

Doreen Rekoski, Blood Donor Recruiter
Blood Donor Center, Naval Medical Center San Diego

Coast Guard comes to the rescue of Naval Medical Center San Diego



Summer blood drive collections were sluggish at Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCS). The blood donor center staff wondered aloud where they would find more donors to provide the needed blood. Then an e-mail request arrived.

“We would like to coordinate a blood drive,” came the offer from Christopher Tadlock, a Health Services Technician Chief (HSC), and member of the medical department aboard *USCGC Mellon* — *WHEC 717*, a *High*

Endurance Coast Guard cutter (CGC) based out of Seattle, Washington.

With their ship docked in San Diego for training, Commanding Officer, Capt. Michael Hamel, asked Tadlock to coordinate a blood drive with the Naval Blood Donor Center over the weekend. The *Mellon* had conducted a blood drive several years earlier with NMCS during a similar training evolution.

The call went out from Tadlock to the crew. Twenty-seven *Mellon* crew members joined a previously scheduled blood drive with the Marine recruits at **Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD)** San Diego. Taking time from their break, the Coast Guard and the Marines—dark blues mingling with combat greens—gave 88 units of blood. This joint drive - and the unexpected gift of the Coast Guard - met the needs of the donor center for NMCS and, more importantly, helped save lives.

For Food Service Specialist Senior Chief Eric Grantham, the joint blood drive was a homecoming of sorts. Grantham spent four years in the Marine Corps where he attended boot camp at MCRD in 1986 and served in the 1st Battalion, Charlie Company, before switching to the Coast Guard.

“I am glad to have this opportunity [to give blood]. I feel it is important to support our brothers and sisters in arms over there,” said Grantham. “I want to give something back to the soldiers and Marines – even some of our fellow Coast Guard members deployed there.”

Tadlock, who first reached out to the Naval donor center, one of 22 blood donor centers within the Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP), understands the importance of the ASBP mission.

“I am trying to establish a legacy for the *CGC Mellon* as well as all Coast Guard Cutters that frequently visit San Diego for training or liberty port calls,” said Tadlock. “We want to assist our fellow troops. We are proud of what they are doing for us and even prouder to provide whatever support we can to bring them home safe.”

The Armed Services Blood Program thanks HSC Tadlock, and the CGC Mellon under Commanding Officer Capt. Hamel and also thanks the Marines at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego!!

To find out more about the Armed Services Blood Program and where you can donate visit us online: [Where To Give](#).

The Blood Donor Center (BDC) at Naval Medical Center San Diego is one of 22 BDCs that support the Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP) and Navy Blood Program by providing blood and blood components for use by the troops and in NMCS D and other military medical treatment facilities. This blood, donated by the volunteer donors within the military community saves lives, not only of our troops but of those children and adults with life threatening illnesses such as leukemia, aplastic anemia, cancer, and other diseases of the blood, along with many others.