

Military Health System Communications Toolkit

American Pharmacists Month

Topics and Resources For Communicators



OCTOBER 2020						
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18	19	20 Pharmacy Technician Day	21	22	23	24
Pharmacy Week						
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October is American Pharmacists Month

- National Pharmacy Week is October 18-24, 2020
- National Pharmacy Technician Day is October 20, 2020

Overview

Key Messages

- Pharmacy is a critical component of care. Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians across the Department of Defense deliver the essential service of medication therapy to 9.6 million TRICARE beneficiaries worldwide.
- Military pharmacists and pharmacy technicians support the readiness mission prior to deployment and provide medication therapy in operational theaters around the world.
- Pharmacists have served alongside armed forces in the U.S. throughout the nation's history, but officially became a part of the military during the Revolutionary War. Six Navy pharmacy technicians have earned the Medal of Honor.
- Military pharmacy professionals exhibit flexibility and adaptability during crises, such as joint deployments in support of COVID-19, and adapting to operate drive through pharmacies during the pandemic. They also monitor and manage the DoD's supply of critical medications.
- The Department of Defense (DoD) pharmacy program innovates for safety and efficiency, to include the implementation of ScriptCenter pharmacies.



IMAGE: Pharmacy Services in the time of Corona Virus

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- Military Pharmacy by the Numbers
- Role of the Pharmacy Technician
- Pharmacy Technician Medals of Honor

Pharmacy Technician **MEDAL OF HONOR** Recipients

Did You Know?
Six Navy Pharmacist Mates have been awarded the Medal of Honor.

WWI
■ Pharmacist's Mate First Class **John H. Balch, USN**

WWII
■ Pharmacist's Mate Second Class **William D. Halyburton, Jr., USNR**
■ Pharmacist's Mate First Class **Francis J. Pierce, USN**
■ Pharmacist's Mate Second Class **George E. Wahlen, USN**
■ Pharmacist's Mate Third Class **Jack Williams, USN**
■ Pharmacist's Mate First Class **John H. Willis, USN**

MHS Military Health System
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Role of the **MILITARY PHARMACY TECHNICIAN**

Under the direction & supervision of a registered, licensed pharmacist, a pharmacy tech executes many tasks to safely deliver medication, to include:

- Accurately prepare and distribute patient medications
- Perform calculations
- Assist with prior authorization completion
- Collect accurate patient information
- Ensure compliance with regulatory requirements
- Assist in the management of investigational drug studies
- Prepare sterile medicines including those used to treat cancer
- Work directly with patients to obtain medication histories and reconciliation
- Use technology to help maintain accurate patient records, medication inventory, and orders ... and so much more

Pharmacy Technicians Across the Services
Army Pharmacy Specialist (68Q)
Navy Pharmacy Technician (NEC HM-8482)
Air Force Pharmacy Technician (4POX1)
U.S. Coast Guard Health Services Technician

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Military Pharmacy **BY THE NUMBERS**

Military, Civilian & Contractors

- **1,800+** pharmacists
- **3,900+** pharmacy technicians
- **43.7** million prescription filled at **658** military pharmacies in 2019

MHS Military Health System
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COVID-19 Response

Key Messages

Pharmacy staff across the Department of Defense have exhibited agility to deliver services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. They've done so by adapting practices at military pharmacies to provide drive through or curbside services – and they've also mobilized to help civilian communities by providing military support to the Federal Emergency Management Agency response to COVID-19.

Adaptations

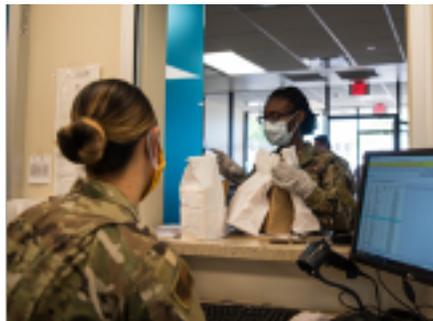
- Pharmacies across the Military Health System are adapting their prescription services to protect high-risk patients and pharmacy customers and staff from COVID-19 exposure.
- Responding to Defense Health Agency guidance on prescribing during COVID and state and local stay-at-home and social-distancing requirements, pharmacies are finding ways to get patients their prescriptions with minimal patient-staff interaction.

Deployments

- Military pharmacy staff mobilized to help civilian communities provide military support to the Federal Emergency Management Agency response to COVID-19.
- Pharmacists served aboard the USNS Comfort and USNS Mercy, which provided surge hospital beds and resources to regions in the U.S. during the COVID-19 pandemic.

