Force's Focus

Official Newsletter of the Hospital Corps
Volume 1, Issue 3 - November 2026

Sailor Spotlight

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Jajuan Hernandez
Hotel Company, 2d Marine Raider Battalion



HM2 Jajuan Hernandez, a native of Mobile, Alabama, serves as a Fleet Marine Force Hospital Corpsman with Hotel Company, 2d Marine Raider Battalion, at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. He was most recently deployed with Operation Inherent Resolve and Operation Epic Fury, returning home in July 2026.

Operating in an austere location with no higher-level medical providers, he engineered a mobile medical capability and instructed Tactical Combat Casualty Care training for his fellow Marines and host-nation partners.

On March 12, 2026, an enemy one-way unmanned aerial vehicle struck within 25 meters of his position. HM2 Hernandez moved into the burning berthing to locate French soldiers, and with his Marine teammates, extricated and treated seven critically wounded men. As the sole U.S. Corpsman and Medic on the ground, he triaged all casualties, treating the most urgent himself while directing care for the others, all while additional strikes fell nearby.

He coordinated the evacuation of all casualties to the nearest host-nation hospital and accompanied the most critical patient. With minimal tools and telemedicine guidance, he administered fresh whole blood by the intraosseous route, performed a needle decompression, and executed a blunt thoracostomy en route. Despite his efforts, that patient ultimately succumbed to his injuries. He conducted a thorough handover, then pivoted to assist hospital staff with the remaining six casualties. The hospital's lead surgeon credited his triage, on-site treatment, and rapid evacuation with saving those soldiers' lives.

Scan this QR code for instructions on requesting a Navy Medicine Retirement Letter. Website is CAC-enabled .

Team,

Recently, I had the honor of celebrating the 251st Navy Birthday at the Navy Birthday Ball in Camp Lejeune. Standing alongside the Sailors and Marines present, I was profoundly reminded of the weight of our shared history. For two and a half centuries, the U.S. Navy has stood as a global force for good. As hospital corpsmen, we have been there for 128 of those years - carrying the unique burden and honor of preserving the lives of those who go into harm's way.

But a ready Navy and a lethal Hospital Corps don't run on platforms, clinics, or ships alone - they run on "People" - the first of my five organizational priorities. We cannot achieve precision, pride, perseverance, or purpose if we don't first take care of our own. Taking care of our people means being honest about the challenges we face.

I recently sat down for the latest episode of the Navy Medicine Stories Podcast to have a candid conversation about the real issues affecting our deckplates: stress, burnout, and emotional resiliency. If you are struggling, feeling overwhelmed, or experiencing burnout, I want you to hear this directly from me: it is a sign of strength, not weakness, to raise your hand and ask for support. You can listen to the podcast by scanning the QR code below.

Resiliency is not about silently enduring exhaustion; it is about building the personal and professional support networks that allow us to bounce back stronger. Look out for the Shipmate to your left and your right. As leaders - from our newest HR to our seasoned HMCs - we must foster environments where our people feel valued, heard, and supported.

Keep charging, and look out for one another.

FORCM Jerry Cantorna
Force Master Chief, Navy Medicine
Director of the Hospital Corps

Podcast QR Code



History & Heritage

On the morning of Sept. 15, 1944, the 1st Marine Division stormed the shores of Peleliu in the Central Pacific. Among them was 19-year-old Pharmacist's Mate Third Class Eleuterio "Joe" Marquez, a Los Angeles native.

The island of Peleliu is just 13 square miles, but in World War II it was strategically critical for retaking the Philippines. The assault was brutal: half the first wave became casualties, with corpsmen targeted relentlessly by snipers. Within a month, 59 corpsmen lost their lives.

Despite terrifying artillery and mortar fire, Marquez established a battalion aid station, dressing wounds, administering plasma, and evacuating casualties. On Oct.13, while his unit rested on the heavily defended "Bloody Nose Ridge," an attack struck. Shrapnel tore through Marquez's legs.

