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# Pacific Partnership 2016

## Humanitarian Mission aboard the USNS Mercy

By: Michele Reynolds UCSD CRNA

I spent the first 2 weeks of August as a volunteer on the hospital ship USNS Mercy in Malaysia. I am a CRNA at UCSD and was offered this opportunity through the Advanced Practice Nursing Council. I was part of the Pacific Partnership 2016 and UCSD's liaison to this is Dr. Irvin Silverstein of the Dental School.

The Mercy personnel worked alongside their local counterparts in Timor-Leste, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia. They shared their knowledge and training in disaster response preparedness through subject matter expert exchanges, workshops, and exercises. The focus areas were humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, medical care, and civil engineering. The theme was "Women, Peace and Security". I was able to attend

a seminar at the Islamic University in Kuantan, Malaysia, alongside Malaysian health care providers, students and physicians. Two lectures that were particularly memorable discussed the role of women in disaster or peacekeeping missions, and Sharia law's treatment of women.

Malaysian healthcare providers toured the Mercy and I was able to go to the local hospital and teamed-up with their Anesthetist. We performed a couple of surgeries on the Mercy with local surgeons assisting. The Malaysian people were incredibly warm and welcoming toward us even though this was the first time the Mercy had been to Malaysia.

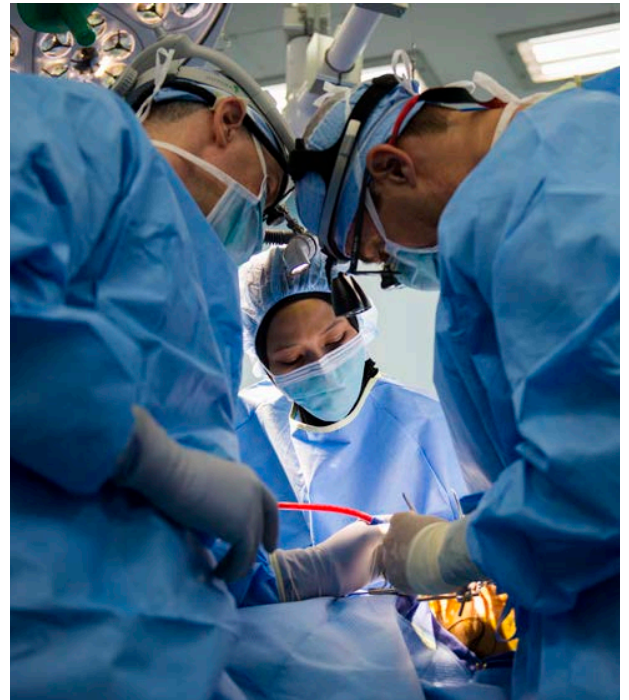
I was impressed that the quality of healthcare offered in Malaysia was apparently equivalent to the care we provide at UCSD; the



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has been a Nurse Anesthetist at UCSD for over 16 years. She got her Anesthesia training at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. She earned her Master of Science in Nursing from the University of Texas in Austin where she also worked in critical care and taught in the School of Nursing. She got her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.





equipment and technology we were using was the same (but they did not use disposable wrapping, gowns or masks).

The Mercy included many nations participating in this mission including military and civilian personnel from Australia, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, and Singapore.

So it was fun to get to know these wonderful people from all over the world.

I stayed in officers berthing but still the space was tight and there was very little privacy. I appreciated being able to go up to the flight deck. There were 1200 sailors aboard the Mercy and most of them were on the mission from May through

September. Knowing the personal sacrifices they made helped me appreciate how much our military does for us. One sailor had tears in his eyes as he told me about his one year old triplets.

Going on a humanitarian mission on a hospital ship was something I have wanted to do since childhood. I am grateful for the wonderful opportunity to participate through the support from UC San Diego Health and the Department of Anesthesia and the UCSD Pre-Dental Society NGO of the Medical School