■ Example: [Army Reservists Double Comfort's Pharmacy Capacity](#)

Graphics



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ARMY



Left to right, Sgt. Erik Arias, Capt. Sarah Steger, and Sgt. Nicholas Shepherd, members of the pharmacy team assigned to Urban Augmentation Medical Task Force 352-2, were deployed to Atlantic City Field Medical Station, Atlantic City, N.J., in support of the Department of Defense COVID-19 response. The team was a part of the U.S. Army Reserve unit comprised of 85 healthcare professionals and support personnel specifically created to respond in times of crisis. U.S. Northern Command, through U.S. Army North, is providing military support to the Federal Emergency Management Agency to help communities in need. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. ShaTyra Reed, 22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

IMAGE: [Hero Shot: Atlantic City Field Medical Station](#)



U.S. Army Lt. Col. John Falzone, a pharmacist aboard the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20), verifies a patient's prescription. 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. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Scott Bigley)

IMAGE: [Army Reserve Pharmacists Augment USNS Comfort](#)

AIR FORCE



PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. – Airman 1st Class Grant Alvarez, 21st Logistics Readiness Squadron (left) and Capt. Lorna Neeley, 21st Medical Group, assist customers at the new drive-thru pharmacy located at the Peterson base exchange parking lot April 8, 2020. Customers can drive up to a series of stations and have their prescription delivered to their vehicle. This new procedure is being used to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. (Air Force photo by Craig Denton)

IMAGE: [Peterson's medical dream team keeps base safe](#)

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U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Kayla Billings, 633rd Dental Squadron dental assistant, gathers prescriptions to take to a patient at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia, April 28, 2020. To help expedite the process of acquiring your prescriptions from the Satellite Pharmacy technicians, members from organizations such as pediatrics and the dental squadron help the pharmacy as runners, greeting patients outside of the facility to gather information and deliver prescriptions. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Marcus M. Bullock)

IMAGE: [Medical professionals join forces at the pharmacy](#)

NAVY



NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY SOUDA BAY, Greece (Aug. 20, 2020) Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Justin Preiser, pharmacy technician, places a label onto a pill bottle at the Naval Support Activity Souda Bay, Greece, Branch Health Clinic on August 20, 2020. NSA Souda Bay is an operational ashore base that enables U.S., allied, and partner nation forces to be where they are needed when they are needed to ensure security and stability in Europe, Africa, and Southwest Asia. (U.S. Navy photo by Joel Diller/Released)

IMAGE: [NSA Souda Bay Branch Health Clinic Operations](#)



LOS ANGELES (April 30, 2020) Lt. James Ofori, from Boston, verifies medication for patients in the pharmacy aboard the hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) April 30. Mercy deployed in support of the nation's COVID-19 response efforts, and serves as a referral hospital for non-COVID-19 patients admitted to shore-based hospitals. This allows shore base hospitals to focus their efforts on COVID-19 cases. One of the Department of Defense's missions is Defense Support of Civil Authorities. DoD is supporting the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the lead federal agency, as well as state, local and public health authorities in helping protect the health and safety of the American people. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class

IMAGE: [USNS Mercy Sailors Work in Pharmacy](#)

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Pharmacists have served alongside armed forces in the U.S. throughout the nation's history, but officially became a part of the military during the Revolutionary War.

In September 1775, Congress recognized the challenge of supplying the Continental army with medication by appointing a committee. The committee could not identify a new solution. On August 20, 1776, Congress appointed a Continental Druggist to manage and deliver medications. Dr. William Smith, apothecary, was elected to the position of Continental Druggist, becoming the de facto Chief Medical Purveyor of the United States Army.

Due to the challenges of the medical supply system during the Revolutionary War, the position of "Continental druggists" were introduced to improve the supply system. The Continental druggists were what is now known as pharmacy technicians.

Andrew Craigie became the first man to hold the rank of a commissioned pharmaceutical officer in an American army. He served in the Continental Army during the American Revolution. He was present at the Battle of Bunker Hill, June 17, 1775. When Congress reorganized the Medical Department of the Army in 1777, Craigie became the first Apothecary General.

On March 2, 1821, Congress passed an act downsizing the army and the position of American Apothecary General and his assistants was eliminated.

