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Leading with purpose

MRF-SEA Sailor awarded 1st Med Battalion Sailor of the Year

By Sgt. Shaina Jupiter

Marine Rotational Force - Southeast Asia

BATAM, Indonesia – Growing up, David Doyle loved watching movies about the military and popular superheroes. In his mind, joining the service would be the closest thing to living a life like those of his favorite movie characters, “Maybe without the powers or abilities but a hero nonetheless.” Growing up around veterans and a heavy military influence in his family impacted his decision to ultimately walk into a recruiter’s office, with the aspiration to become what he envisioned as a child. The occupation he was assigned was not one he envisioned, but it led him down a path to where he is today as 1st Medical Battalion’s Sailor of the Year, while performing a vital medical role for Marine Rotational Force-Southeast Asia.



U.S. Navy Hospitalman 2nd Class David Doyle

As the Preventive Medicine Technician and Leading Petty Officer for the medical team of MRF-SEA, U.S. Navy Hospitalman 2nd Class David Doyle plays a vital dual role in maintaining the force’s health and ensuring operational readiness. In the PMT capacity, Doyle works at the forefront of health protection, carefully monitoring, assessing, and mitigating risks from disease, injury, and environmental threats. He provides crucial insights to preemptively safeguard against potential hazards. On the other hand, as the LPO of MRF-SEA’s medical section, Doyle directly leads the unit’s corpsmen and assists the section’s Chief Petty Officer and medical officers in achieving mission success. He ensures tasks are accomplished with accuracy and promptness, while also prioritizing the well-being and growth of each sailor. Doyle exemplifies both commitment to duty and caring leadership.

“I believe that every day is a learning opportunity and if I learn something new and do something to make someone else’s life easier, then I consider it a successful day,” said Doyle.

For Doyle, being selected as “Sailor of the

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A life saved, a limb healed

By Douglas Stutz

Naval Hospital Bremerton/
Navy Medicine Readiness and
Training Command Bremerton

A routine cycling ride for a U.S. naval officer unexpectedly became a harrowing injury which threatened both his life and limb.

Recovering from the gruesome ordeal was fraught with unknowns and uncertainties for Lt. Lyman Woollens, family medicine physician assigned to Naval Hospital Bremerton’s Urgent Care Clinic.

He was unexpectedly hammered by a vehicle, which also pulverized a lower limb. After being emergency airlifted to Harborview Medical Center for level one trauma care, there were umpteen surgeries, multiple weeks confined to a wheelchair, and the distinct possibility of having his leg amputated.

Until collaboration between Navy Medicine, Commander, Submarine Development Squadron 5 and the Navy diver community teamed up to provide Woollens with extensive rehabilitation treatment to help him along the road to recovery.

“My duty as a Navy physician is to provide necessary medical care and treatment so our active duty personnel like Lt. Woollens are



Official Navy photo by Douglas H. Stutz, NHB/NMRTC Bremerton public affairs officer

Airing out the healing process... after suffering a harrowing injury which threatened both his life and limb, Lt. Lyman Woollens has started to receive extensive rehabilitation treatment using the Navy’s oldest certified dive chamber on Naval Undersea Warfare Center for hyperbaric oxygen therapy to improve his recuperation process.

ready to deploy,” said Capt. Juan Dapena, Commander, Submarine Development Squadron 5 Undersea Medical Officer, who was contacted by NHB’s orthopedic surgeons Cmdr. Kenneth Needham and Lt. Cmdr. Clarence Steele for assistance.

Dapena in turn reached out to the Navy divers assigned to Naval Undersea Warfare Center Keyport

Dive Locker for their support in using the Navy’s oldest certified dive chamber, affectionately known as ‘The Whale,’ for hyperbaric oxygen therapy to improve Woollens recuperation process.

“There has been an amazing amount of support. We are very thankful. All the post-traumatic care is such a testament to the Navy’s commitment to do as much

as possible for a service-member in need,” shared Woollens.

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy – a specialty of Navy undersea medicine – can help with treatment for a host of ailments, illnesses and medical conditions. Research has shown that it is a well-established treatment for fighting infections and

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• Healed

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wounds that haven't been able to heal from severe injuries.

According to Dapena, Woollens was a prime candidate.

