

Washington Metropolitan Area Navy Nurse Corps Association

The Capital Zone



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Holiday greetings to all WMANNCA members and their families. This holiday promises to be one like no other. Many of us will be forced to be apart from family and loved ones in the midst of this historic pandemic. Be patient. Next year **will** be better.

In the interim, be sure to be good to yourself. Like many, I intended to "scale back" on Christmas since no grandchildren will be here. NOT a good idea! Treat yourself like company! Decorate your spaces as would normally. Plan a nice, albeit smaller, meal and eat on your best china. If you've got, use it! Dress up. Make your day special in whatever way you choose. Our prayers go to all those who are ill or struggling in some other way this season. Think about making care calls to fellow Navy Nurses....especially those living alone.

I wish to thank those who participated in the virtual WMANNCA meeting of November 10th. Twenty-eight of us gathered to

hear chapter updates and listen to a wonderful speaker from MOAA relate important changes on the horizon to military healthcare. BZ to Kathy Thorp, our chapter program chair, on a job well done. Our next chapter meeting will be in April and will likely also be virtual. More on that later.

Reunion news: We are not sure what form the Reunion 2022 will take. I'm optimistic that we will be well past this pandemic by then. A short questionnaire is being sent out to NNCA members. Be sure to provide input. As a reminder, the first 2022 Reunion planning meeting will take place on January 6th at 1900 via Zoom. If you'd like to help, e-mail me, mfbalacki@yahoo.com, and I'll see to it that you are sent the link the day before.

Stay healthy and positive. Better times are ahead. Wishing you a good holiday season.



COMMITTEES

AWARDS

Boo Lahman

MEMBERSHIP

Sue Miller

NEWSLETTER

Ann Ross

**NOMINATIONS/
RECRUITMENT**

Cindy Sweeney

ORAL HISTORY

Maria Harbeson

PROGRAMS

Kathy Thorp

SCHOLARSHIP

Sue Miller

TROOP SUPPORT

Kathy Thorp

EMAIL/WELFARE

Dee Bogart/

Boo Lahman

**NEWSLETTER
REPORT**

Ann Ross, Editor

This issue is dedicated to the Holiday season. Just as many in our country are lamenting not being able to spend time with families, we as Navy Nurses have known many holidays spent far from loved ones. So we've added a few stories of "Christmases spent on deployment".

Also this issue we've started a Birthday Corner for those of us who like to be reminded to send cards or just make a phone call.

We are always looking for input. The deadline for our next issue is February 28, 2021. Please send to WMANNCAnews@gmail.com.

Enjoy! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



**FINANCE REPORT
1-31 October 2020**

Shelley Savage

Starting Balance:		\$24,200.72
Receipts (deposits)		
None		
Interest	\$000.20	
	<hr/>	
	Income	.20
Disbursements		
Troop Support Mailing	\$196.50	
Troop Support Mailing	\$147.10	
WIMSA donation	\$100.00	
	<hr/>	
	Expenses	\$ 443.60
Ending Balance:		\$20,757.32
Liabilities:		
Scholarship Fund	\$3,110.21	
History Fund	\$1,020.25	
Troop/Vet Support	\$2,936.54	
Rough Seas	\$ 70.00	
	<hr/>	
		\$7,137.00
Working Balance:		\$16,620.32

TROOP SUPPORT *Kathy Thorp*

On cloudy, wet Veterans day, smiles were plentiful as neighbors rolled in and out of Kathy Thorp's home, following social distancing protocols in order to pack packages for the Troops.

The snacks items, were collected from St. Mary's Elementary school (Annapolis, MD) on Veterans day, which marked their 12th year of collecting snack items for the Troops. Chick fil -A (Annapolis, MD) also collected candy donations, raising the number of packages to be sent overseas to over **80!** The generosity of many who continue to donate to Troop support fund, is greatly appreciated,



as the boxes cost from \$20-\$45 to mail.



Kathy and neighbors from Ulmstead Estates in Arnold, MD.

More pictures will follow in the next newsletter from the recipients' to include Maggie Balacki daughter, LCDR Katherine Gardner USNR, who is deployed to Bahrain, and Kathy Thorp's son, LT Matthew Thorp, who is deployed on the USS Donald Cook (DDG-75).

Thank you all who continue to contribute to this worthy cause!

WMANNCA BUDDY PROGRAM *Christine Boltz*

Thank you to the nine initial volunteers for reaching out by phone to members in support of the Buddy Program. So far, at least one person is interested in having her oral history recorded and Maria Harbeson is working out the collection details.



Would you like to be on the receiving end and be assigned a buddy? Information on any

members seeking assistance would be kept confidential.

