

The Official USU Newsletter

the pulse

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Learning to Care for Those in Harm's Way

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Photo by MC3 Laura Bailey

On the cover

The Honorable Jessica L. Wright, acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, was the keynote speaker at the Uniformed Services University's commencement. Learn more about USU's graduation on page 2 and 3.

USU's 35th Commencement: Class of 2014

by MC3 Laura Bailey, writer and photographer

More than 250 students at the Uniformed Services University received their diplomas during commencement at the Daughters of the American Revolution Constitution Hall in Washington, May 17.

The Honorable Jessica L. Wright, acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, was the guest speaker for the graduating class of 2014.

In her speech, Wright talked about “The Man in the Arena,” in reference to a famed speech delivered by former U.S. President Teddy Roosevelt called, “Citizens in a Republic.”

“The Man in the Arena,” – who was described by Roosevelt as having a face marred with dust, sweat and blood – accurately describes the graduating class, according to Wright, because they arrived at this stage of their lives through hard work and discipline.

But it wasn't their accomplishment alone, she said.

“You clearly have made it. I believe people are the very essence of readiness, and that is where you come in. Our national security strategy cannot be achieved without healthy, fit and resilient men and women in uniform. A unique component of the education you've received is the opportunity you had to learn military skills and medical techniques from men and women in our enlisted ranks through medic training and battlefield exercises. Through these and other interactions with our enlisted force, we all learn to become better officers. I urge you to seek these opportunities throughout your careers.”

Wright also commended USU's faculty and staff for their impor-

tant roles.

“Thank you for your hard work professionalism and inspiration, which produced this fabulous group. You serve as educators, clinicians, scientists and mentors to our graduates,” she said.

Wright hopes USU's newest alumni – who include 160 physicians, 70 biomedical sciences, public health and clinical psychology graduates, 43 advanced practice nurses and 53 advanced practice dentists – will remember their feelings of expectation, excitement, accomplishment and elation at commencement because their hard work paid off.

But the feelings Wright described do not apply to USU graduates exclusively. The university's leadership were also proud to participate in commencement.

“The ceremony at DAR Constitutional Hall was my ninth USU commencement, and even though I have been participating each year for nearly a decade, I still get goose bumps every time I hear the Marine Band play ‘Pomp and Circumstance’ and watch our graduates cross the stage and receive their diplomas,” said USU President Dr. Charles Rice. “Perhaps it is because I know that they are celebrating one of their most significant accomplishments to date and by extension, one of the most joyous occasions of their lives, or that I know they are well prepared for a new and exciting journey into a world filled with extraordinary opportunities and challenging situations. Whatever the reason, it is a direct reflection of the hard work, dedication and devotion to the mission and students that USU faculty and staff have.”

USU's 35th commencement: Class of 2014 center stage

Photos by Thomas Balfour and MC3 Laura Bailey



Operation Bushmaster 2014: Making the “cut” with new equipment

by MC3 Laura Bailey, writer and photographer

Off in the distance, a crew chief is lying injured on the ground and unable to walk. Wounded crew members are lying on the grass around him and a downed helicopter lays motionless in the background.

“Where’s Adkins?” mumbles the crew chief as a medic, who just arrived on the scene of a rocket propelled grenade assault, assesses his injuries. “You have to find Adkins. I think she fell out of the helicopter. Find ... Adkins.” The crew chief pushes the medic away. “I’m fine! Just find Adkins!”

A moment later a medic calls out to the other first responders on the scene. “I see a patient! We have a patient over there!” She runs more than ten yards across the field and crouches down on the ground beside a soldier who sits in bloodied grass.

The green sleeve of the soldier’s uniform turns red as blood gushes out of her left arm. The cloth is soaked through. The letters on her name tape read A, D, K, I, N, S.



Photo by MC3 Laura Bailey

The medic’s face lights up with relief. “I found Adkins! I need a tourniquet,” she said as blood continues to gush from Adkins’ wounded arm.

Without hesitation, the medic begins immediate intervention to stop the bleeding by applying pressure to the wound.

