

The Official USU Newsletter

# the pulse

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*Learning to Care for Those in Harm's Way*

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# Thomas addresses university at first town hall meeting



*Richard W. Thomas, M.D., D.D.S., president of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, held his first town hall meeting with the faculty and staff on Sept. 29. (Photo by Sharon Holland)*

*By Christopher Austin*

**On the cover**

*Dr. Thomas Schneid, executive dean of USU's Postgraduate Dental College, delivers remarks at the recent graduation ceremony aboard the USS Missouri memorial for Army PDC students at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. See story pg. 8. (Courtesy photo)*

Richard W. Thomas, M.D., D.D.S., president of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU), held his first town hall meeting on Sept. 29, introducing himself to the faculty and staff and sharing his initial observations following his first quarter in the position.

Thomas said that he recognizes that the university is very good at what it does providing unparalleled support for the Department of Defense and other federal and non-federal partners.

“The university is the best staffed, best resourced and in the best position than it’s ever been before,” said Thomas. He detailed his priorities for the university, adding that readiness is the major focus.

“I’m really proud to serve with you. Thanks for being here in this

room today, and thanks for being on this team. What we provide here is education, research and training opportunities to develop the finest health care professionals we have. No one else does it better, no one else can do what we provide here for U.S. medical care. Thanks for what you do every day,” Thomas said.

# Koles, Cross civilian employees of the quarter

By Christopher Austin

Department of Medicine research biologist Nancy Koles and program support assistant Pamela Cross were selected as the senior and junior employees of the quarter for the beginning of 2016, respectively.

Koles has worked in the Department of Medicine for the past 32 years. During that time, she has worked across several divisions within the department to expand her knowledge base, according to Dr. Louis Pangaro, chair of the Department of Medicine at Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU), in a letter nominating Koles for her selection.

"Ms. Koles has an amazing knowledge of systems' operation and will independently take care of anything from resupply, laboratory animal medicine arrangements, equipment management, controlled substances [and] troubleshooting that keeps our labs running smoothly," Pangaro said.

In addition, Pangaro commended Koles for volunteering to assist others in the lab, mentoring younger learners.

"Another admirable quality is that Ms. Koles is always conscious of her responsibilities and acts proactively instead of waiting to be asked to perform a task," Dr. Sonia Doi, a research associate professor for the school of medicine, said in Pangaro's letter. "When asked to do something out of her usual schedule, she is always amenable and easily adjusts to it."

Cross was nominated for her commitment to excellence of service to the USU community, in-



*Department of Medicine Research Biologist Nancy Koles has been selected as the senior employee of the quarter at Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) for the beginning of 2016. (Photo by Tom Balfour)*

cluding administrative support for the general internal medicine, infectious disease, immunology, and health professions education divisions, Pangaro wrote in Cross' nomination letter.

On top of this, Cross also volunteered to help the newly-formed Health Professions Education Section with financial management, bringing on personnel, acquiring equipment and securing travel.

"With the end of fiscal year spending fast approaching, Ms. Cross also took over purchasing support for research faculty members in both our infectious diseases and immunology divisions," ensuring purchases were complete prior to the cutoff dates, said Pangaro.

Pangaro lauded many other invaluable actions that Cross under-



*Program Support Assistant Pamela Cross has been selected as the junior employee of the quarter at USU for the beginning of 2016. (Photo by Tom Balfour)*

took to support the Department of Medicine, including creating a database to assist incoming faculty members, designing a new telephone directory that is now the standard for the entire department, and setting up supplies for transitioning faculty and staff.

Cross has worked for 28 years in federal service and two within the Department of Medicine at USU.

# Study: Genes linked to PTSD also linked to increased risk for cardiovascular disease

By Sarah Marshall

The same genes linked to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) also appear to be linked to a significantly increased risk for cardiovascular disease (CVD), according to a new study published in *Frontiers in Molecular Neuroscience* on Sept. 9 by researchers at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU).

The study, “Soldier’s Heart: A Genetic Basis for Elevated Cardiovascular Disease Risk Associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder,” was led by USU department chairs Dr. Harvey Pollard and Dr. Robert Ursano. The researchers believed there might be a quantifiable genetic basis that links PTSD to CVD. Therefore, they examined a comprehensive set of candidate risk genes – genes that may have a specific mutation cor-

related with PTSD. The team tested whether any were also independent risk genes for CVD. They used various databases to examine genes as part of the study, including *PubMed*, a catalog from the National Institutes of Health, and a database from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

After examining 106 previously-published genetic studies of PTSD, they identified 87 unique genetic variations in more than 83,000 patients with PTSD and case controls (individuals who were similar to the patients but did not have PTSD). The researchers found about half of these genes did, in fact, have an associated risk for CVD. Looking further, they found, to a lesser extent, there might also be a connection between PTSD and Type 2 diabetes. Additionally, they believe

these genetic connections might involve the same intrinsic structures within the brain that are linked to elevated inflammation that occurs after a physical injury.

Based on their findings, the researchers suggest those who have been exposed to extreme stress, both soldiers and civilians, might be significantly more susceptible to both PTSD and CVD. They suggest further testing is needed to validate these results.

More recently, this relationship has been described in different groups of combat veterans and civilians. With continued advancements in genetic testing, researchers can continue delving into these associated risks.

# New study finds over-the-counter loperamide, when used in large doses, might be linked to heart arrhythmias

By Sarah Marshall

New research has found an over-the-counter medication, loperamide, used to treat diarrhea, including traveler’s diarrhea, might be linked to heart arrhythmias when used in large doses. The study, “Potent Inhibition of hERG Channels by the Over-The-Counter Anti-Diarrheal Agent Loperamide,” was published on Sept. 14 in the official journal of the American College of Cardiology, *JACC Clinical Electrophysiology*.