The need for pharmaceutical services was still clear, however, and on May 19, 1862 Congress passed a ruling adding up to six "medical storekeepers" who were skilled apothecaries or druggists to the Medical Department of the army.

On July 12, 1943, Congress passed an act creating a Pharmacy Corp within the Medical Department.



IMAGE: U.S. Army. Camp Hospital No.26 Pharmacy. Noyers, France.

[From the U.S. National Library of Medicine](#)

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Medals of Honor

Over the history of military pharmacy in the U.S., at least seven pharmacy professionals have been awarded the Medal of Honor for valor. A pharmacist and physician earned the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions during the Civil War, and six Navy pharmacy technicians (“Pharmacist’s Mates”) earned the Medal of Honor during the World Wars: one during World War I and five during World War II.



Civil War:

[Maj. Joseph Corson](#)

Date of Award: May 13, 1899

Conflict: Civil War

Branch: U.S. Army

Pharmacist and physician Joseph Kirby Corson received the Medal of Honor for his actions at Bristoe Station, VA on October 14, 1863. At the time Corson was serving as an assistant surgeon with the 6th Pennsylvania Infantry Reserves. He was awarded the medal on May 13, 1899, almost 36 years after the event.

Maj. Corson was a physician of considerably high repute, who obtained an exceptional military and medical record during the Civil War and further Army service. Corson answered President Lincoln’s first call for troops in the Civil War, completing a three-month term of duty and attaining the rank of sergeant. He returned to school afterward for further study but later joined the Sixth Regiment, Pennsylvania Reserve Corps, where he was immediately commissioned as an assistant surgeon. During his duty, Corson was present at battles including Gettysburg and Manassas Gap. He selflessly dedicated his military career to saving lives and healing the wounded – at one time risking his life to care for over 40 fellow service members stricken with cholera.

Citation: “With one companion returned in the face of the enemy’s heavy artillery fire and removed to a place of safety a severely wounded soldier who had been left behind as the regiment fell back.”

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WWI

[Pharmacists Mate First Class John Balch](#)

Date of Award: September 19, 1919

Conflict: World War I

Branch: U.S. Navy

On July 19, 1918, the exhausted and battered 6th Marines received orders to push the attack forward through a wheat field towards the Soissons-Chateau-Thierry highway. The battle was extremely fierce, with heavy artillery and machine-gun fire causing 1,300 casualties of the 2,400 men engaged. Pharmacist's Mate First Class John Balch voluntarily left the aid station to help the wounded, fearlessly exposing himself to heavy barrages of enemy fire, and managed to work all day and late into the night for 16 hours straight. His sustained courage under fire saved the lives of many men.

In addition to the Medal of Honor, Balch also received the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star Medal, the French Croix de Guerre, the Italian Crux de Guerre and the Portuguese Cruz de Guerra for his actions during World War I.

Citation: "Petty Officer Balch unhesitatingly and fearlessly exposed himself to terrific machine-gun and high-explosive fire to succor the wounded as they fell in the attack, leaving his dressing station voluntarily and keeping up the work all day and late into the night unceasingly for 16 hours.

WWII

Five Navy Pharmacy Technicians ("Pharmacist's Mates) earned the Medal of Honor during World War II.

- [Pharmacist Mate Second Class George Wahlen](#)
- [Pharmacists Mate First Class Francis Pierce Jr.](#)
- [Pharmacists Mate First Class John Willis](#)
- [Pharmacists Mate Second Class William Halyburton](#)
- [Pharmacists Mate Third Class Jack Williams](#)



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[Pharmacist Mate Second Class George Wahlen](#)

Date of Award: October 5, 1945

Conflict: World War II

Branch: U.S. Navy

On February 19, 1945, Pharmacist's Mate Second Class George Whalen's division landed on Iwo Jima. Seven days later, Wahlen received a serious wound during a fierce battle against Japanese forces, however he stayed on the battlefield to aid a wounded Marine and carry him back to the battle aid station. When an adjacent platoon suffered heavy casualties, he readily assisted its corpsmen as well. In all, he treated 14 wounded men in an area swept by constant fire before he finally returned to his own platoon.

On March 2, Wahlen was wounded again, but he refused evacuation. Instead he moved out with his company the following day to fight the Japanese forces again. The Japanese were stubborn and well-equipped, and casualties were heavy. Shot for the third time, Wahlen was no longer able to walk, but he resolutely crawled 50 yards to administer aid to a wounded Marine. Only after he saw to his patient did Wahlen finally agree to be evacuated to a battalion aid station.

