

Holloman celebrates Nurses Week

Lifting spirits and touching lives

by Airman 1st Class Vanessa LaBoy
49th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

National Nurses Week is this week honoring 2.7 million nurses nationwide and 15 here at Holloman. The purpose of National Nurses Week is to raise awareness of the value of nursing and help educate the public about the role nurses play in meeting the health care needs of the American people.

"Nurses have always been and will always be at the patients' side," said Capt. Dan Roper medical readiness, education and training element chief.

It's been said nursing is an art and a science, an integrated concept of caring. Air Force nursing is a way of life and that's most endearing.

The emergency room nurse, clinic nurse or inpatient nurse care for airmen and their loved ones in times of illness or injury, Roper said. In the Air Force, medical technicians and nurses work together as a team to give the best possible care.

"The most important part of being a nurse is keeping the military family healthy," said 1st Lt. Marisa Avalos, 49th Medical Group Family Practice clinical nurse. "We are responsible for community health and ensuring our military is healthy and ready for war."

job than his or her civilian counterpart.

"The military nurse serves in challenging situations," Roper said. "As a combat flight nurse, I saw dedication from the front line. Nurses, separated from their own families, cared for combat casualties without thought for themselves. They flew in and out of places where hostile fire was an everyday occurrence. They cared for someone's parent, child, or sibling as if they were their own family. I have never been so proud to be a nurse."

An Air Force Nurse is a "special" person with multi-missions to accomplish; there's patient care and teaching, research and mobility, All important, all requiring action and stability.

Many of Holloman's nurses are special because they play a non-traditional role in airmen's healthcare. A public health nurse, health care integration nurse and a chief nurse executive care for airmen everyday, yet airmen may never meet them.

"My job mainly consists of overseeing nursing practice and career

development," 49th Medical Group Chief Nurse Executive Lt. Col. Kathleen Dune-Cane said. "I follow nurses career progression and ensure they are competent to do their job."

In the last seven years, with the reorganization of Air Force Medical Service, nurses have had even more opportunities to step out of the traditional role and step into positions such as squadron and group commanders.

During nurses week the nurses and medical technicians celebrate together, for they are a cohesive team. It is the collective contribution of both nurses and medical technicians that ensure quality care for all of our patients, said Col June T. Gavron, 49th Medical Group Commander.

"Nurses are one of five medical corps in the Air Force Medical Service, and have embraced the role as squadron and medical group commanders," said Gavron.

Potential, initiative and strength are stressed, for future leaders are needed to dream, to plan, to lead the way.

"Nurses are a vital link in health care delivery in the United States," Gavron said. "With the shortage, patients are leaving hospitals often less prepared for their recovery period. The recognition nurses receive during this week is not only to celebrate their dedication but to educate the public on the many contributions they make to quality health care."

"I was a nurse for one year in the civilian sector before I joined the Air Force," Dunn-Cane said. "The camaraderie and opportunities Air Force nurse's have can't be matched in the civilian world. Hopefully, while nurses are being recognized we can also inspire people to follow in our footsteps."

Nurses serve with pride and integrity... they are positive and strong, proficient and respected.

(Editors note: Excerpts from The Air Force Nurse Officer by Maj. Brenda Davidson were used in this article.)



Photos by Airman 1st Class Vanessa LaBoy

Kay Aldrich measures the fluids in an IV bag.



Capt. Dan Roper and 1st Lt. Amy Crow inspect their MA-1 equipment to make sure the machine will give oxygen to patients while they are being transferred to receive treatment.



Airman 1st Class Ricky Wilson performs a throat culture on Airman 1st Class Jubert Tenorio.



Maj. Theresa Rodriguez and 1st Lt. Marisa Avalos inspect a crash cart to make sure it is fully equipped with all necessary items.



Shirley Neyhart, R.N., a 50 year veteran of nursing, takes the blood pressure of a fellow nurse, Diana Coolidge.