While this gruesome scene seems very real, it’s all part of a simulation for Military Field Practicum 202 at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa., nicknamed Operation Bushmaster. The exercise serves as the final examination for the Military Contingency Medicine course for all fourth-year medical students at the Uniformed Services University.

Adkins is actually a volunteer role player and her “wounded arm” is just a latex sleeve – part of what’s called a cut suit, which slides over Adkins’ real arm.

Hospital Corpsman Julie Adkins volunteered as a role player for Bushmaster when she heard about the exercise during a meeting at Walter Reed National Medical Center, Bethesda, Md.

“This is the first time I’ve ever done anything like this,” said Adkins. “I had no idea I’d be wearing the cut suit, but it’s exciting. The suit is kind of heavy so it wasn’t hard to fake having difficulty breathing.”



Photo by MC3 Laura Bailey

During the simulation, Adkins creates an even more realistic scenario for the students by groaning, struggling for breath, and “acting injured.” She’s the human aspect of the suit that can interact with and respond to the students as they apply medical interventions.

The blood that gushes out of the sleeve is artificial. A pump that’s connected to rubber tubing, which acts like human arteries, feeds the artificial blood through the suit and out of the simulated wound. The cut suit, which is made of latex, is designed to look and feel like human skin. It even has an artificial rib cage and organs encased inside the latex.

This year is the first time cut suits were used at Bushmaster, said Point of Injury Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge Army Sgt. 1st Class Celecia K. Kalili. They were acquired from USU’s Val G. Hemming Simulation Center to present a realistic scenario for the students.

“The benefit of the cut suits is that students are actually able to perform medical interventions on the suit and it will bleed,” said Kalili. “Hence the name, cut suit. It’s safe for the role player. We utilize a safe word at all times during the scenario, and before a student cuts or inserts any sharp object into a suit they announce “hot sharp.”



Photo by Thomas Balfour

The safe word allows the role player to stop the scenario at any point during the simulation should they feel at risk of being cut or pricked during the exercise.

The cut suits are used to teach important medical skills to USU students. They also bring a significant amount of realism to university field training exercises.

“We’d like to get more suits so more role players can wear them during Bushmaster,” said Kalili. “Right now we have two. We’ll definitely use them again in the future. It worked very well.”



Photo by Thomas Balfour

Research Days features renowned speakers

by Christine Creenan-Jones, editor

Research took center stage at the Uniformed Services University with keynote lectures from leading health science experts during Research Days, May 14-15. They brought the 2014 theme, “Celebrating Excellence in Research,” to life by delivering compelling talks across diverse scientific planes.

Dr. Robert Ursano, director of USU’s Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress and professor and chair of the Department of Psychiatry at the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine, led an especially gripping presentation about military suicide. As the winner of the James Leonard Award for Excellence in Clinical Research, Ursano was invited to share his groundbreaking work on the Army Study to Assess Risk and Resilience.

During his keynote lecture, Ursano described some of the ways Army STARRS has shed new light on suicide through its unprecedented data collection taken over a five-year span to include 1.1 billion records from 1.6 million troops, interviews with more than 100,000 soldiers, thousands of blood and saliva samples, and the largest psychological autopsy study ever

conducted.

At Research Days, Ursano also discussed how the Army STARRS team is analyzing this data to provide “actionable findings” to curb military suicide rates.

“The goal here is to establish a cohort that can be followed for decades to come. Furthermore, the information we collected spans not only mental health but all areas of illness,” he said.

As a result, the breadth of Army STARRS research has both long lasting and far reaching potential across multiple disciplines of military medicine.

Other Research Days’ presentations illustrated the penetrable value of USU science as well. Among them, Dr. Ada Sue Hinshaw, dean of the Daniel K. Inouye Graduate School of Nursing, delivered the Presidential Lecture called, “Shaping Health Policy Through Research: One Discipline’s Journey.”

In her talk, Hinshaw avowed the importance of developing and using credible research to influence public health policy.