"The wound sustained, and multiple subsequent surgeries, resulted in the loss of a major arterial supply to the affected area. This area required skin grafts, two of which previously failed due to decreased arterial supply of oxygen-rich blood. While on his third graft he also shows delayed wound healing at the lower aspect of the graft where it attaches to normal and scarred tissue and a pressure ulcer on the posterior aspect of the heel of the same leg secondary to prolonged prostration," explained Dapena, noting that Woollens surgical and medical care, nutritional status, and physical therapy were being maximized.

"This is where hyperbaric oxygen therapy comes into play as an adjunct to standard medical care," Dapena continued. "HBOT increases the partial pressure of oxygen ten-fold throughout all tissues of the body."

The complex workings of The Whale

are manually controlled by the Navy diver team. They simulate setting to a depth of 45 feet of sea water pressure with the air pressure increased higher than normal, with Woollens entire body receiving 100 percent oxygen through a mask - instead of the normal 21 percent - for three 30 minute sessions. There's a five minute break between the sessions to prevent side effects such as oxygen toxicity, lung tissue damage and seizures.

The treatment plan has him receiving 20 such treatments.

Before actually entering the chamber, a complete medical assessment was done to ensure he was capable to be in such a compression chamber.

"Once in there, Woollens is immersed in a setting that he's not accustomed, which is why someone is always in there with him and the UMO always present," Dapena said, noting that the use of HBOT is covered as adjunctive therapy only after there are no measurable signs of healing after at least 30 days of treatment with standard wound therapy. Even then, it must be used in addition to the standard wound care.

The U.S. Navy has such chambers located throughout the world, assigned to Navy Dive Lockers and other operational units at risk for barotrauma or decompression injuries. The availability for the treatment depends on the current and future operational requirements of that unit, and the availability of an undersea medical officer like Dapena on site during the treatment sessions.

"Lyman is fortunate to have all requirements lined up to be able to take advantage of this treatment option," added Dapena, stressing that the planned treatment is like giving him a prescription for pure oxygen along with having a well-disciplined group of cross-trained Navy divers there to provide constant support.

"Evolutions like these are extremely beneficial for maintaining our proficiency in using our chamber for emergency, diving-related treatments. While we do drills regularly, having an actual patient to care for gives supervisors, tenders, and medical personnel really good experience in these hyperbaric operations without having an actual emergency occurring. We're able to find out areas for improvement in our training and equipment that might not be apparent during the shorter duration of a drill," said Navy Diver 1st Class Gregory Murphy (Diving Warfare Specialist qualified), assigned to Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Keyport Range Support Operations and Dive Locker.

"The pre-dive checks are vital. When you put someone under that much pressure, it's no joke. We rely on the Navy diver community to help us provide the treatment. Their support is incredibly critical," added Dapena.

Murphy shared that providing treatments in the chamber requires qualified divers for specific positions.

"While doing a series of treatments over weeks like we're doing now, our dive locker still has to support the command's primary mission, our own maintenance, and other scheduling challenges. We have to stay flexible with personnel to be able to support all of these operations," Murphy said.

Yet despite being stretched thin in balancing manpower with current operational responsibilities, the Navy Divers take great pride in adhering to their Latin motto, "Aut Viam Inveniam, Aut Faciam," which translates to, "I will either find a way or make one."

"I've been involved on hyperbaric treatments following a surgery for similar injuries in the past and the improvement over the course of treatment is significant. We

train to do treatments for diving-related casualties and are fortunate that we rarely need to put those skills to use in a real-life scenario. Being able to take those skills and use them for therapeutic purposes gives us a lot of pride," stated Murphy.

"The dive team has been upbeat and very professional in assisting with the treatment," remarked Woollens, noting that the swelling on his injured leg has already improved.

HBOT is regulated by the Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society, approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for such medical indications as acute carbon monoxide intoxication; crush injuries and suturing of severed limbs where the therapy would be an adjunctive treatment when loss of function, limb, or life is threatened.

Woollens continues to augment his recovery process with physical therapy and occupational therapy to also help improve mobility and function. He also squeezes in fitness center strength and flexibility exercise on his own. He's even advocated on his own behalf to return to work.

"I've been cleared to work a full shift," declared Woollens, deflecting attention from his own mental and physical challenge over the past months to lauding his wife, Lt. Cmdr. Karli Woollens, also a Navy physician. "She's been carrying the load for us. She's had to literally handle work, our baby and Navy Medicine responsibilities. The hyperbaric oxygen therapy is all for her and family."

