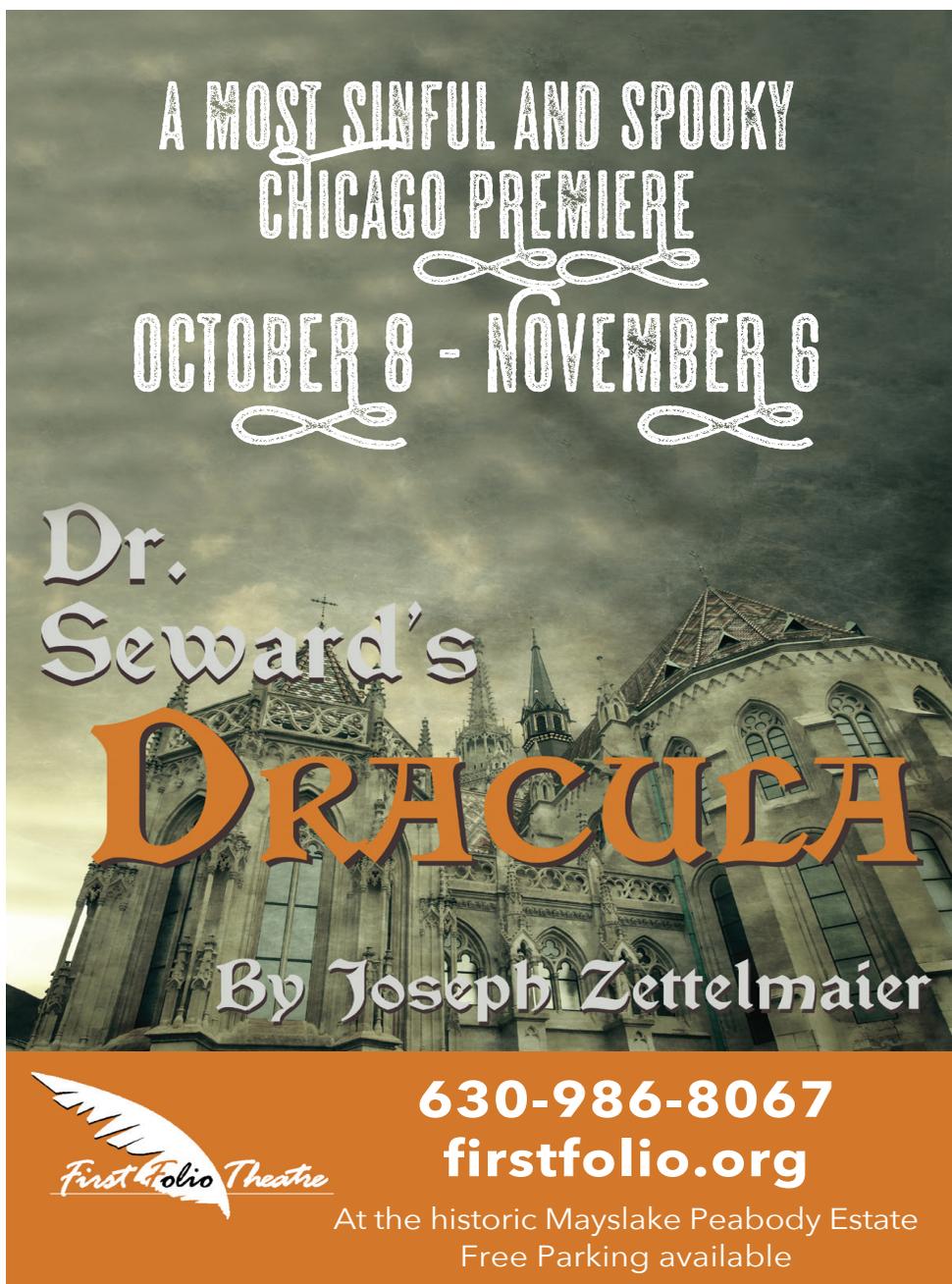


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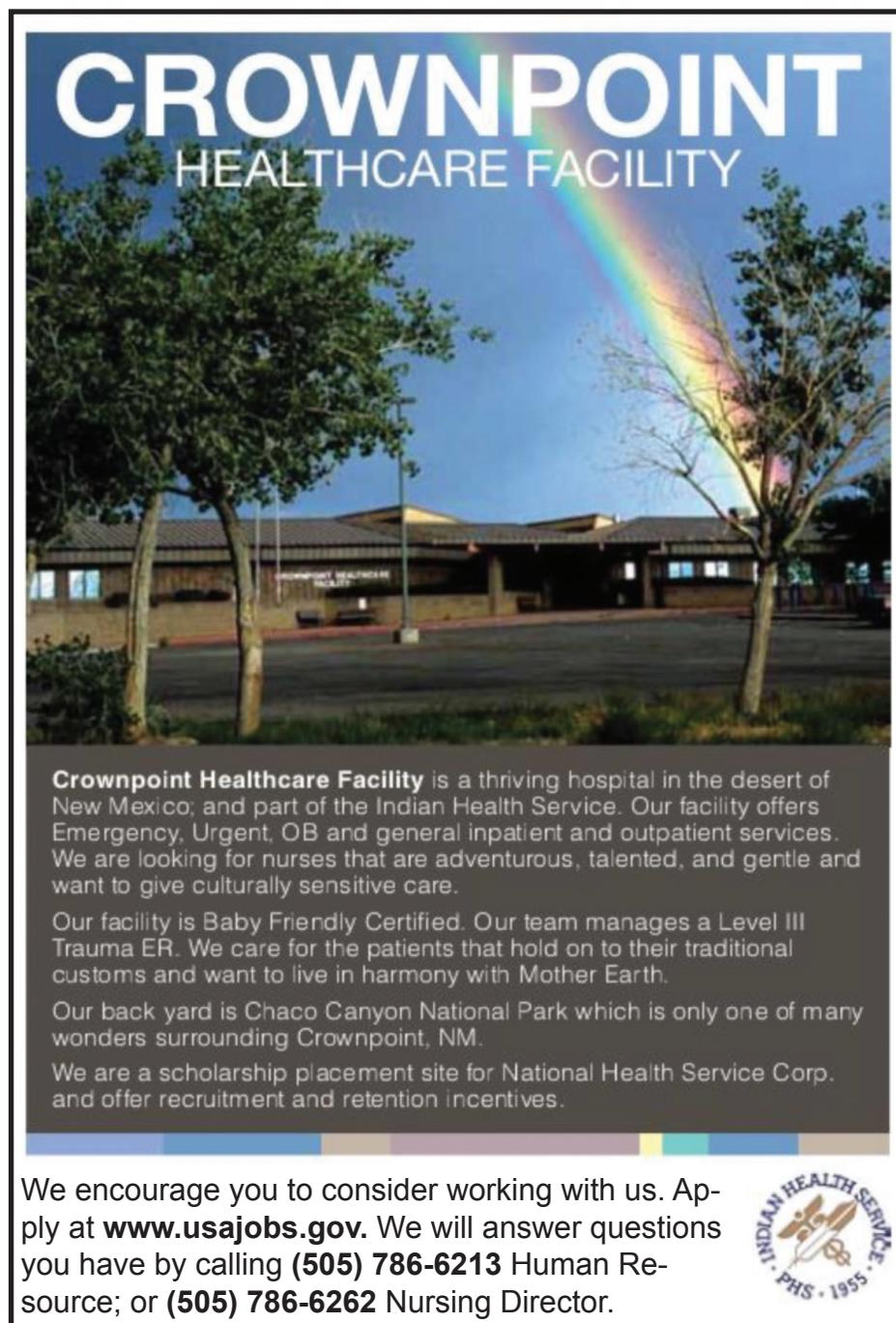
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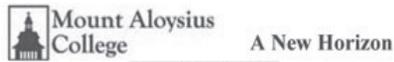




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## • Wellness

Continued from page 7

a plan that is specific to each Soldier.

“Part of what we do is to not only teach you how to do your push-ups and sit-ups, we teach you how to do them correctly. The first thing we teach is form,” he added.

The program is offered through the Health and Wellness section of the Service Member and Family Care Program and covers not just the fitness aspect of a Soldier’s life, but can be catered to assist with diet and other health aspects with the intent to improve the Soldier’s whole life.

“We spend time with them and get them out of that sedentary lifestyle,” said Doiron. “We have had many examples of Soldiers who were once on medications be able to get off of them because we believe exercise is medicine. Then, once they start seeing the effects and the results, they stop asking, ‘How long do I have to do this?’ and they start telling me how long they are going to do it.”

Soldiers, like those in the 1222nd Engineer Company, perform a wide range of missions and duties and often have the potential to get injured. This program is a great way for commanders

to help their Soldiers recover from injuries, get out of a fitness rut or improve their overall life style.