Citation: "Stouthearted and indomitable, he persevered in his determined efforts as his unit waged fierce battle and, unable to walk after sustaining a third agonizing wound, resolutely crawled 50 yards to administer first aid to still another fallen fighter."

[Pharmacists Mate First Class Francis Pierce Jr.](#)

Date of Award: June 25, 1948

Conflict: World War II

Branch: U.S. Navy

On March 15, 1945, Pharmacist's Mate First Class Francis Pierce Jr.'s party was caught in a heavy fight with Japanese soldiers. A corpsman, two of eight stretcher-bearers and two Marines were seriously wounded. Because no safe way existed to evacuate the wounded, Pierce covered survivors by exposing himself, taking the enemy under fire with his Tommy gun. His action allowed the stretcher-bearers to move the wounded to a safer place. Pierce then deliberately drew the attention of a sniper and used the last of his ammunition to kill the Japanese. He lifted one of the casualties on his back and carried him across 200 feet of open terrain under intense rifle fire to the battle aid station.

The following day, however, his luck ran out. Leading a patrol to destroy a nest of snipers, his group encountered strong resistance. As Pierce aided a fallen Marine, a Japanese round hit his shoulder. Then a grenade exploded blowing shrapnel into his left leg and back. Refusing aid for himself, however, Pierce returned to treat the casualty.

Citation: "Completely fearless, completely devoted to the care of his patients, Petty Officer Pierce inspired the entire battalion."



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[Pharmacists Mate First Class John Willis](#)

Date of Award: February 28, 1945

Conflict: World War II

Branch: U.S. Navy

On February 28, 1945, during the fight for Hill 362A, many Marines were wounded from continuous artillery and mortar fire. Pharmacist's Mate First Class John Willis tried to render aid to as many casualties as possible, until he was wounded by shrapnel. His superiors ordered him back to the aid station, but instead he went back to his company because so many wounded were waiting for help.

Spotting a wounded Marine lying in a shell hole at the extreme front lines, he defied heavy mortar and sniper fire to reach him. He was busy administering blood plasma, when suddenly a grenade landed in the crater. Willis calmly but quickly picked it up and threw it out of the shell hole. He did the same to seven other grenades as he continued working on his patient. The last exploded in his hand and killed him immediately.

Citation: "Through his great personal valor in saving others at the sacrifice of his own life, he inspired his companions, although terrifically outnumbered, to launch a fiercely determined attack and repulse the enemy force."

[Pharmacists Mate Second Class William Halyburton](#)

Date of Award: Unknown

Conflict: World War II

Branch: U.S. Navy

On May 10, 1945, the 1st Marine Division moved out to attack Awacha Draw, a strategically important ravine in Okinawa, Japan. Amidst the attack, Pharmacist's Mate Second Class William Halyburton's rushed across the draw, exposing himself to intense mortar, machine-gun and sniper fire to help the wounded. Halyburton shielded a badly wounded patient with his body, thereby placing himself in the line of fire. Although the area around him as swept with shrapnel and bullets, Halyburton persevered until he suffered mortal wounds.

Citation: "Alert, determined, and completely unselfish in his concern for the helpless Marine, he persevered in his efforts until he himself sustained mortal wounds and collapsed, heroically sacrificing himself that his comrade might live."

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[Pharmacists Mate Third Class Jack Williams](#)

Date of Award: May 14, 1970

Conflict: World War II

Branch: U.S. Navy

Pharmacist's Mate Third Class Jack Williams was assigned to the 5th Marine Division in the Iwo Jima Campaign in the Pacific. On March 3, 1945, his division prepared to attack the enemy on Hill 362B. The terrain was as foreboding as the enemy, which held an extremely strong position at the top of a hill. Progress was slow because the routes had to be cleared of mines and new roads had to be constructed for tanks to support the attack. The company met heavy resistance from the enemy and there were many casualties.

Williams spotted a Marine lying beyond the front lines. Under intense enemy fire, he moved forward to the man and dragged him into a shallow depression. Using his body to shield his wounded patient from continuous fire, he gave first aid until enemy rounds hit him in the stomach and groin.

Disregarding his pain and urgent need for medical aid, he continued to search for other casualties and managed to make his way back to the aid station, until he was struck down by a Japanese sniper's bullet. He later died of severe internal injuries.

Citation: "By his courageous determination, unwavering fortitude, and valiant devotion to duty, Petty Officer Williams served as an aspiring example of heroism."