Once considered a quaint and outdated product, The Whale - 94 years and counting - under the capable guidance of the Navy dive community with Navy undersea medicine, continues to help restore broken bodies to deployable status.

As Lt. Lyman Woollens can attest, one session at a time.

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Official Navy photo by Douglas H. Stutz, NHB/NMRTC Bremerton public affairs officer
Lt. Lyman Woollens, family medicine physician assigned to Naval Hospital Bremerton's Urgent Care Clinic (right) receives instructions from Navy Diver 1st Class Andrew Turner before receiving his initial hyperbaric oxygen therapy.

Arkansas Army National Guard opens dental clinic

By John Oldham

Arkansas National Guard Public Affairs Office

CAMP JOSEPH T. ROBINSON, NORTH LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — The Arkansas Army National Guard is bridging the gap on Soldiers oral health by opening its own in-house dental clinic here Dec. 8, 2024, becoming just the fourth state National Guard nationwide to authorize Army Guard dentists to treat Guardsmen in drill or annual training status.

Two rooms in the Troop Medical Clinic are designated to provide dental care to help keep Soldiers worldwide qualified and dentally ready to deploy by performing a limited scale of dental treatments, such as fillings and cleanings.

“This is a game changer for the Arkansas Army National Guard,” said Col. Clint Miller, Arkansas Army National Guard Medical Command commander. “The Dental Treatment Facility not only provides us with an additional capability, but it also contains current state-of-the-art equipment that exceeds many current operating civilian clinics.”

The colonel said it’s an additional win, as well, because now Arkansas Army National Guard dentists will be practicing their civilian profession in drill status and during annual training, too.

“That’s huge,” he said. “We typically only see this when in a Title 10 status deployed. The Arkansas Army National Guard has some phenomenal dentists that not only have very successful practices in the civilian sector, but now the Soldiers can benefit from these professionals as well and at no



Photo by John Oldham

Capt. Kayla Payne, an Arkansas Army National Guard dentist, and Sgt. 1st Class Adam McCauley, medical operations noncommissioned officer in charge, cut the ribbon Dec. 8 to ceremonially open the dental clinic here. The clinic staff will be able to treat 15-20 Army Guardsmen daily on drill weekends and during annual training to help Guardsmen maintain their individual medial readiness.

charge.”

Initial equipment purchases to create the dental clinic, plus operating supplies to provide treatments cost roughly \$250,000, but it’s a small investment Guard officials expect will return big dividends with increased dental readiness.

The Arkansas National Guard’s Dental Readiness Program consists of three sections focusing on the force’s

overall dental health. The first section is an annual dental exam, which all Soldiers undergo as part of the annual periodic health assessment at the Arkansas Medical Readiness Detachment. The dental exam determines which dental readiness classification the Soldier is classified as. The Guardsman will be assigned as a DRC 1, 2, or 3, respectively. Soldiers classified as a DRC 1 or 2 are considered deployable within 12 months and receive a “Go” for dental during their PHA. Soldiers classified as DRC 3 fall into one of the other sections of the program.

A subsection of the annual dental exam is the DD Form 2813 (Proof of Dental Examination). The DD Form 2813 allows Soldiers to “bypass” the dental exam conducted during the PHA. If a Soldier has had a civilian dental exam within the last 90 days and is classified as a DRC 1 or 2, they can have this form completed and submitted during the PHA to fulfill their annual dental exam requirement.

The Arkansas National Guard’s new dental treatment program is the second section of the Arkansas National Guard Dental Readiness Program. It offers real-time dental treatment for soldiers with DRC 3 conditions, such as cleanings, fillings, and simple extractions, the colonel said. The Camp Robinson Troop Medical Clinic has two rooms designated and renovated as a dental treatment facility. The clinic is staffed during drill weekends and annual training periods and can treat 15 to 20 Soldiers a day. The

dentists are clinically trained, certified in the state they practice, and credentialed with the National Guard Bureau. Their assistants are MOS-qualified 68E dental specialists trained by the Army and LDTP staff to prepare and arrange dental instruments, administer X-rays, manage patient records, and perform preventive maintenance.

The third component of the program is the Arkansas National Guard Paid Dental Program, which enables Army Guardsmen to receive more complex dental treatments, such as root canals and wisdom teeth extractions at a civilian dental clinic of their choice. This program allows Guardsmen to select a familiar clinic closer to their home of record, ensuring a more convenient treatment experience. Once an appointment is made, Guardsmen notify the medical detachment staff, who handle all the necessary paperwork, records updates, and payments.