Loperamide is a synthetic opioid medication that is generally consid-

ered low risk for abuse because little drug reaches the brain. However, the recent epidemic of opioid abuse has led to opioid-dependent individuals taking loperamide in high doses, in order to mitigate withdrawal symptoms from heroin or prescription opioids. These excessive doses can cause loperamide to enter the brain in sufficient amounts to make subjects feel “high” or prevent opiate withdrawal. Clinicians at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) led by Dr. Mark Haigney, director of Cardiology and professor of medicine and pharmacology at USU, and the Uni-

versity of Colorado School of Medicine, recently reported a case of cardiac arrest in a loperamide abuser, but the cause of the toxicity was unknown.

According to the researchers, the over-the-counter medication’s structure is similar to methadone, another synthetic opioid that has been associated with cardiac arrest. Therefore, they decided to look at the impact of loperamide on the electrical currents in the heart, blocked by methadone and other drugs that cause cardiac arrest. As predicted, they found loperamide blocks

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# School of Medicine Announces Dean's Annual Faculty Teaching

## Awards

*By the Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs, F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine*

Dr. Arthur Kellermann, dean of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine (SOM), recently announced the winners of the SOM annual Faculty Teaching Awards. One winner each was selected from a basic science department and from a clinical science department. These awards recognize two faculty who demonstrated outstanding performance in their roles as educators during the preceding academic year (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016). This is the sixth year that this prestigious honor has been bestowed on two SOM faculty members.

The number of nominations submitted, and the caliber of those nominees, speaks volumes about the cadre of faculty at USU, according to Dr. Brian Reamy, senior associate dean in the SOM. The dean's advisory committee reviewed the nominations, and after scoring and deliberation, Kellermann was honored to present Craig Goolsby, M.D., Department of Military and Emergency Medicine (MEM), and David Mears, Ph.D., Department of Anatomy, Physiology and Genetics, with the awards.

Goolsby is an associate professor and vice chair for Education in MEM, as well as Military Field Practicum (MFP) 102 director, Emergency Medicine clerkship director, Bushmaster Casualty Force and Simulation Team director, Val G. Hemming Simulation Center Hybrid Simulation Lab director, research capstone mentor, and National Center for Disaster Medicine



*Dr. Craig Goolsby, Department of Military and Emergency Medicine was selected to receive one of the Dean's annual Faculty Teaching Awards. (Photo by Tom Balfour)*

and Public Health interim director.

Goolsby has educated students throughout the entire four-year curriculum: from early first year via the Combat Medical Skills course to late fourth year through research capstones. He employs innovative simulation tools such as the human-worn simulation known as the 'Cut Suit,' and developed all of the cases, coached student actors, trained his teams, and performed direct teaching in conjunction with this tool. Goolsby's dedication to educational scholarship is impressive, having had five papers published in peer-reviewed journals in the past year. Three of them involved original research about medical education, and included capstone students as co-authors.

"Dr. Goolsby's dedication to his students, USU, and his craft as a medical educator is second to none. In May, he graduated with a Master of Education in the Health Profes-



*Dr. David Mears, Department of Anatomy, Physiology and Genetics was selected to receive one of the Dean's annual Faculty Teaching Awards. (Photo by Tom Balfour)*

sions degree from the Johns Hopkins University School of Education. Dr. Goolsby's work in the program has paid impressive dividends for USU and his students. Beyond self-improvement, Dr. Goolsby takes a deep interest in mentoring his students. He advises many students on career selection/progression, research, and a host of other topics," said Army Col. (Dr.) Francis O'Connor, professor and chair of MEM.

Mears is an associate professor in the Department of Anatomy, Physiology and Genetics, and currently serves as the Neuroscience Module co-director, the Structure and Function of the Head, Neck, and CNS course director, and director of Medical Neuroscience for the USU Neuroscience graduate program.

Mears spends countless hours every year preparing for the neuroscience module, including meticulous

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# 'Caring for Transgender' conference helps ensure quality care

By Sarah Marshall

The Department of Defense began requiring military services to provide gender transition care to service members on Oct. 1. To prepare for the change, the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) held a conference Sept. 13 and 14 focused on caring for transgender individuals in a changing environment.

"We all recognize that transgender individuals are individuals first," said Dr. Karen Guice, acting assistant secretary of defense for health affairs.

As the principal medical advisor to the secretary of defense, she administers the military health system's (MHS) \$50 billion budget, and is responsible for providing cost effective, quality health care to more than 9.5 million active duty members, retirees and their families.

According to a 2016 Rand Corporation study, she explained, out of about 1.3 million active duty service members, about 2,500 transgender individuals serve in the active component of the military, and just more than 1,500 transgender individuals serve in the Selected Reserve. Some will want care in the MHS, and some will be comfortable where they are now receiving care.

The study also showed 18 other countries currently allow transgender personnel to serve openly in their military, she added, and in no case was there evidence of an adverse or negative effect on the operational effectiveness, operational readiness, or cohesion of the force in those countries.

Additionally, the Rand study found policy changes that opened more roles to women, and allowed gay and lesbian personnel to serve openly in the U.S. military, had no significant adverse effect on unit cohesion, operational effectiveness or readiness.

During the conference, providers further discussed other research findings, policies and standards of care. The event ended with a panel discussion that included transgender individuals and medical providers who have cared for transgender patients. Sitting in on the panel was USU alumnus Dr. Curtis Hobbs, an endocrinologist and director of the Diabetes Care Center at Madigan Army Medical Center, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.

