

## A 40-Year-Old Goal

Arlan Fuhr, DC

Sometimes it takes awhile to accomplish things dear to your heart. It was 1962 and I had just graduated from chiropractic college; immediately upon graduation, I was called to active duty in the Navy. When I arrived in the Navy as an enlisted man, it was a big shock. I was not able to practice my profession. I was not considered a doctor and was assigned to the U.S.S. Alacrity MSO 520 as a second-class petty officer legal yeoman.

Now, when the crew on the ship found out I was a chiropractor, I soon became the unofficial chiropractor for Mine Division 45. I was miffed that I was unable, in an official capacity, to treat the men of my division. It also bugged me that I could not park in the doctors' parking lot.

One night the whole division went on liberty. When we returned from liberty our ships were nowhere to be found. Now, when a ship is your home and it is not there when you return from liberty, it will unsettle even the toughest sailor. We went to operations and were told to find a bunk for the night, and that we would rendezvous with our ships in the morning.

The next morning we were loaded into whale boats, taken out to sea and deposited on our ships, which were in formation waiting for the rest of the crew. We headed south with no real idea of what we were facing. The next night I was on watch on the bridge and the weather became very rough. Just as the captain got out of the captain's chair to get a cup of coffee, the ship rolled and he went flying across the bridge. We caught him, helped him to his feet and I heard him say in a low tone of voice, "I hurt my back." I helped him to his stateroom and as we closed the door, he looked up at me and said, "Fuhr, aren't you a chiropractor?" I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "I hurt my back. Do what you do to get me back on the bridge, as we have an important mission." This was years before Activator, so I put him on his side in his rack, prayed, and gave him the best lumbar roll I could on a pitching and rolling ship. I remember him getting up, swearing and then slapping me on the back, saying that his pain was already better. He then proceeded to walk over to his wall safe, open it and take out our mission orders. He told me we were to head for Cuba, to take mines out of Guantánamo Bay so as to clear the way for an aircraft carrier to get out. He was on the bridge in full command the next morning as we cleared the harbor of mines.

For the past 30 years, I have never forgotten that our servicemen and women and veterans have needed chiropractic care. I have testified in Congress. I have helped get legislators to cosponsor our military bills. I have talked to our senators and representatives each year that I have been in practice.

In Phoenix, we have the Carl T. Hayden Veterans Affairs Medical Center and Clinics. It is a very large regional center with almost 3,000 employees, and an untold number of patients on the rolls. I pass by every day on my way to work. One day, I thought, "Wouldn't it be great if we could serve these veterans with chiropractic care?"

Then it was announced that Phoenix was one of the sites selected to offer chiropractic care for our veterans. I was so excited that I decided to send in my résumé. After about four months, I received a call to come in for an interview. The MD who interviewed me said my résumé was very good, and

that I had made the final cut. He asked me why I wanted to be involved and I said it was a passion of mine to see that our military and veterans receive chiropractic care. He said, "I like your attitude." Then he asked if I had any suggestions. I said that maybe we could credential another doctor or two; that way, the program would never be short a doctor. He said he liked that idea, and told me that he would get back to me. About a month later, I got a call from the director of the ambulatory care department, and he told me that I had been selected and that we needed to start the credentialing process. I was elated, but how was I going to have the time? Well, as of this month, the credentialing process for three chiropractic physicians has been completed, and I gave the first chiropractic adjustment to a deserving veteran on August 1, 2005. And by the way, I just picked up my sticker to park in the doctors' parking lot.

*Arlan Fuhr, DC*  
*Phoenix, Arizona*  
[awfuhr@aol.com](mailto:awfuhr@aol.com)

SEPTEMBER 2005