



ABRAHAM LINCOLN CARRIER STRIKE GROUP PRESS RELEASE

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Decorated in Valor

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PHILIPPINE SEA – Hospital Corpsmen (HM) are the most decorated rate in the Navy as well as the most decorated occupational specialty in the military, with 22 Medals of Honor, 179 Navy Crosses since World War I, 31 Navy Distinguished Service Medals, 959 Silver Stars and more than 1,600 Bronze Star Medals with combat Vs for heroism.

HMs take pride in their history, which is the foundation of their initial education upon enlistment. The first chapter in their rating manual is naval hospital corpsman history. This is to illustrate the standards set before them so that they know to uphold that legacy.

HMs are essential to USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) because they take care of the health and welfare of the crew, as they are the primary medical care givers for Sailors and Marines while underway. They must be ready to respond to a myriad of medical emergencies, and ensure that everyone is fit for ship life and able to do their jobs efficiently and properly.

“We have to make sure everyone is able to get the care that they need while they’re on the ship,” said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Claudia Roby. “We conduct an annual physical health assessment (PHA) to make sure everyone is healthy and fit for duty. We recently just became the number one aircraft carrier in the fleet for medical readiness.”

Medical readiness is maintained through PHAs, which is a physical examination to identify symptoms of medical conditions, immunizations, laboratory studies, dental classification, and medical equipment. As of today, Abraham Lincoln's medical readiness is assessed as 97%.

"This is a really huge accomplishment," said Chief Hospital Corpsman Ryan Hevener. "With a crew this large, it's really hard to hit that number. I know throughout deployment the corpsmen here have seen over 2,000 Sailors come in for their PHAs, immunizations and labs just to get to that number, so I'm extremely proud of them."

Besides routine care and treatment, HMs must always be ready because an emergency can happen at any time. When a medical emergency is called over the 1MC, the ship's announcing system, they are the first response authority.

"When the bells go off at 2 a.m., our corpsmen don't have time to think," said Hevener. "They just respond. Everyone in the department will wake up and come to medical to get set up. Everybody just knows their role."

The most challenging part about being a HM is the initial fight or flight response when responding to emergencies.

"I think the most important role when you become a senior corpsman is to provide that mentorship to the junior guys," said Hevener. "We always say, for a medical emergency, the first pulse you should check is your own. You have to make sure you're under control before you can go and handle the situation."

HMs remain prepared and ready for emergencies through training during general quarters. Lt. Cmdr. Dana Flieger, the ship's nurse and medical training officer, creates simulated

casualties for the corpsmen to do on-scene treatment. After they've been treated, the patient is transported to the appropriate battle dressing station and taken care of.

"We always say complacency kills," said Hevener. "Understanding the importance of our role and constantly training for when something does happen ensures that we're able to respond correctly."

HMs are key assets to the mission both on and off the ship. Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Jessica Woods is a search and rescue medical technician (SMT), which is a special navy enlisted classification (NEC) within the hospital corpsman rate, with enroute care being their specialty. SMTs are trained in both overwater rescue and overland rescue.

"Our training is specific to flight care and advanced life support," said Woods. "We are a unique NEC that allows us to go through a similar pipeline as rescue swimmers to integrate with them as an aircrewman and medical technician."

Woods said it can be a challenge balancing her medical skills and certifications with her job as an aircrewman.

"This is one of those jobs where you get out what you put into it," said Woods. "We have the opportunity to not only be great medical technicians, but we also get to be proficient aircrewman with a plethora of certifications and credentials to support. The sky is the limit in this job."

HMs also have the ability to work in the dental field. Dental corpsmen are in charge of assisting providers with direct patient care. Their duties include taking X-rays, dental cleanings and conducting lab work such as making retainers and crowns. Dental corpsmen are also required to respond to medical emergencies.

Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Cathryn Floyd said that a lot of time and effort goes into patient care.

“There’s a lot that goes on behind the scenes that most patients don’t get to see, such as the setup and breakdown process, treatment planning and paperwork,” said Floyd.

While it is challenging to be an HM, the job can also be very rewarding.

“I enjoy being a dental corpsman because of the people I am able to help on a daily basis,” said Floyd. “Smiles are a big part of people’s self-esteem, and I love being a part of that transformation.”

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Jon Hallquist said he enjoys the work itself and the people he works with the most.

“It’s all about taking care of people and making sure they get better,” said Hallquist. “We see people come in sick, and then we see them leave feeling better. There’s joy in that.”

Being an HM can be a difficult job to shoulder, but it’s also one of the most essential and rewarding jobs in the Navy.

Abraham Lincoln’s medical and dental departments will be having a cake cutting ceremony with guest speakers in the forward mess decks on June 17 to celebrate the HMs 124th birthday. All hands are welcome to join the celebration.