Hobbs explained how he began caring for transgender patients not only because he was asked to, but also because he was driven to; it's a personal matter to him. When his daughter was 17, he recalled hearing the door to their house rattling at three in the morning, as though someone was trying to get into the house. He found his then 17-year-old son standing outside, rattling the knob. Hobbs asked his son why he was outside in the middle of the night, and he said he just needed to go for a walk. Hobbs then asked his child if there was something that he should know.



*USU and Walter Reed Bethesda put on the "Caring for Transgender" conference, to raise awareness of issues related to health care for transgender individuals. During the event, Dr. Karen Guice, acting assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, participated in the discussion regarding the new policy on transgender service members. (Photo by Bernard S. Little, WRNMMC Public Affairs)*

"Yes," he said.

Today, Hobbs has a daughter who is gainfully employed and doing well.

"The difference was compassionate people who took care of her and gave her what she needed. I think that's what you are here to do," Hobbs said.

The DoD policy on service by transgender individuals took shape after more than a year of careful and thorough planning involving military leadership, medical and personnel experts, transgender service members, advocacy groups and private corporations. The policy took effect on Oct. 1.

For more information about the DoD's transgender policy, visit [www.defense.gov/News/Special-Reports/0616\\_transgender-policy](http://www.defense.gov/News/Special-Reports/0616_transgender-policy).

# Combined Federal Campaign kicks off

By Staff Sgt. Stephanie Morris U.S. Air Force

The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) officially kicked off at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) on Sept. 20.

“The purpose of the CFC is to promote and support philanthropy through a program that is employee focused, cost-efficient, and effective in providing all federal employees the opportunity to improve the quality of life for all,” said Annette Askins-Roberts, the administrative officer for External Affairs and CFC co-campaign manager.

President John F. Kennedy originally authorized the U.S. Civil Service Commission to develop guidelines and regulate fundraising in the federal service in 1961 by Executive Order 10927.

In 1964, the first “combined” campaigns, officially called “Combined Federal Campaigns,” were conducted as experiments in six cities, consolidating all drives into one. The result was a substantial increase in contributions, ranging from 20 percent to 125 percent. By 1971, all campaigns had become combined.

President Nixon announced on March 3, 1971, that the CFC would be the uniform fundraising method for the federal service.

“This year’s target contribution amount for USU is \$120,000,” said Askins-Roberts. “Federal civilian employees and military at USU are able to work together to obtain this goal.”

When giving online, personnel can contribute to the CFC by payroll deduction, credit card, debit card or electronic check. When giving using



Service members at Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) gathered in building B for a cake-cutting ceremony that kicked off the Combined Federal Campaign on Sept. 20. (Photo by Tom Balfour)

a paper pledge form, personnel can contribute through the CFC by payroll deduction, cash or check.

“I wholeheartedly believe the CFC is an excellent program,” said Askins-Roberts. “I personally like that there are more than 20,000 charities worldwide to choose from. They have every charity that you could possibly imagine.”

In addition to listing the charities online, they also list the overhead cost to run these charities, Askins-Roberts stated.

There will be a number of CFC-sponsored activities over the next few months, including a 5K run, Thanksgiving bake sale, and the Penny Wars Challenge.

Penny Wars is a three-week-long competition where members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and civilians compete to fill their respective jar with pennies.

“You add pennies to the jar you want to give positive points to and silver coins and dollars to the jar you want to give negative points to,” said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Jamal Powell, CFC campaign manager. “At the end, all of the money is counted and the jar that has the most points wins the competition.”

The jars will be located next to the Mid-Watch coffee kiosk in building C.

To make online donations, please visit: [www.cfcnc.org](http://www.cfcnc.org) and click the red donate button in the upper right of the screen.

Paper donation forms can be requested from Powell or Askins-Roberts.

# Postgraduate Dental College Awards USU Degrees

By Sharon Holland

More than 56 Army, Navy, and Air Force dentists were awarded Master of Science in Oral Biology degrees from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) in 2016 after completing their dental residency programs.

USU Postgraduate Dental College (PDC) Executive Dean Dr. Thomas Schneid conferred the degrees at each of the PDC's program locations, and aboard the USS Missouri memorial in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

"I'm so proud of these outstanding graduates and their dedicated mentors," said Schneid. "They have all been trained as master clinicians in their chosen specialty. The research experience gained from their USU Master of Science degree programs has given them a sound scientific foundation and prepared them to choose the best materials and techniques, in order to provide the highest quality dental care to those that defend our nation. These graduates truly represent the best of the best with bright futures as clinicians, educators, and leaders of our military dental services."



Air Force Col. James Knowles (left) and Army Col. Douglas Lancaster (right) presented Air Force Capt. Michael Segall (center) with the Air Force Postgraduate Dental School "Marble Thesis" Research Award for 2016. (Courtesy Photo)



Dr. Charles Rice (left) and Rear Adm. Stephen Pachuta (right) present a Master of Science in Oral Biology degree to Navy Lt. Cmdr Robert Lummis (center). (Courtesy Photo)



Dr. Margaret Culotta-Norton presents the 2016 International College of Dentists Research Award to Major Karen E. Gonzalez-Torres from the Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology Department. (Courtesy Photo)