Feel free to contact me at:

Christine.boltz@gmail.com for more information.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE *Cindy Sweeney*

There are 3 openings on the WMANNCA board for the 2021-2023 term with election in the Spring. All chapter members are encouraged to consider applying as a candidate. Nominations will close on 1 February 2021.

Or, if not interested in a board position, new members would be welcomed in any of the committees.

Anyone interested in serving on either the board or a committee should contact:

Cindy Sweeney at bacsweeney@hotmail.com or call her at 410-757-3005.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMIT- TEE *Sue Miller*

WMANNCA is currently advertising for three \$1500 Graduate Navy Nurse Scholarships for Navy Nurses (active/non DUINS, reserve, former or retired). Recently NNCA has announced that they will be donating scholarship money to chapters from Carol Hubbard's estate. So now WMANNCA will receive enough of this money to offer four Graduate Nursing Scholarships for 2021. If you are currently enrolled or have been accepted to a Graduate Nursing Degree Program, please apply for one of our scholarships. Also spread the word to your Navy Nurse friends in graduate school that our four scholarships are available. You may download the guidelines and application form on the NNCA.org website.

BIRTHDAY CORNER

DECEMBER

- 1 Odette Willis
- 2 Carol A. Carney
- 5 Kay Beasley
- 5 Judy Logeman
- 6 Dottie Leonard
- 7 Maureen Holtzman
- 15 Nancy McCarthy
- 23 Sandy Cupples
- 30 Judy Brinckerhoff

JANUARY

- 1 Cindy Coyle
- 7 Christine Curto
- 26 Mary Ann Bogdanski

MEMBERSHIP COMMIT- TEE *Sue Miller*

The chapter has completed its membership drive for 2020-2021. We currently have 113 members. Recently we have lost two members: Marie Smith and Phyllis Elsass. If you have questions about your WMANNCA membership renewal, please contact Sue Miller at millersees@gmail.com.

QUILTS OF VALOR *Sue Miller*

All presentations of Quilts of Valor are on hold now due to the Covid 19 pandemic. WMANNCA has four members to receive quilts once the Covid 19 restrictions are lifted.

FEBRUARY

- 4 Margaret Ann Connors
- 11 Pat Dougal
- 16 Jacqueline Rychnovsky
- 21 Victoria Meyer



MARCH

- 6 Linda Cummings
- 7 Mary Ann Cronin
- 9 Lee Speckmann
- 11 Alice "Jean" Cave
- 12 Susan Protheroe
- 13 Marsha Hughes Rease
- 14 Ginny Beeson
- 21 Claire Pagliara-Miller
- 25 Maryanne Ibach
- 31 Marsha DeWeese

WARRIOR CANINE CONNECTION(WCC) in Boyds, MD

Pam Giza

WCC is a pioneering organization that utilizes its Mission Based Trauma Recovery model to help wounded warriors reconnect with life, their families, their communities, and each other. WCC has been honoring fallen and inspiring service members and veterans by giving their names to purposefully bred Golden and Labrador Retriever puppies entering the training program which takes up to 2 ½ years! Through this tradition, they have recognized veterans who have served from World War II to recent conflicts. Some lost their lives in battle, others were wounded in action, but all have made profound contributions to our country. Each puppy trained will bring awareness to the inspiring service of their namesake while helping to heal the invisible wounds of recovering warriors.

The NNCA has participated in the namesake program since 2017. Thus far, **five service dogs in training (SDiTs)** have been named after Navy Nurses: JACKIE (LT Jacqueline Jacquet Melvin), DARBY (CAPT Darby Reynolds), RUTH ANN (CAPT Ruth Ann Mason Wilson), MINDA (CAPT Geraldine Araminda Houp) and RUE (LT Ruth Martin Deus).

Do YOU have a NNCA member who you would like to nominate for WCC's namesake program? NNCA nominations may be submitted directly by the Chapters, the Oral History and Memorabilia Committees via this link: <http://form.jotform.us/form/50645691646160>.

Those NNCA members who live in the DC metro area have a unique opportunity to support the WCC's mission even though COVID restrictions have required changes to many volunteer opportunities such as puppy petting and socialization. ***There is ALWAYS a need for Puppy Parents***, those dedicated individuals who take puppies into their homes to help WCC staff and the veterans to socialize and train the SDiTs. If you are interested in learning more about the Puppy Parent program and Puppy Sitters (those who tend SDiTs for shorter periods of time) here is the link for more information:

<https://warriorcanineconnection.org/get-involved/become-a-puppy-parent/>

Have fun exploring this wonderful organization! We have been puppy sitters for 9 years and are blessed to have been a small part of this organization's development headed by husband and wife team Rick Yount and Molly Morelli. Please reach out if you have any questions at pggiza@gmail.com or contact them directly at 301-260-1111 or info@warriorcanineconnection.org.