“The new Arkansas Paid Dental Program replaces the old process and provides our Soldiers with real-time capability to receive care for those higher-level dental conditions,” the colonel said. “So far, this program in its entirety is working very well and has driven the DRC3 population down to 2.3%, which is below the required NGB metrics, and is continuing to gain momentum on resolving identified DRC3 issues. This is an exciting time and great breakthrough for Arkansas Army National Guard dentistry. Most importantly it provides our Soldiers with ability to receive the proper dental care that they deserve.”



Photo by John Oldham

Army Capt. Marco Gargano, a dentist, prepares to numb a soldier before treating a cavity. The clinic staff can treat up to 10 patients a day on drill weekends, helping ensure soldiers remain dentally ready for state or federal missions. The clinic is one piece of a multi-layered approach to help keep soldiers deployment ready. The Army Guard relies on the clinic, contract dentists, and a soldier’s private dental insurance to ensure soldiers are ready to deploy.

Desert Hammer 2024

Tactical combat casualty care: training to save lives

By Senior Airman Jacob Dastas
944th Fighter Wing

The remote desert landscape of southern Arizona recently played host to Desert Hammer 2024, an expansive Joint Large Force Exercise showcasing the 944th Fighter Wing's commitment to readiness and lifesaving excellence, Nov. 13-16, 2024.

Among its many facets, Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) training took center stage, immersing participants in realistic scenarios designed to prepare them for the most challenging battlefield conditions.

"Typically, in our IRPS (In-Route Patient Staging) mission, we may have our patients up to three days, but here, we're anticipating having them longer and in more critical conditions," said Capt. Paris Mandy, a clinical nurse with the 944th Aeromedical Staging Squadron (ASTS).

Mandy highlighted the importance of this rigorous training, which focuses on adapting to resource limitations and responding effectively to severe injuries.

Key scenarios included mass casualty events requiring advanced triage and trauma response under fire. Master Sgt. Ashley Wells, who directed moulage operations to simulate injuries, emphasized the importance of realistic training aids.

"It was really hard to train lifting litters with unrealistic weights or performing triage without visible injuries," explained Wells. "This year, with moulage, we could create scenarios that mimic what you'd actually experience on the field."

Wells added that the addition of moulage enhanced training fidelity, ensuring participants were better prepared to manage the chaos of mass casualty incidents.

Among those on the front lines of medical readiness was Staff Sgt. Omar Robinson, a 944th Medical Squadron medic providing real-world medical support during the exercise. His role was pivotal, as he and his team stood ready to respond to injuries at a moment's notice.

"People were grateful we were there," Robinson noted. "We've been told we're much needed out here because we're the only real-world medics on-site."

For Staff Sgt. Sara Weaver, a 944th Civil Engineering Squadron emergency management specialist, the exercise tested her ability to assess post-attack conditions. Wearing Mission-Oriented Protective Posture (MOPP) gear, Weaver conducted field tests to detect potential chemical agents while remaining vigilant



U.S. Air Force photo by Maj. Casey Stahell

944th Fighter Wing Reserve Citizen Airmen conduct casualty evacuation and care training during Exercise Desert Hammer 25-1 at Gila Bend Air Force Auxiliary Field, Ariz., Nov. 14. Set against the unmatched backdrop of the Barry M. Goldwater Range, Desert Hammer leverages Arizona's strategic geography to provide realistic combat training for U.S. and allied forces.

for enemy threats.

"If we have a chemical agent in the area, we may have to go through DECON [decontamination]. We bring a lot of equipment out, but we also minimize to essentials for mobility," Weaver explained, emphasizing the exercise's dual focus on preparedness and adaptability.

Another critical component was the integration of flight medics, such as Staff Sgt. Daniel Ippolito of the 944th MDS, who participated in air transport scenarios.

Reflecting on his experience, Ippolito remarked, "It takes a lot more effort to do things you think you know how to do when you're stumbling around trying not to fall."

He praised the controlled stress training, which bridged the gap between routine clinic work and high-pressure environments.

"Flight medics can do way more than just tourniquets – they're critical care flight paramedics with advanced skills," he added.

