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Learning to Care for Those in Harm's Way



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Photo by MC2 Brittney Cannady

On the cover

The Board of Regents held their quarterly meeting at the Uniformed Services University's Val G. Hemming Simulation Center, which included a tour of the facility. Read more about their visit to the SimCenter on page 7.

USU hosts active shooter exercise

By Christine Creenan-Jones, editor



Photo by Tech. Sgt. David Speicher

Military installations around the world are sponsoring Active Shooter Exercises to prepare employees for an active shooter situation. The Naval Support Activity Bethesda will host its Active Shooter Exercise at the Uniformed Services University, Feb. 27.

Mass shootings – like the tragedies at Columbine, Virginia Tech and Sandy Hook – have necessitated that schools, shopping malls, military bases and other organizations have a plan in place in case of such an event. As a result, the Naval Support Activity Bethesda is hosting an Active Shooter Exercise that will culminate at the Uniformed Services University, Feb. 27.

The training, which is part of the annual Naval Installations Command's Citadel Shield Anti-Terrorism Exercise, began with classroom instruction at USU that took place Feb. 10 through Feb. 21. In preparation for the exercise, security forces from NSAB taught USU personnel the best practices for responding to an active shooter scenario.

These benchmarks were assessed through an online quiz and will be evaluated once again during the active shooter simulation later this month. As noted in the preliminary training, USU personnel are expected to find cover and shelter-in-place once NSAB's Giant Voice – the base-wide

emergency alert system – announces the start of the exercise. The university will also use the event to test its Everbridge emergency notification system, which sends both telephonic and electronic (e-mail and text) emergency notifications to USU personnel.

Although the exact time of the scenario isn't being disclosed to USU personnel, the shelter-in-place drill will last approximately 15 minutes. During this time, evaluators will survey the campus to ensure USU personnel are responding appropriately and safely.

"Nobody should take the training lightly because it has the potential to save lives. Furthermore, components of this training are exportable to many work and social environments, so it's good knowledge to have from a safety standpoint, not just at USU but literally anywhere you go," said James Schwartz, deputy of Operations, Communications and Strategic Planning for the Department of Military and Emergency Medicine at USU.

Kortepeter named new research dean

By Master Sgt. Oshawn Jefferson, deputy chief of Media Affairs

Army Col. (Dr.) Mark Kortepeter will be the new associate dean for research at the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine, effective, Feb. 24. The announcement was made Jan. 28 by Dr. Arthur Kellermann, dean of the medical school at the Uniformed Services University.

“Doctor Kortepeter’s proven ability at building bridges for the university with external partners, assessing internal research processes, and clearing roadblocks to research success will serve us well,” said Kellermann.

Kortepeter is following the trail blazed by his predecessor, Army Col. (Dr.) Kent Kester, who is retiring from the U.S. Army after more than 24 years of service.

The newly-selected associate dean is board certified in infectious diseases and preventive medicine and is an associate professor of preventive medicine and medicine. Furthermore, Kortepeter led the Infectious Disease Clinical Research Program at USU for the last-three-and-a-half years. During that time, he solidified partnerships with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health as well as a variety of military research commands, military hospital commands and external academic organizations around the world.

“He brings a blend of research, leadership and operational experience to the job,” said Kellermann. “Going forward, he will work closely with me to identify and develop opportunities to leverage USU’s institutional strengths and develop new sources of support.”

Prior to his work at the IDCRP, Kortepeter served in a number of key roles in biodefense at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases, including deputy chief of the Virology Division, chief of the medical division and

deputy commander. He had operational tours as chief of preventive medicine for U.S. forces in the stabilization force in Bosnia in 1997, and prepared medical assets in theater for bioweapon attacks as a member of the Special Medical Response Team for Investigational New Drugs during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Kortepeter also serves as the acting consultant for infectious disease and biodefense consultant for the Army Surgeon General, as well as a subject matter expert on the NATO BioMedical Advisory Committee.

“I am pleased that we were able to secure such a seasoned and accomplished investigator to fill this important role,” said Kellermann. “Doctor Kortepeter’s appointment reflects our strong and ongoing commitment to the value of research at USU, and my personal confidence in all of you.”