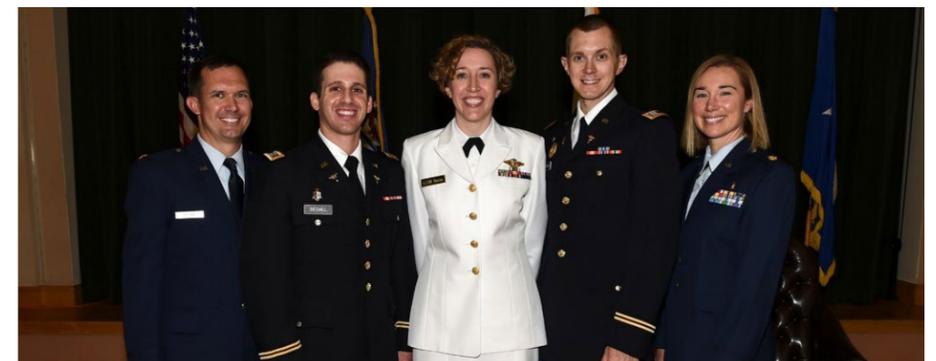
Top Row: Navy Lt. Svetlin Penchev, Lt. Cmdr. Walter Volinski, Lt. Spencer Bjarnason, Lt. Christopher Barth, Lt. Cmdr. Jared Beck, Lt. Cmdr. Bryan Rasmussen, Lt. James Lish, Lt. Cmdr. Robert Lummis; Middle Row: Lt. Eric Oxley, Lt. Peter Krumbhaar, Lt. Cmdr. David Quintero, Cmdr. Roger Thompson, Lt. Bryan Behm, Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Cooper, Lt. Cmdr. Gustavo Lores, Lt. Cmdr. Christopher Parks; Front Row: Maj. Karen Gonzalez-Torres, Lt. Cmdr. Bradley Martinsen, Lt. Cmdr. Alexander Desta, Lt. Marina Hernandez-Feldpausch, Lt. Cmdr. Kyle Vick, Lt. Cmdr. Joshua Treesh, Lt. Cmdr. David Dow, Dr. Heather Giannotta. (Courtesy Photo)



Dr. Schneid poses with Endodontic Residency Graduates: Air Force Col. Marco Galvez, Maj. Gregory Zilinski, and Program Director Col. Timothy Kirkpatrick. (Courtesy Photo)



Prosthodontics: Air Force Lt. Col. Cade Salmon, Col. Jose Villalobos, Col. Rod Phoenix, Maj. Francisco Gallardo, Jr., Col. Richard Batzer, Lt. Col. Ketu Lincoln, Maj. Ryan Sheridan. (Courtesy Photo)



Orthodontics: Air Force Maj. Gary Mayne, Capt. Michael Segall, Lt. Cmdr. Casey Burns, Capt. Stona Jackson, and Maj. Sara Wilson. (Courtesy Photo)



Endodontics: Training Officer Air Force Maj. James Wealleans, Maj. Kevin Kunz, Maj. Kelly Ramey, Program Director Col. Richard Vanderweele. (Courtesy Photo)

# Laboratory Animal Medicine gains new director

By Christopher Austin

Army Lt. Col. Larry Shelton was appointed the new director of Laboratory Animal Medicine (LAM) at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU), effective Sept. 7.

Shelton is a graduate of Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine. He earned his Master of Public Health at USU, and from 2006-2008 he served as the deputy director of LAM, making this his third time stationed at USU.

"I am a very energetic guy. I'm full of energy and I like to bring a little bit of fun in getting the job done. I will bring an energetic focus to accomplishing the mission. That's my goal," Shelton said.

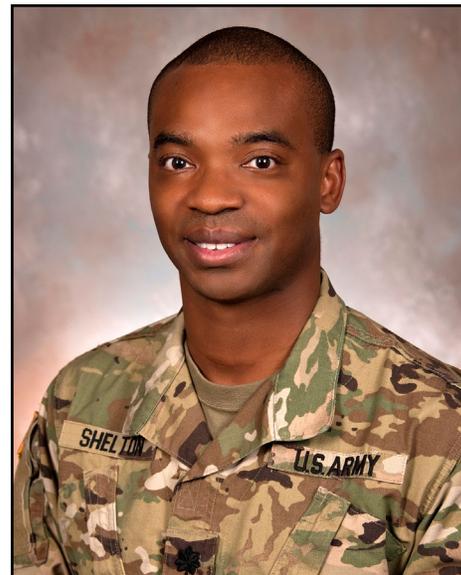
Shelton's interest in laboratory animal medicine began back in high school, where he had a job in a research laboratory.

"That kind of got me interested in the research part of it. I didn't know I was going to be a laboratory ani-

mal vet at that moment, but I knew I was going to be interested in biomedical research," he said. "It wasn't until I got to undergrad that I started hanging out in laboratories more and I said 'I could do that.' When I did get into veterinary school, I hung out with laboratory animal medicine staff and saw what they did. I decided it was for me."

Shelton is a board-certified diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine and the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine. He also completed the U.S. Army Laboratory Animal Medicine residency program at the joint Walter Reed Army Institute of Research/Naval Medical Research Center.

Shelton's other prior assignments include serving as head of the Veterinary Sciences Department at the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute and deputy director of the Veterinary Medicine Division at the U.S. Army Medical Research



*Army Lt. Col. Larry Shelton has been appointed the new director of Laboratory Animal Medicine at Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU). (Photo by Tom Balfour)*

Institute of Infectious Diseases. Most recently, he was director for Veterinary Affairs for the Department of the Navy.

## Loperamide, continued from pg. 4

an important electrical current in the heart, which flows through the hERG channel (human  $\alpha$ -go-go-related gene), and this causes a block that significantly slows the recovery of the normal resting electrical state, thereby putting the heart in a less stable condition that is prone to cardiac arrest.