Desert Hammer 2024 was more than an exercise – it was a continuation of the 944th Fighter Wing's dedication to forging combat-ready Airmen. From simulated triage under helicopter rotors to field-testing chemical detection kits, the exercise honed skills that could mean the difference between life and death in combat and humanitarian missions.

Through its focus on cross-unit collaboration and realistic training scenarios, Desert Hammer 2024 highlighted the Air Force Reserve's unwavering commitment to lifesaving preparedness.

"This training is vital because we don't know what the next conflict will bring. We just know we need to be ready," said Mandy.



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Jacob Dastas

A 944th Fighter Wing U.S. Air Force Reserve Citizen Airmen provide simulated medical care to a casualty during Exercise Desert Hammer 25-1 at Auxiliary Airfield 6 near Gila Bend, Ariz., Nov. 14. Through joint and multinational collaboration, Desert Hammer tests the ability of over 700 participants and 131 aircraft to operate, defend, and sustain airbases under austere conditions.

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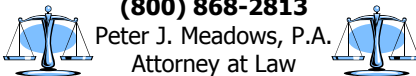
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• **Purpose** (Continued from front page)

Year” isn’t just about personal achievement. To him, it’s a recognition that goes beyond individual accomplishments - it’s a tribute to the Navy’s core values of leadership, integrity, and dedication.

“Sailor of the Year, by definition, is meant to recognize one person who represents the best of the unit and the Navy,” Doyle explains. “But it’s also about building camaraderie and boosting morale within the service.”

This honor, the corpsman believes, is a symbol of the Navy’s commitment to excellence and dedication to duty, reminding everyone to pursue their personal best and uplift those around them.

“My goals while attached to MRF-SEA are to continue to learn and grow,” Doyle shared. “I am always looking for ways to become the best version of myself that I can.”

This drive extends to both professional and personal realms; professionally, he is eager to explore the medical practices across the different countries he will visit during MRF-SEA’s deployment to Southeast Asia, learning new medical treatment techniques and refining his leadership skills along the way. On a personal level, Doyle looks forward to experiences different customs and cultures from the local people he will encounter throughout the deployment and hopes to build bridges of understanding and respect with everyone he meets. Doyle’s journey is one of continuous improvement, fueled by a desire to grow not just as a corpsman and leader, but as a compassionate individual.

“My experiences have shaped the sailor that I am today, and I’m always trying to take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves,” said Doyle.

The sailor credits not only his experiences but also his choices in shaping the person he has become, viewing each



U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class David Doyle, a preventative medical technician with Marine Rotational Force-Southeast Asia, gives instructions while conducting a humanitarian aid and disaster relief demonstration during KAMANDAG 8 at Camp Cape Bojeador, Burgos, Philippines, Oct. 20.

moment as an opportunity for growth. With a philosophy rooted in resilience, he believes in facing challenges head-on.

“If something bad happens to you, it is easy to accept the situation and become a victim of your own circumstances,” Doyle said. “It is much more difficult to look at a bad situation, accept it, learn from it, and change your circumstances.”

Central to Doyle’s personal growth are the people and relationships he continues to prioritize in his life. “The people, or lack thereof, that I have chosen to surround myself with have significantly influenced who I am today,” he explains, echoing the words of entrepreneur Dan Peña, “Show me your friends, and I’ll show you your future.” For this sailor, resilience, growth, and the company he keeps serve as the compass points that guide him forward.


In his journey to becoming a leader, Doyle is not just thinking about the next step, he’s laying the foundation for a long-term vision of positive change. “My short-term goals for my career are to go to my next command, continue to learn to become a more effective leader, and help make the command better than when I checked in,” he shares, demonstrating a commitment to both personal growth and the betterment of those around him. While he continues to serve, he’s also working toward a bachelor’s degree in environmental science, combining his passion for service with a dedication to personal growth. His ultimate ambition is to commission as an officer, a role he believes will allow him to increase the positive impact he can have and the institution and his fellow Sailors and Marines.

Looking ahead, his vision is crystal clear: to lead with purpose, foster growth in those around him, and leave an enduring impact on the U.S. Navy. By merging his career in service with his dedication to education and mentorship, the Sailor of the Year for 1st Medical Battalion is committed to not only advancing himself but also paving a way for others to follow.



U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Doyle poses for a photo during KAMANDAG 8 at Camp Cape Bojeador, Burgos, Philippines, Oct. 20.

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