Kortepeter received his bachelor’s degree from Harvard College, his medical degree from New Jersey Medical School, and his master’s in public health from Harvard School of Public Health.

“I’m looking forward to doing what I can to build bridges with external partners, improve efficiency of internal processes, and to facilitate great research,” said Kortepeter.



Army Col. (Dr.) Mark Kortepeter

HPRC shares ways to stay heart healthy

By MC2 Brittny Cannady, writer

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States.

In an effort to combat this preventable disease, the Human Performance Resource Center at the Uniformed Services University is sharing easy-to-follow tips that promote healthy living during these cold winter months.

“It’s very easy to cozy up next to the fire instead of going out-

side for exercise,” said Stephanie Van Arsdale, an educational specialist at HPRC. “But cold weather can be invigorating and energizing. Just make sure you wear the appropriate attire and you’re hydrated.”

Although exercise is important year round, Van Arsdale understands that for many people, physical activity slows down or even stops during the winter

months.

“Despite our best effort, sometimes it’s just harder to exercise during winter so watching portion sizes is even more important to avoid unwanted weight gain,” she said. “You can take advantage of the time spent indoors to make fiber rich soup with beans, veggies and whole grains which help boost serotonin levels.”

USU faculty member follows dreams, pursues career in nursing

By Christine Creenan-Jones, editor

Dr. Sandra Bibb has manifold responsibilities at the Uniformed Services University. She conducts research, teaches several courses and mentors other professors as the university's first associate dean for Faculty Affairs in the Daniel K. Inouye Graduate School of Nursing.

Furthermore, her prolific academic career at USU comes on the heels of an equally impressive military career through which she has achieved several pioneering successes. Among them, Bibb was the first nurse to lead two interdisciplinary clinics in San Diego and Gaeta, Italy before retiring as a U.S. Navy captain in 2004.

Despite these groundbreaking achievements, Bibb has remained humble. In her eyes, she is simply following an early calling. As a young girl, Bibb knew that nursing was a good fit because she wanted to help people during their times of need. Still, the pursuit toward a career in nursing was difficult.

Bibb comes from modest roots – her father supported a family of six on a laborer's meager wages – and she attended segregated schools in Mobile, Ala., where racial disparity pervaded nearly every facet of southern life.

"Childhood wasn't an easy time for me. My mother was ill, so a lot of the parental responsibilities for my younger brother fell on me. Still, I did well aca-

demically because both of my parents stressed the importance of school and a strong work ethic as a means for a better future," said Bibb.

She heeded their advice. Bibb graduated from high school at 16 years old and was awarded a scholarship to attend a Daughters of Charity Nursing School. Toward the end of the program, one of her classmates encouraged Bibb to attend an information session hosted by the U.S. Navy.

It didn't take long for Bibb to become enthralled with the possibilities of military life. She was commissioned after completing her nursing program and embarked on a whirlwind Navy career that lasted 30 years. During that time, she earned bachelor, master and doctoral degrees from the University of San Diego, served as a staff nurse on orthopedic and intensive care units and helped establish the Navy's first Population Health Department.

"Both my father and uncle served in the Navy during a time when African Americans could only hold certain job ratings, so my achievements were a big deal to them," said Bibb. "But my pride lies in the fact that I was able to make a difference in a career field that I love."

Her passion continues to burn strong at USU. She accepted a position as an assistant professor in the GSN during the same



Courtesy photo

Dr. Sandra Bibb

month she retired from the Navy and quickly rose through the university's leadership ranks.

"USU is a wonderful place because there is no other university in the world with our expertise. Many of our faculty members have extensive backgrounds in both military and federal healthcare. This benefits our students in innumerable ways because the vast majority of them will assume leadership roles within the Military Health System upon graduating from USU," she said. "They can learn from our experiences and become better officers and nurses. I'm honored to be a part of this work."

Attention all USU faculty

The Faculty Senate is currently seeking nominations for the 2014 Faculty Senate president-elect, secretary/treasurer, and senators.

Interested faculty are encouraged to contact Dr. Susanne Gibbons, chair of the Faculty Senate's Nominations and Elections Committee, via e-mail at susanne.gibbons@usuhs.edu for a candidate form.