ADVANCE CARE PLANNING: Are You Prepared?

M. Jane Markley

I'd like to think this article isn't necessary for our membership but, I know many people procrastinate, and with COVID-19 all around us, it may be worth reminding you, your family, and other loved ones of the importance of advance care planning. Yes, it is not new and is something with which we should be familiar but... do you have your advance directive (AD) completed? Have you identified your healthcare agent and had a good long talk with them about what is important to you and how you wish to live well for the rest of your life? Have you given your AD to your healthcare agent and healthcare team? If, you have already done this; Great! But when was the last time you reviewed it to ensure it is current? In other words,



have you taken control of your life and your future? If not, now is a great time to do so.

Remember, it is never too late; until it is. And

when you can no longer speak for yourself and tell people what kind of care you want; you will have lost control. As I remember, Navy nurses like to be in control. Without an AD, you will leave your loved ones and your healthcare team in the untenable position of having to make decisions for you without knowing your preferences for care. They will have to guess. This may result in the care you receive not being what you would have wanted and it leaves those who care for you uncertain as to what to do.

Some of you will say, old hat, I've done this but... what about the rest of your family and all those friends you have? Are you going to get

the ER call in the middle of the night and be asked what kind of care they would want? Would you know? Have you had the conversation with them about this? Don't leave yourself standing flat footed. Talk to them now! Find out what their basic beliefs and values are and encourage them to complete their directive, sooner rather than later. When they do, get a copy. What about those youngsters in your life: children, grandchildren, grand nieces and nephews, and others you know, as young as 18? They need a healthcare agent, at a minimum, who knows them well enough to help out if something goes wrong?

I remember, as a Navy nurse, all the proper prior planning we used to do, the drills, the preparation for things that might never happen. But we were prepared. Are you? Chances of needing an AD in this time of COVID-19 have gone up dramatically so care for yourself and for others. As I always say:

**Have the "conversation"
and give the "gift"!**

M. Jane Markley is a retired Navy nurse (1971-1998) who currently has a private practice in advance care planning.

She speaks locally, nationally and internationally, is an assistant professor at USUHS, and works one-on-one with individuals and their families to facilitate their plan development. She can be reached at :

jane@mjmarkley.com.



MEMORIES OF CHRISTMAS OVERSEAS OR DEPLOYED

PUERTO RICO 1974-76

Maggie Balacki

I've never been closer to co-workers as I was in Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico. Few went home for the holidays. We made our own holiday.

The season lasted quite a long time with many traditions. My fondest memory is caroling at night. They called it "asalto". At each house we sang glasses were filled and food was provided and then one or more members of that house would join the group. The group got

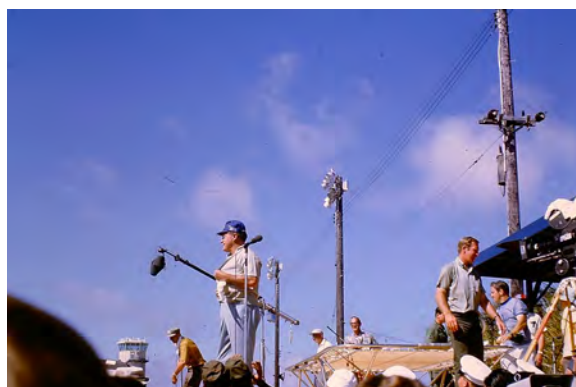
larger (and more off key) the longer we sang. We would finally end up singing under the Admiral's window. The second year the admiral had an inkling we were coming and had a band on call! For this northeasterner, it was a strange warm Christmas without snow but filled with beautiful poinsettia trees and wonderful friends. Feliz Navidad!



Nurses' Station, Guam

GUAM 1968 *Sue Miller*

It was Christmas a long way from home during a very stressful Vietnam war. Sharing the season with patients, nurses and corpsmen was our only blessing. The other big treat was taking patients to see Bob Hope's Christmas Program.



Bob Hope



Nurses dancing on stage at show.

USS REPOSE (AH-16), 1969

Ann Ross

We spent Christmas in **Vietnam** at our Northern Station just off the beach from Quang Tri. Like most Naval Hospitals, we decided to have a Ward Decorating Contest. Of course, being at sea meant decorations had to be made from whatever was at hand. Our Hospital Corpsmen proved to be a very talented group creating some real works of art including a life size angel made from sheets. Here are some of them.