Ignoring his own severe injuries, Marquez crawled across the rough terrain as cries of "Corpsman!" echoed in the dark. Finding fellow corpsman Ken Blewitt gravely wounded, Marquez requested a flare to illuminate Blewitt's veins and start a lifesaving plasma drip. As he tended to the injured, a voice in the dark asked, "I'm a corpsman. Can I help?" Marquez said "yes," and together they treated every casualty.

When relief arrived at daybreak, Marquez learned something chilling: no other corpsmen were in the area. His mysterious assistant remained an unexplained miracle. Refusing treatment until every patient was evacuated, Marquez exemplified selflessness.

In 1945, Marquez received the Navy Cross, becoming the first Mexican-American hospital corpsman so honored. After the war, he worked as a medical technologist, raised a family, and lived to age 90 before being laid to rest at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery.

Written by:
Andre Sobocinski, BUMED Historian



Community Corner

Fleet Marine Force Special Operations Independent Duty Corpsman (L02A)

The FMF SOIDC are unequivocally at the cutting edge of combat medicine, continuing the legacy of the most decorated rate in the Navy. Our mission is to serve as the premier Special Operations Medical provider for the Fleet Marine Force and Special Operations. We operate in austere and hostile environments, delivering advanced medical care and combat medicine expertise where it is needed most; the Point of Injury. Functioning as a force multiplier for U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), deploying behind enemy lines and integrating as team members within Marine Reconnaissance, Marine Raider and USSOCOM specialized units.

Pipeline:

- Hospital Corpsman Basic School & Field Medical Training Battalion
- Ground Reconnaissance Course
- Amphibious Reconnaissance Course
- U.S. Army Airbourne Course
- U.S. Marine Combatant River Course
- Special Operations Combat Medic
- Special Operations Independent Duty Corpsman

Pay and Bonuses:

- Basic Airborne/Freefall Pay- $150-$225
- Dive Pay- $215
- Demolitions Pay- $150
- L02A Special Duty Assignment Pay- $450-$750
- Total Special Pay- $665-$1040
- ZONE A (21 months-6years) $60,000
- ZONE B (6-10 years) $90,000
- ZONE C (10-14 years) $100,000

Physical Requirements:

- 500yd Swim (Combat Side Stroke or Breaststroke) - 12:30
- Pushups (2mins) - 50
- Sit-ups (2mins) - 50
- Pull-ups - 10
- 1.5 Mile Run - 10:30

Pipeline Certificates:

- National Registry Paramedic
- Advanced Cardiac Life Support
- Tactical Combat Casualty Care-Instructor
- Special Operations-Advanced Tactical Paramedic (SO-ATP)
- SCUBA Diving International Advanced SCUBA Diver
- Pediatric Education for Prehospital Professionals Certification
- Associate's degree in health & science through USUHS
- 100+ college credits toward degree at USUHS towards bachelor's degree.

Other Requirements:

- No NJP, court-martials, or serious civil convictions within the past 18 months (waiverable)
- Be 28 years or younger with normal color perception (waiverable to age 32)
- Be current with IMR status upon transfer to school
- Maintain a favorable background check/ SECRET security clearance eligibility
- ASVAB Requirements: AR/WK=100
- Obligate service as required for C-school, minimum 36 months
- Recommended for Retention of Service
- Maintain Worldwide Assignability

Admin and Medical:

- Complete Special Operations Physical, PST, Hyperbaric Chamber Pressure Test and L02A Interview
- E-4 and below must submit their most recent performance evaluation with 45 days of school selection
- MPM 1306-983 Screening form must be signed by a qualified FMF SOIDC. If you do not have access to one, contact your detailer and career counselor
- Complete Operations Suitability Screening
- Signed page 13 with Statement of Understanding and Pregnancy acknowledgement

"C" School Application packages can be submitted online via MyNavyAssignment or by submitting a package via ASKMNCC.FCT2NAVY.MIL Attention to PERS 407 C-Schools.

Product made by the BUMED Public Affairs and Outreach Office
For questions, comments, or requests to recognize an outstanding Sailor or team, please direct all queries to:
usn.ncr.bumedfchva.list.bumed---pao@health.mil