To be successful, this work should address major public health problems or issues, use a patient or community-centered approach and utilize the expertise of multi-

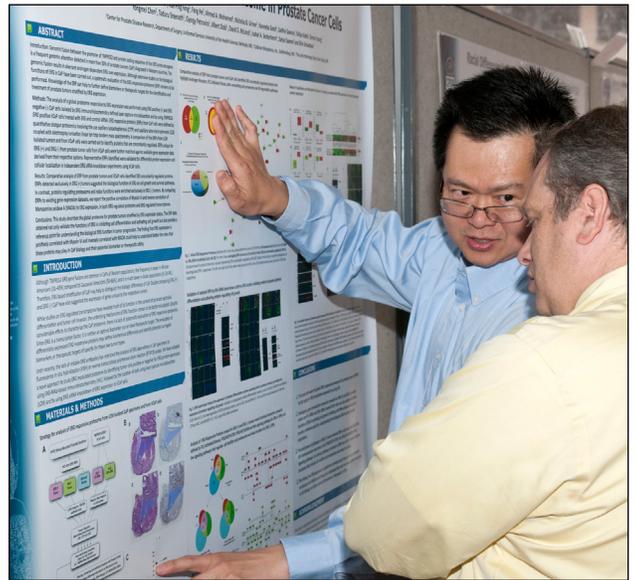


Photo by Thomas Balfour

The university’s extensive research portfolio was highlighted during Research Days, May 14-15, with talks and poster presentations from USU students, faculty and invited speakers.

disciplinary experts, she said.

This model was the basis for Hinshaw’s own success in the field of nursing, where she’s distinguished herself as a pioneer across education, research and policy realms.

“Dean Hinshaw delivered an eloquent, thought-provoking talk that captured what it takes to thrive as a 21st century nurse. Her message – to let quality research drive policy development – is something we teach in every school and program at USU, so it was an especially fitting topic for our Research Days, from one of our most accomplished leaders,” said USU President Charles Rice.

Research Days also included keynote talks from experts at the National Institutes of Health, Boston College and the Kleber Dental Clinic in Kaiserslautern, Germany as well as poster and oral presentations from USU faculty and students.

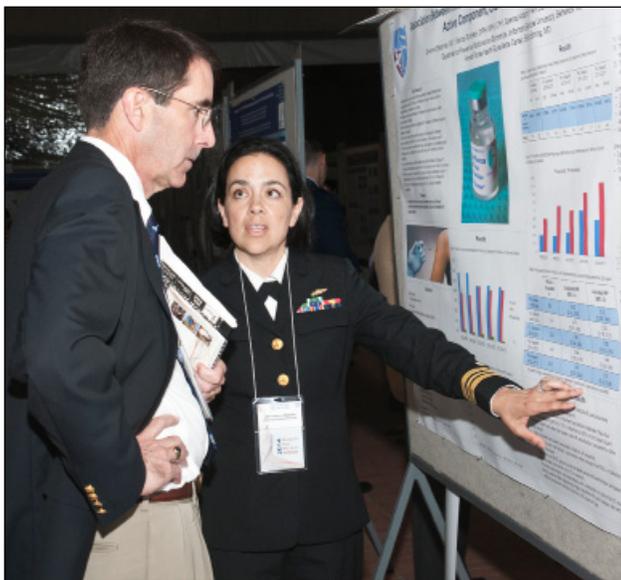


Photo by Thomas Balfour

Girasek earns 2014 Outstanding Biomedical Educator Award

by Christine Creenan-Jones, editor



Photo by Thomas Balfour

Dr. Charles Rice, president of the Uniformed Services University (left), Dr. Eleanor Metcalf, associate dean for biomedical education at USU (second from right), and Dr. Arthur Kellermann, dean of the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine (right), presented the Outstanding Biomedical Educator Award to Dr. Deborah Girasek. Girasek, an associate professor in the SoM, was lauded for exceptional teaching and mentorship.

Dr. Deborah Girasek, an associate professor and the director of the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Biometrics, is the recipient of the 2014 Outstanding Biomedical Educator Award at the Uniformed Services University. Girasek was lauded for outstanding contributions to biomedical education at the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine.

The product of good teaching herself, Girasek attributes much of her success in USU's classrooms to the academicians who've shaped her teaching philosophy, one that's earning Girasek high praise.