"The abuse of loperamide can trigger lethal arrhythmias, and we now understand how that may happen," said Haigney, "Individ-

uals taking large doses of loperamide, far in excess of what is recommended, may also develop less severe symptoms such as sudden loss of consciousness. Emergency room physicians should consider loperamide abuse when confronted by loss of consciousness in an opioid-dependent individual, as this is a life-threatening condition. The presence of loperamide toxicity can be confirmed using a conventional EKG."

Though this medication is still considered safe when used at recommended doses, the researchers encourage those with pre-existing heart conditions, or those who have suffered cardiac arrest, to be cautious when taking loperamide. Further research is needed to support these findings.

# USU welcomes new chaplain

*By Mass Communications Specialist  
2nd Class Laura Bailey, U.S. Navy*

He is neither a Washington Redskins nor Dallas Cowboys fan, but he prays for both teams. He enjoys good humor and was once an avid runner but now he spends his time reading and journaling. Most of all, Cmdr. LeRoy G. Mack III, a Navy chaplain, desires to live a life of a servant-leader to all people that he encounters on his life journey.

Mack is an ordained American Baptist minister who arrived at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) in July 2016. He is eager to serve as the USU chaplain to the students, staff, faculty and all authorized Department of Defense personnel here for the next three years.

"The four competencies of the Chaplain Corps – provision, facilitation, caring and advising guide me as a chaplain," he said. "It is my vocational duty to facilitate the spiritual development of others, provide for faith-specific ministries, and care for all and to advise the command on religious and morale matters as it relates to mission readiness."

Mack believes it's an awesome privilege to serve in the U.S. military as a Navy chaplain. Military service members, faculty, and staff of USU can serve together as one team and have different religious beliefs; it's a unique dynamic of U.S. military communities, he said. He is honored to offer counseling to people of different faith backgrounds and those who have no particular religious preference because he cares for all.

Mack's service as a U.S. Navy chaplain has its genesis in a strong desire to serve God, country and our communities. His faith is the premise which led him to become a chaplain in 2001 after serving seven years in the civilian pastoral ministry. He also once served as an active duty Army intelligence officer from 1987 until 1994.

"My choice to serve as a military chaplain is likened to other chaplains – my service comes out of a calling," said Mack. "Chaplains are ordained ministers who primarily serve a specific community – military personnel and their families. I remember early on when I first joined the Chaplain Corps, the senior pastor of my church told me to remember I'm serving all people not just a branch of service."

Most recently someone asked him if he ministers any differently with the Soldiers or Airmen. He paused for a moment and thought why would he do that? "People are people," he said laughing. "I welcome all. I stay grounded by my faith in God even when they are not Sailors."

His military career has taken him on numerous adventures. In 2010, he was selected for training in the Clinical Pastoral Education Program as a resident at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth and the Veteran Administration of Hampton, VA. It was after this training assignment that he was detailed to the U.S. Naval Hospital, Naples, Italy as the command chaplain where he also served as the acting U.S. Sixth Fleet com-



*Navy Cmdr. LeRoy G. Mack III, the new Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) chaplain. (Photo by Tom Balfour)*

mand chaplain for a brief period. During this tenure, he served as the command chaplain aboard the USS Mount Whitney (LLC 220) during Operation Jukebox Lotus – the crisis response to the U.S. Special Mission Compound in Benghazi, Libya, September 2012.

Whenever he and his family arrive at a new duty station, they come as a team. His kids know that they will be involved in something that helps the community, he said.

"Serving is a family affair. Service defines the Mack family. Whether it's my sons who participate in Boy Scouts, the family helping with base beautification projects or working with charities in Naples, Italy to provide food for the holidays, we are very much a part of that community, wherever we are," said Mack.

# Wound Management Workshop teaches students suture skills



*Dr. Linda Wanzer, chair of the Adult/Geriatric Clinical Nurse Specialist Program guides Air Force Capt. Shanna Miller in proper technique to tie a suture. (Courtesy Photo)*

## *Courtesy Article*

A wound management workshop at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) is helping students do more than just hone in on their suture skills.

The university's bi-annual Suture Technique and Wound Management workshop is designed to teach advanced practice registered nurses (APRN) the core clinical skills they need in primary care, acute care, as well as in deployed environments. The workshop has evolved over the years, becoming an interdisciplinary experience, as well as an opportunity for professional development.

APRN students in the Daniel K. Inouye Graduate School of Nursing (GSN) have gained their core wound management and suture skills in a lab on campus, for years, under the expert guidance and instruction of Dr. David Welling and Dr. George

McNamee, from USU's Department of Surgery. Students in these sessions may be from the Adult/Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist, Family Nurse Practitioner, or Women's Health Practitioner programs.

In recent years, the workshop has grown to allow students a chance to practice trauma wound management concepts, and a variety of suture techniques, in a more realistic environment. Additionally, teaching assistants from the student Surgical Interest Group are now helping to lead the workshop – an opportunity to share unique skill sets across disciplines.

These student leaders, from the Surgery Interest Group, bring extensive training to the table. They're able to teach their APRN student colleagues how to tie knots, handle surgical instruments, and close wounds, and they can teach two-handed instrument typing and suturing techniques. This interdisciplinary collaboration gives both GSN and SOM students a chance to support each other's professional development.

Dr. Linda Wanzer, Dr. Heather Johnson, and Dr. Andrea Fuller meticulously plan and implement these sessions, which have become a tradition at the University.

"The instruction and support the students receive, through this collaborative workshop, has proven to be integral in accomplishing their learning objectives," Wanzer said. "It's also a perfect example of USU's drive to advance the inter-professional educational efforts between schools and disciplines."