MEIR course provides unique training

By Christine Creenan-Jones, editor

Experts at the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute conduct world-class research to mitigate the harmful effects of radiation disasters. They also share their knowledge with health care leaders at federal agencies by offering a Medical Effects of Ionizing Radiation course.

The MEIR course was developed in 1973 and has been used as a platform for translating AFRRI's compelling research into practice during emergencies like the 2011 earthquake in Japan that led to a series of meltdowns at the Fukushima Dai-Ichi nuclear power plant.

Other crises over the past several decades and the use of radiation as a weapon by terrorists have validated the need for places like AFRRI and courses like MEIR, which is taught approximately 24 times a year to more than 1000 students in physical and digital classrooms around the world.

"The MEIR course helps safeguard world health and security because it provides a foundation for understanding the best ways to manage a radiological or nuclear accident," said Army Col. (Dr.) Neil Page, head of Military Medical Operations at AFRRI.

These types of accidents are especially worrisome because they can lead to acute and long-term health problems. In the past, radiation leaks have been linked to several types of cancer, tumors and thyroid disease. In extreme cases – such as the Chernobyl accident – radiological disasters can even be deadly.

Proper planning, however, can assuage the

9-1-1 misdial? Don't hang up!

By Christine Creenan-Jones, editor

Phone hang-ups happen at the Uniformed Services University. People misdial and calls get dropped. But when they happen to 9-1-1 operators, it's important for callers to clarify – in non-emergency situations – that no public safety or law enforcement intervention is needed.

"There have been several 9-1-1 hang ups from phones that were routed to USU and other Naval Support Activity Bethesda lines in recent months. When this happens, tell the operator that you accidentally misdialed. Also,

if emergency dispatch calls, answer your phone. Otherwise, Montgomery County or NSAB may have to send law enforcement to our campus unnecessarily, which can tie up important resources that could be utilized in a true emergency situation," said James Schwartz, deputy of Operations, Communications and Strategic Planning in the Department of Military and Emergency Medicine at USU.

Furthermore, although dialing 9-1-1 in the event of a crisis will connect USU personnel with

damage and the number of casualties or prevent radiological or nuclear accidents from occurring in the first place. This is the nexus behind AFRRI's research and the MEIR course, with benchmarks that cover the fundamentals of ionizing radiation, ways to diagnose acute radiation syndrome and combined injuries, understanding the psychological effects of radiation exposure and methods for ensuring radioprotection.

"AFRRI is one of only a few agencies in the world with such broad expertise in radiobiology," said Page. "But through the MEIR course, we have prepared thousands of defense leaders, health care providers and paraprofessionals to take the lead during an emergency situation, whether it's a natural disaster, chemical or biological incident or a nuclear weapon attack."

MEIR course alumni have always been diverse – with classes taught everywhere from the U.S. to the United Arab Emirates – but it gained further widespread appeal in 2011, when the White House mandated that our nation must be prepared for a radiological incident.

Since then, the White House Medical Unit has taken the course along with staff members at the State Department, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, several foreign military units and many others.

Visit www.usuhs.edu/afri/outreach/meir/meir.htm for more information about the MEIR course.

emergency dispatch, the quickest, most efficient method for getting help is by dialing 7-7-7, the direct line to NSAB's emergency communications operators.

"By dialing 9-1-1 for an on-campus emergency, you're essentially creating another step for emergency dispatch, because the 9-1-1 call is initially routed to the Montgomery County emergency dispatch, who must then route the call to the NSAB emergency dispatcher to respond," said Schwartz.

Countdown to Commencement: A look at the Class of 2014

Air Force Maj. Christopher Kelly, Graduate School of Nursing

By Christine Creenan-Jones, editor

Before coming to the Uniformed Services University, Air Force Maj. Christopher Kelly had already experienced many visages of military life, beginning with the U.S. Marine Corps in 1997. Kelly enlisted after he finished high school and quickly began training as a rifleman on an infantry unit in Mobile, Ala.

Kelly's first duty assignments in the Marines included a lot of ruck marches, combat skills training, survival exercises and marksmanship activities. His days were long and physical – especially the week-long field exercises in the deep southern brush – but they were also challenging and rewarding.

"It was an educational two years, and I enjoyed my time in the Marine Corps, but I knew I wanted to do something different," he said.