"In my graduate training, I was blessed with extremely generous advisers at both Johns Hopkins and the University of Michigan School of Public Health. I try to emulate their patient and

encouraging style of guiding student growth," she said.

Girasek, who arrived on campus in 1997, has already influenced hundreds of USU alumni, who rely on her teaching to improve military medicine and public health. Their work and focus fuels Girasek's ambition to continue teaching to a high standard.

"Most of the graduate students in my department are mid-career physicians. They bring a maturity and professionalism to the classroom. Their prior experience enriches our discussions and often helps them "get" the importance of what the teacher is trying to convey. Finally, when you see the responsibilities that our students take on after graduation, you realize that if we prepare them well, we can have a very far-reaching impact," she said.

First-year medical student uses CPR to give man second chance at life

by Sharon Holland, managing editor

Their school break was drawing to a close and Army 2nd Lt. Jason Ausman and his roommates, all first-year medical students at the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine were looking forward to a carefree day of fun before classes resumed the next day. Ausman, along with Air Force 2nd Lts. Taylor Roth and Doug Morte, headed to Jessup, Md., for some indoor electric go-kart racing at the Autobahn Indoor Speedway.

Dick Talley, 69, had also gone with friends to Jessup from his home more than two hours away in southern Maryland for a day of Grand Prix-style go-kart racing at the Speedway.

Talley and his friends arrived before the medical students and took their turns behind the wheel. After a number of laps, Talley's go-kart came to a stop and as he stood up to get out, he suddenly felt faint and then blacked out.

Meanwhile, Ausman, Roth and Morte got there, signed in, and then watched the mandatory safety video before heading to the go-kart area where the previous session's drivers were just ending their last laps. The students watched the drivers exit their vehicles and noticed Talley collapse. Ausman, who served for eight years as a paramedic, paramedic instructor and flight medic with the Lee County EMS in Fort Myers, Fla., before coming to USU, immediately rushed over to help. In the few seconds it took Ausman to reach him, Talley was lying still and had no pulse.

"They teach you that if a person is not conscious, and not breathing normally to go ahead and start CPR," Ausman said, and he did just that, continuing compressions until paramedics arrived, refusing to let anyone take over. "I have seen lots of people do CPR," Ausman said. "I have also seen lots do poor CPR, and if there's a chance for the victim to make it, you've got to keep up good perfusion."

Once paramedics arrived, Ausman told them he believed Talley was in cardiac arrest. Although paramedics initially discounted his diagnosis, a cardiac monitor revealed that Talley displayed signs of ventricular fibrillation, a lethal rhythm, and showed that his heart was not beating at all.

The paramedics, with help from Ausman, began



Courtesy photo

Army 2nd Lt. Jason Ausman

administering life-saving support. A defibrillator was used to shock Talley's heart, rescue breathing was performed and Ausman continued administering chest compressions.

After a while, Talley's heart started to beat again. The paramedics loaded him into their ambulance and drove him to the closest hospital, 10 miles away. Ausman had no idea who the man was, where they were taking him and believed he would never know the final outcome.

Talley spent the next six days in the hospital, where he learned the full details of what had happened – all except the identity of his rescuer.

Determined to thank the man who saved his life, Talley reached out to the Speedway. The manager contacted dozens of registered riders, including Ausman, asking if any of them had performed CPR at the racetrack. Ausman responded and gave them permission to share his email address with Talley. Within a few days, he received an emotional message from the grateful man.

Story continued on page 9

“Hello, Jason. I am so glad they were able to locate you! Needless to say, you are a very special person in my life now. ... I have essentially made a 100 percent recovery due to the excellent CPR you so promptly performed on me from the time my heart stopped beating. Considering the type of heart attack I had, the normal survival rate is about two percent for an out-of-hospital attack. Thanks to you, I am very lucky to be here today. They did install a defibrillator while I was in the hospital and I am basically cleared to continue to live my life as I was before. ... I must give you credit for not only saving my life, but that I am fully recovered. I do look at each day a little different now since I am living in ‘overtime.’ The circumstances that allowed our paths to cross and your actions are as big as life itself. Just to say ‘thank you’ seems insignificant for what you did for me. ... Thank you for life itself!”