*Students practice their suturing technique at the Suture Technique and Wound Management workshop. (Courtesy Photo)*

# USU hosts convocation, White Coat ceremony

By Christopher Austin

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) academic leadership welcomed new students and their guests during the annual Fall convocation, Sept. 16.

The event welcomed members of the 2020 class of the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine (SOM), the 2019 class of the Daniel K. Inouye Graduate School of Nursing (GSN) and the matriculating class of USU graduate students.

“These students come from all over our great nation to become part of a unique and exciting educational experience that will prepare them to serve the United States in medicine, nursing, science, psychology, or public health, throughout their professional lives,” said Army Col. (Dr.) Jerome Buller, USU Brigade Commander, who served as the master of ceremonies for the convocation.

“For the next 30 years, many of you will work and serve side by side in war and peace. Sometimes far from home,” said Dr. Jeffrey Longacre, vice president for External Affairs, speaking on behalf of USU President Dr. Richard Thomas. “Those bonds you build today with those standing next to you will last for a lifetime. Cherish them every day.”

Speakers thanked the students for their service and offered encouraging words for the challenges they face ahead.

“We’re proud and pleased to have you among our ranks,” said Dr. Arthur Kellermann, dean of the SOM. “The next few years are going to be the most transformational in your career because, here at USU, you



*Dr. Arthur Kellermann, Dean of the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine leads students in the Hippocratic Oath during the white coat ceremony held on Sept. 16. (Photo by Tom Balfour)*

will not only learn to be superb clinicians, you will learn to be outstanding military officers, or outstanding civilian leaders in biomedical research, psychology or public health.”

“You are embarking on an adventurous journey. You are at the crossroads where you assess who you are now and decide who you want to become -- physicians, advance practice nurses, psychologists, scientists or scholars in many other health fields,” said Dr. Carol Romano, dean of the GSN. “You will heal our nation’s heroes as you learn at an advanced level how you care for those in harm’s way.”

In his remarks, Dr. Gregory Mueller, associate dean for graduate education in the SOM, told students they are responsible for upholding the maturity, integrity and respect for all for which the university is known.

Following the convocation, the event transitioned to the medical student White Coat ceremony, orga-

nized by the student Arnold P. Gold Foundation chapter at USU. Navy Lt. Cmdr. (Dr.) Geoffrey Cole, staff cardiologist and director of the anti-coagulation clinic at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center was guest speaker, telling students that it is important to work as a team, but not to lose sight of their individual capabilities as well.

The White Coat ceremony is practiced at medical schools across the country and is meant to symbolize the beginning of the students’ journey to becoming medical professionals. Students are presented with short, white jackets to wear during clinical rotations.

“It was a very meaningful ceremony, personally,” said Air Force 2nd Lt. Shawn Kim, a member of the SOM class of 2019. “It was a good way to celebrate what I accomplished and a good reminder that I was here because of my family.”

# Air Force Celebrates 69th Birthday

By Christopher Austin

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) students, faculty and staff gathered together on Sept. 15 in Sanford Auditorium to celebrate the 69th birthday of the U.S. Air Force.

The event featured guest speaker retired Air Force Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Douglas J. Robb, former Defense Health Agency director and a scholar-in-residence at USU, who reflected on the history of the service, from its origins as a part of the U.S. Army, through today as a major force that controls air, space, and cyberspace and leading military innovation.

"It takes men and women, sitting behind screens for data analysis and targeting," Robb said. "It's your job, the people graduating from this university, to take care of those men and women and make sure they are up and around... Everybody behind the screen is at work. If one

piece of data is missed, the target of opportunity is missed. That's why [medical care] is important. Everybody contributes to the fight."

"Thank you for what you do in training the next generation of our healthcare operators who are going to take care of our forces as we move on to the next generation," Robb said.

After his speech, Robb was presented with a token of appreciation and the event was closed by the ceremonial cutting of the Air Force's birthday cake.

"I think it went really well, especially with the briefing Gen. Robb presented. We tried to do our best to represent Air Force heritage, 69



*Air Force Lt. Gen. (ret.) Douglas J. Robb, a scholar-in-residence at Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, served as guest speaker during the Air Force's 69th birthday celebration held on Sept. 15 in Sanford Auditorium. (Photo by Tom Balfour)*

years long," said Staff Sgt. Marcus Ayala, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the finance and manpower group at USU. He served as the master of ceremonies for the event and helped in its planning.

## Workforce for 21st century health and healthcare

By Sarah Marshall

To keep up with the evolving needs of our nation's health and health care system, a series of papers published in the Journal of the American Medical Association on Sept. 26 recommends restructuring the U.S. health care system in ways that will support more efficient, targeted health care delivery.

One of these papers, "Workforce for 21st Century Health and Health Care," was authored by Arthur L. Kellermann, M.D., M.P.H., dean of the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine at the Uniformed Services

University of the Health Sciences, with Steven H. Lipstein, M.H.A., president and chief executive officer of BJC HealthCare. The paper summarizes the recommendations of a National Academy of Medicine writing team, made up of distinguished healthcare leaders chaired by Lipstein and Kellermann.

The paper outlined an interdisciplinary health care workforce, organized to care for four major groups of patients to support our nation's evolving health. These groups include people who are generally healthy, those who experience acute and major episodes of illness and

injury, those who have significant chronic medical and behavioral conditions, and those who are approaching the end of a natural lifespan.

"To improve the care Americans receive in the 21st century, we need to recruit, educate, and sustain a diverse workforce of compassionate health professionals that are comfortable working in interdisciplinary teams, technically skilled, adept at using telehealth and health information technology, and consistently responsive to patients' needs," Kellermann said.