“Physical fitness is a big part of being in the Army, particularly in the infantry,” said U.S. Army Capt. William Self, 1222nd Engineer Company commander. “And as a Sapper company, we are right there with the infantry breaching or emplacing obstacles. We’ve seen some dramatic results with our Soldiers involved in the program.”

Self explained, the number of Soldiers in his unit not passing the APFT has declined by nearly 50 percent since getting involved with the Health and Wellness Program last October. He expects them to drop even further after the upcoming APFT.

“When a Soldier gets flagged for not passing the APFT, things like promotions, schools and tuition assistance go away,” said Self. “So it is better for the Soldier, the unit and the overall Army mission for Soldiers to be physically fit.”

There are a variety of trainers working with the program from a wide range of backgrounds, from fitness trainers to former coaches. Their sole intent is

to help a Soldier meet their goal. One of these trainers is Tyson Chandler, a former strength and conditioning coach with University of South Carolina Upstate.

“We look at how the body works. We find out what you do. Then we create a program for you. I take the same approach that I did with the athletes and apply them to meet the individual needs,” said Chandler. “There is a science behind everything we do and that is what I’m excited to share with you. It’s not about getting you to a gym to lift weights, it’s trying to make you feel better throughout the day. That’s the wellness part of what we do.”

Once those goals have been attained, a Soldier doesn’t have to stop there. The trainers will continue working with the Guard member to reach another goal or to simply maintain their current health and fitness level.

“Instead of having a guy who scores a 300 on an APFT try to train you two days out of a month, we can be there every day throughout the month,” said Chandler. “And if you have a question that we don’t know the answer to, we have the educational background to

go find the answer and bring it to you. Anyone can go to the web and look up information, but we can dispel some of those myths about diets and nutrition.”

Many Soldiers have already seen progress and benefitted from this program through positive changes in their lifestyle and fitness habits.

“I realized when I looked at my [Department of the Army] photo, that wasn’t the person that I wanted to be,” said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Terrence Dover, 1222nd Engineer Company platoon sergeant. “So I reached out to Ron and it started there. Since I’ve been with the program, I’ve lost weight, been able to get off the medication I was on and just been able to improve my overall health. It has worked really well for me.”

U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Semko, 1222nd Engineer Company combat engineer, had a shoulder injury that began to interfere with his ability to perform his duties and complete his APFT.

“When I began working with Ron, I found out that part of my problem was my form on my run was incorrect.”

**See HEALTH, Page 11**



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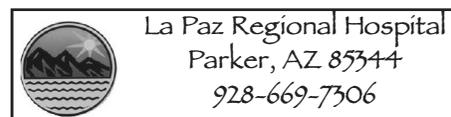
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Photo By Sgt. Brad Mincey

**Ron Doiron, Health and Wellness Program Coordinator for South Carolina National Guard, spoke with Soldiers from the 1222nd Engineer Company about the new program Sept. 10 at their armory in Fort Mill, S.C. The program that is changing the way Soldiers train, workout and recover from injuries while improving overall lifestyle and healthy living choices.**

• **Health**

Continued from page 9

said Semko. “I was doing my pushups incorrect and my sit-ups incorrect, so he walked me through step-by-step on how to correct those. We worked on keeping my shoulders back, running on the balls of my feet and other things that were slowing me down.”

In the beginning of the process, Doiron would run with Semko and when something needed to be corrected, they would stop, talk about it, make the adjustment and then start over again.

“About the first time we got together I was able to improve my stride and my form,” said Semko. “I’m now back to at least 70 percent across the board on my PT test. Push-ups and sit-ups are no longer an issue. The pain I used to have isn’t there.”

In fact, Semko has seen such a dramatic improvement that he is going to compete in a Spartan Run with Doiron in October.

There are six districts throughout South Carolina with a Health and Wellness instructor for each area. The trainers do not just come up with a plan and then leave the Soldier to complete the training on their own. They are there to work with the Soldier, and even train with them if that is what is needed.

“I’ve had constant contact with Ron,” said Semko. “He calls me regularly to check up on me. We worked together almost daily.”

In addition, the Soldiers are not the only ones who have the responsibility of keeping up with how the program is working for them. The program also provides information to leadership to keep accountability of the Soldiers in the unit.

“We also send updates and reports up to the commanders and first sergeants to let them know these are the Soldiers who want to improve,” said Doiron.

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