For Kelly, something different meant trying out a whole new service and a different career field. After leaving the Marines, he attended the University of South Alabama on an Air Force scholarship and eventually earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

From there, it didn't take long for Kelly to find his calling in military nursing, especially while treating patients with cancer at base hospitals in Mississippi and Florida.

"As an oncology nurse, I've

had the opportunity to care for some truly incredible people, who unfortunately had to battle a really terrible disease. It was emotionally taxing work, but I took solace in the fact that I was doing everything in my power to help during their times of need," he said.

Besides clinical medicine, Kelly has pursued other leadership roles in military nursing over the past 13 years. His deployment to Balad, Iraq in 2005 was especially meaningful because he experienced a new side of military medicine.

"In Balad, I worked as a flight clinical coordinator at a busy frontline theater hospital that received most of the combat casualties, including patients who needed to be medevac'd out of Iraq. My job was to coordinate military aircraft, anticipate the needs of aeromedical teams, and ensure the correct flight surgery crews and critical care teams were available to provide medical care while en route to hospitals in Germany or the U.S.," Kelly said.

Coordinating "all the moving parts" of patient evacuations in a warzone was humbling work, especially as he watched service-members grapple with amputations, traumatic brain injuries, gunshot wounds and other combat wounds.

Still, Kelly's passion resided in



Photo by Thomas Balfour

Air Force Maj. Christopher Kelly

patient care, and that's why he came to USU.

Kelly enrolled in the university's Family Nurse Practitioner program in 2012. Two years later, he's completed most of the benchmarks and is on course to graduate with a Master of Science in Nursing this May. His time at USU – like all of his military experiences – has resonated strongly with Kelly.

"I've learned so much at USU that will help me throughout my career. This place has a unique approach to education that is ideal for military healthcare providers like me."



Countdown to Commencement Trivia Question Answer #1

Congratulations to Bryan Nowak for being the first person to answer last issue's trivia questions: These two Public Health Service officers represent an important piece of history at the Uniformed Services University. Who are they? And what is their milestone achievement?

His response, Victoria Anderson and Helen Golden were the first two officers to graduate from USU's Graduate School of Nursing, is correct.

Board of Regents tour USU Simulation Center

By MC2 Brittney Cannady, writer



Photo by Thomas Balfour

The Board of Regents at the Uniformed Services University hosted their quarterly meeting at the Val G. Hemming Simulation Center, Feb. 4.

The Board of Regents at the Uniformed Services University meets quarterly to discuss important university business. The February board meeting was held at the Val G. Hemming Simulation Center, so board members could not only tour the state-of-the-art facility but learn more about the value of simulation education.

The board tour began with a visit to the Wide Area Virtual Environment, or W.A.V.E., which spans an 8,000 square-foot area and accommodates more than a dozen students.

The W.A.V.E. simulates battlefield and natural disaster scenarios. It also features unique settings like a simulated helicopter landing during a mass casualty air disaster, which board members got to experience during their visit.

This kind of experiential learning has important advantages, according to SimCenter staff members.

“Other disaster response scenarios like the field hospital have the authentic sound of screaming patients behind you. It tests students’ abilities to treat patients and still be in control of their environment,” said Eric Acosta, a computer research scientist at the SimCenter who guided board members through the W.A.V.E.

The W.A.V.E.’s ability to reconfigure training environments is also beneficial.

“With the W.A.V.E., you have the ability to train teams of 10-15 students at a time and evaluate them, compared to the logistics of live training. The value is in being able to do it over and over without going outside, facing inclement weather or any other issue. This teaching platform doesn’t exist anywhere else in the world,” said Dr. Joseph Lopreiato, associate dean for Simulation Education at USU.

Following their visit through the W.A.V.E., board members stopped by the SimCenter’s Clinical Skills and Surgical Simulation Labs, where USU students receive hands-on medical training.

These spaces include task trainer rooms with mannequins programmed with different life-like responses, including the ability to sweat, bleed and breathe. The mannequins give students the opportunity to practice potentially life-saving medical skills and learn team interaction. Other SimCenter mannequins feature slightly more realistic and challenging simulators with side-by-side animation that walks students through ultrasounds, lumbar punctures and other medical procedures.

The SimCenter tour was preceded by a regular meeting of record, where board members received important university updates from key USU leaders.



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