Talley also said that he was sure he would not be here today if he’d had his heart attack anywhere else. “My friends tell me from the time I passed out until Jason was giving me CPR was about 30 seconds,” he said. “That would have been just about impossible to be in a similar situation where that could happen. I am very lucky to be alive today.” “Given the circumstances of Mr. Talley’s cardiac arrest, including an eight-minute ‘down time’ in a non-urban setting, the odds of survival would have been less than two percent if he had not gotten bystander CPR,” said Art L. Kellermann, MD, MPH, F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine dean and an expert on the subject who has published numerous studies on out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. “I’m convinced that the speed and precision with which

2nd Lt. Ausman reacted literally saved Mr. Talley’s life. Although this incident occurred in public, most cardiac arrests occur in the victim’s home. In fact, if you learn CPR, the most likely life you will save is that of your spouse, parent or another member of your family. The wonderful thing is that you don’t have to be a medical student like 2nd Lt. Ausman, much less a doctor or nurse, to deliver lifesaving CPR. It’s easy to learn and easy to do. And as this situation proves, you may save someone’s life.”

As a measure of his gratitude, Talley offered to contribute to Ausman’s medical education fund. Ausman, like all USU students, does not pay tuition and graciously declined the generous gesture. “I told him I don’t have any debt from school and I would never take anything from him for helping him out,” said Ausman. “When I was in high school, I saw a man at the beach wash up on shore unconscious but I didn’t know what to do at the time to help him. I began teaching CPR classes and working in healthcare so that I would never experience that hopeless feeling again if presented with a similar situation. Luckily, when Mr. Talley collapsed in front of me, this time I knew exactly what to do.”

Talley is relishing his second chance at life thanks to Ausman. “I am currently in cardiac rehab three times a week for the next 12 weeks and I am working out in the gym two times a week. My perspective and priorities have changed somewhat since it happened. I am more focused on enjoying life rather than on my financial future and doing ‘business.’ I expect to start racing on Saturday nights again soon and plan on getting my boat ready to sail to the islands for the winter this fall.”



Photo by Thomas Balfour

Education Day Trivia

Question #1

Field exercises have always been a part of the curriculum at the Uniformed Services University. But they haven’t always taken place in the same location. In fact, Operation Bushmaster has been carried out in several states since the university’s founding. Can you name the last three?

The first person to correctly identify the last three states and send their response to Christine.Creenan-Jones@usuhs.edu wins a large coffee and doughnut courtesy of the USU cafeteria.

Final Frame

The enlisted brigade at the Uniformed Services University is filled with hard-working, high-achieving service members, who push themselves to new heights through training and education. In fact, many of them have accomplished tremendous academic feats recently by earning advanced degrees or completing rigorous certifications, including:

Air Force Staff Sgt. Nathaniel Moses
Bachelor of Science in Management of Information Systems, December 2013

Air Force Staff Sgt. Leonard Tesoro
Associates in Medical Laboratory Technology, February 2014

Army Staff Sgt. Jessica Dillard
Associates in General Studies, May 2014

Army Staff Sgt. Michael Bennett
Associates in General Studies, May 2014

Army Spc. Kalyn Alloway
Assistant Laboratory Animal Technologist Certification, April 2014

Army Sgt. Cassie Barnett
Associates in General Studies, December 2013

Navy MA1 Brian Necaise
USA Weightlifting Level 1 Sports Performance Coach Certification, March 2014
CrossFit Level 1 Trainer Certification, April 2014

Navy HM2 Opeyemi Fadiyimu
American Society of Clinical Pathology Medical Laboratory Technician Certification, March 2013

Navy HM1 Eric McPherson
Master's in Health Care Administration, December 2013

Navy HM1 Richard Slaysman
Bachelor's in History, August 2013

Navy HMC Daryl Mercado
Master's Degree, May 2014

Navy HM3 Lorenzo Walker
American Society of Clinical Pathology Medical Laboratory Technician Re-certification, May 2014

Navy HM2 Karesse Holmes
Associates in Public Health, June 2014