## University welcomes new Army Company Commander and Army Senior Enlisted Advisor



*Army Capt. Christine Argueza-Prince, the new Army company commander for the F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine at USU. (Photo by Tom Balfour)*

*By Christopher Austin*

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) welcomed Capt. Christine Argueza-Prince and Sgt. 1st Class Victor Gomez as the new F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine Army company commander and Army senior enlisted advisor, respectively, this past July.

Before arriving at USU, Argueza-Prince served as a field preventive medicine instructor and later, chief of operations for Public Health Command-Atlantic at Fort Meade, Md.

"The reason why I took this command was because of my passion for mentoring junior officers. I had a choice between this command and another command where I would be around a lot of more senior officers," Argueza-Prince said. "I felt like this was a great opportunity to have an

impact, especially with the junior lieutenants coming through and going out into the Army after this. It will be nice to share my experiences with them."

Argueza-Prince enlisted in Monterey, Calif. and served as a preventive medicine specialist for six years. Taking part in the Army's Green to Gold Program, she graduated with a bachelor's degree in Biology and commissioned as an environmental science engineering officer. In 2012, she deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom XII in Afghanistan. Her past leadership positions include platoon leader, executive officer and brigade combat team preventive medicine officer in the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Gomez also sees this assignment as an opportunity to help shape future medical officers.

"This was a surprising assignment in my view, but I'm looking forward to what I can provide to the officers," Gomez said. "What I see getting out of this assignment is to help the students achieve a much broader view of how they can help, not only as a commanding officer, but through strength of character and leadership."

Gomez, a native of Caguas, Puerto Rico, joined the Army in 1997 and attended basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. After graduation, he went on to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, where he attended advanced individual training to become a healthcare specialist.

He has held several prior leadership roles including team leader, senior line medic and emergency treatment non-combat officer.



*Army Sgt. 1st Class Victor Gomez, the new Army senior enlisted advisor for the F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine. (Photo by Tom Balfour)*

Gomez also holds a Bachelor of Science degree in nutrition from Kaplan University and is currently pursuing a master's degree in performance exercise science from the Liberty University.

He has served overseas in a combat tour in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, a Multi-National Force Observers mission in Egypt, an extended tour in South Korea and another extended tour in Germany, hopes to leverage that experience.

"Just to mentor those from the experience that we bring is something," Gomez said. "For example, I have worked treatment platoon, ambulance platoon, deployed multiple times, to places like Afghanistan and Egypt. With my 19-year career, what I bring to the table is quite a lot."

# USU Student Competes in Ironman 70.3 World Championship

By Sarah Marshall

Air Force Lt. Col. Dr. Elizabeth Erickson competed in the Ironman 70.3 World Championship on Sept. 4, biking, running and swimming more than 70 miles along Australia's Sunshine Coast.

Erickson is a resident in the General Preventive Medicine program and currently working on her Master of Public Health degree at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU). She's also a board-certified family physician. In June, she competed in the Ironman 70.3 Hawaii Triathlon, where she qualified for the world championship, which took place in Mooloolaba, Australia. The 70.3 race is half the distance of the full Ironman triathlon, which takes place each year in October in Hawaii.

"I was shocked," she said, when she learned she had earned a spot in the world championship. She had just finished a 1.2 mile swim, 56 mile bike, and 13.1 mile run – all in about five hours and 38 minutes. Right then and there, she had to decide whether she would go on to participate in another trying competition, more than 10,000 miles away. It was an emotional decision, she said, but she opted to go for it.

Erickson finished the World Championship in about five hours and 44 minutes, placing 78 out of 137 in her age group. Sporting Air Force gear, representing the U.S. military and USU, she competed with about 3,000 athletes from around the world, including many of the world's top triathletes. To qualify for a spot at the World Championship, more than 130,000 athletes partici-



*Air Force Lt. Col. Dr. Elizabeth Erickson takes part in the running portion of the Ironman 70.3 World Championship in Mooloolaba, Australia on Sept. 4. She finished 78 out of 137 in her age group. (Photo courtesy of Lt. Col. Elizabeth Erickson)*

pated in a series of races that included more than 85 events around the world. Those who qualified for the Ironman 70.3 World Championship ranged in age from 18 to 75-plus, and represented more than 70 countries.

Erickson is no stranger to tough competition, having participated in many Olympic and sprint-distance triathlons and running races from 5Ks to marathons over the years. She's completed 13 marathons over the last 22 years, including the Boston Marathon, which she did this year for the first time and for which she hopes to qualify again next year. She began increasing her training for triathlons in the last few years and started working with a coach earlier this year. She tracks her training efforts via a GPS watch and apps on her phone, logging about 10 to 15

hours each week. She often trains on base in the pool and track, and said she maintains a well-balanced diet.

As one can imagine, though, balancing family life, military obligations, school, and triathlon training is no easy feat. What's kept her motivated is knowing she's setting a good example for her daughter. Erickson also added she does her best to live a healthy lifestyle, "practicing what she preaches," as a physician.

She took everything in stride as she geared up for the unique opportunity to compete against athletes from around the globe.

"I am really excited to have qualified for the world championship, and it will be a true honor to represent the U.S. and the U.S. Air Force in Australia," she said prior to the race.

# Nordholm appointed chief of staff for university's Western Office

By Christopher Austin

Retired Navy Captain Alan Nordholm has been selected as the new chief of staff for the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) Western Region. In this role, Nordholm will be providing office continuity and support for the students, faculty, and staff stationed on the West Coast.