Patient lockers decorated to look like a chimney



Santa and Sleigh

FLEET HOSPITAL 5, 1990-91

Christine Boltz

Every year during the fall, I take time to reflect on my deployment experience with Fleet Hospital 5 at the port of Al Jabail in **Saudia Arabia**. The Desert/Shield/Storm deployment of medical resources was the first major deployment of its type since the Vietnam conflict. Soon after my September birthday that year, I realized, I would miss all the fall holidays and then later in the year we found out our planned replacements would be setting up another Fleet Hospital nearby. Life was certainly going to be different for a bit. Like most Navy Nurses, you learn to adjust. Your tent mates become your new family. I lived in a GPM tent with 10 other LCDR's. My ward assignment was Assistant Division Officer for Ward 7. We did our best to celebrate birthdays, holidays and significant events.

I wrote to a former teacher who I exchanged Christmas cards with every year. At the time she was teaching 3rd grade. The entire class began writing letters for me to share with others. I actually wrote to three students and passed on letters to others I worked with and to patients. One early in the 1900-0700 shift I passed our letters to patients and several wrote letters to the students. My letters and those of my colleagues were bound in a booklet. When I returned from deployment to speak to the class, they presented me with the booklet, after an assembly with three 3rd grade classes

The following are excerpts of what I wrote to students regarding Christmas and other events:

(cont. on next page)

FLEET HOSPITAL 5 1990-91 (cont.)

- We are all enjoying the Christmas cards we receive; I hang mine up on a clothesline strung from the tent rafters.

- Yes, we celebrate Christmas around here, many friends and relatives have sent decorations and an assortment trees for our wards and tents. It won't be like home, but we will have chapel ser-



Berthing Tent Christmas Tree

VICES, a nice meal, Christmas caroling and a gift exchange. Since it is warm, we will have lots of group activities outdoors like a 5K run and basketball tournament.

- In our tent we shared Christmas boxes from home, cookies, candy and other things. We gave each other presents like cross stitch kits, notepads, writing paper, clothes pins and other similar items.



1 Marine Expeditionary Force Post Office

- I am off tomorrow for an exciting day of sorting mail at the post office nearby run by the Marines.

- Our hospital compound is on a large parking lot right off the Persian Gulf. It is on a slant and has a drainage system, so we didn't flood when it rained for several days.

- Rules change every day (24 January 1991), here where I am because of the war going on. Some days are fun, and others are not. We spent several days wearing our flak jackets and helmets everywhere. Flak jackets are lead weighted vests with Velcro closures, to protect from flying fragments of explosions.

- Mail, we are no longer allowed to mail and receive packages greater than 12 ounces because the system is too full of packages. We were told that DoD has more important things to move than mail.



Letters posted at Gwyn-Nor Elementary School, North Wales, PA

Christmas 1990 was certainly different; it was fun and memorable because of the people. Fleet Hospital 5 accepted patients soon after we arrived, however we were similar to a general hospital and in a training mode until the "war" started January 16, 1991. We had time to be creative when celebrating holidays and other significant events.

IN MEMORIAM

CDR Marie Lynch Smith NC USN RET

Marie was born in Wiles-Barre, PA on 16 September 1929. She graduated from Mercy Hospital School of Nursing in Wilkes-Barre, Saint Louis University (BSN) and University of Iowa (Master's in Nursing Administration). She practiced nursing at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in NYC and was an instructor at the Misericordia Hospital School of Nursing in Philadelphia, PA before joining the Navy in 1962. She was stationed at Great Lakes, Kodiak, and Philadelphia. She did a tour as a Recruiter and also taught at Hospital Corps School in San Diego in 1966-68 during the height of the Vietnam War. She retired from Bethesda in 1982 and remained in the D.C. area living in Leesburg, VA with her husband, Thomas until her death on 26 September 2020.



CAPT Phyllis Elsass, NC USN RET

Phyllis was born in Canton, Ohio on 28 August 1932. She graduated from Aultman Hospital School of Nursing in Canton and the University of Colorado (BSN & Masters Degrees). She was stationed at numerous duty stations including Guam, Yokosuka and Rota. She was Director of Nursing at Bethesda and also Commanding Officer at the Naval School of Health Sciences in Bethesda until her retirement in 1987. She stayed in the D.C. area until recently moving back to Ohio where she lived until her death on 13 November 2020.



The Washington Metro Area Navy Nurse Corps Association (WMANNCA) is a chapter of the national organization, the Navy Nurse Corps Association (NNCA). The chapter includes the states of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia (Northern), West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

As a chapter we support the mission of NNCA: To preserve the rich history and the traditions of the Navy Nurse Corps through networking and facilitating mentorship opportunities, advancing military nursing and advocating for the conservation of Nurse Corps memorabilia.