“I was honored to get this appointment,” Nordholm said. “This is the culmination of a military career that has spanned five decades. In 1976, I began as an enlisted hospital corpsman and to be selected to be the chief of staff for the USU Western Region senior vice president, is an honor and privilege.”

Enlisting in the U.S. Navy in 1976 as a hospital corpsman, Nordholm was assigned to Naval Hospital San Diego and supported the Marine Corps at Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton as a psychiatric technician. His academic background includes an undergraduate degree in statistics from California State

University Long Beach, a Master of Science in clinical psychology from Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif. and a Ph.D. in behavioral neuroscience from the University of Southern California. Nordholm also completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. From this fellowship, Nordholm rejoined the Navy in 1995 as a Medical Service Corps officer and research psychologist. He recently retired as the dean of Academics at the Medical Education and Training Campus in San Antonio, Texas.

Operational assignments for Nordholm include recalled enlisted active duty service for Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm as a Naval Reserve hospital corpsman and more recently, he was officer in charge of the Navy's Mobile Care Team in Afghanistan. Nordholm has had extensive staff assignments on the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) staff in both manpower and resources. He was the lead medical



*Navy Captain Alan Nordholm has been appointed as the chief of staff for the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences Western Region Office. (Photo by Tom Balfour)*

officer on a CNO-directed task force to revolutionize Navy training. Additionally, he established the Military Liaison Office at NASA Ames Research Laboratory in Mountain View, Calif.

## Dean's Annual Faculty Teaching Awards, continued from pg. 5

review and adjustments of lectures and lecture notes. This year, Mears undertook an effort to revamp the order of instruction so that students would have a more seamless instructional experience. Mears is well known for his care and attention to student needs during the module and throughout the year. Each year after completing a round of neuroscience education, Mears takes stock of both his performance and the performance of the module overall. This process begins the

planning for the subsequent year's teaching and keeps Mears engaged in what he loves to do – teach.

Dr. Gary Wynn, associate professor and assistant chair, Department of Psychiatry, further describes him as being “arguably one of the best educators at this institution as evidenced by the engagement of his students, their long-term performance, student feedback about his teaching, and his receipt of the Most Engaging Module Director award for the Class of 2018. These out-

standing outcomes are the product of his dedication and hard work.”

Both winners will be recognized by placement of their names on tribute bricks in the USU courtyard.

# University remembers Col. Cliff Lutz

By Christopher Austin

Friends, family, faculty, staff and students gathered in Sanford Auditorium on Oct. 3 for a memorial service to pay tribute to retired Army Col. (Dr.) Clifford Lutz, who passed away unexpectedly in August.

Lutz was a 1993 alumnus of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine, and served for several years as a faculty member and vice chair for education in the Department of Military and Emergency Medicine at USU before retiring from the Army.

“When I think about Cliff, all I remember is his smile and words of encouragement,” said Army Col. (Dr.) Melissa Givens, assistant professor of MEM, in her personal reflections of Lutz during the service. “He was my faculty when I was a resident and every time I came on a shift, I had a sensation of relief when I walked into that room. I always knew it was going to be okay. No matter what happened, I was going to learn, we were going to take great care of patients, and we were going to have a good time doing it. I’m hoping that, standing up here, I can put a smile on my face because I think that’s what Cliff would want.”

Givens read comments from her emergency medicine residency classmates, who also expressed their appreciation for the time they spent with Lutz.

Retired Army Lt. Col. James Schwartz, deputy chair of MEM, spoke about his own experiences with Lutz, recalling their shared interest in fly fishing.

“I remember one day he brought all his fly fishing paraphernalia into

the office and showed me how to tie a fly. We talked about fly fishing, both the art and science of it. I remember we finally set up a day where we would go fly fishing. We found an area in the Shenandoah and he lent me all the gear. He showed me a bunch of the different techniques in fly fishing. I remember wading in the stream with him and out of nowhere he turned to me with a total look of contentment and told me, ‘Hey, this is really what it’s all about.’ We didn’t catch much that day, but I could tell that Cliff really didn’t care. It was more about appreciating the surroundings and experience, and spending time with friends.”

Schwartz went on to praise Lutz as a mentor to students, saying that “he always told it like it is, but always in a compassionate way.”

“He was absolutely loved at the university, but most importantly, with the students he was trusted,” Army Col. (Dr.) Francis O’Connor, chair of MEM, said during the service.

O’Connor relayed a situation that took place several years ago where some students on an external rotation observed some inappropriate behavior and chose to confide in Lutz rather than reporting it to O’Connor, Student Affairs, or the medical school dean.

“Cliff knew what to do. But it wasn’t easy. It led to a very tough series of decisions that led to Cliff



Retired Army Col. (Dr.) Clifford Charles Lutz, Jr., passed away unexpectedly on Thursday, Aug. 25 in North Carolina. He was 49 years old. (Photo by Tom Balfour)

confronting a long-time mentor and making the call of cutting ties,” O’Connor said. “Cliff Lutz, will always be, to me, a hero for this school because when he had to make that tough call, he knew what he had to do and did it.”

In his honor, MEM established the “Dr. Clifford Lutz Bushmaster Honor Platoon Award” to recognize the platoon with the highest ratings during Operation Bushmaster. O’Connor said he believed Lutz would want a way to recognize a team rather than an individual. The plaque will be hung in the Military and Emergency Medicine department hallway.

# Final Frame



*Army 2nd Lt. Yizhen Liu, a student at the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine practices intubation on Hero, a simulated canine that will be used during Operation Bushmaster. Army Major Cara Reiter, a resident of the Department of Laboratory Animal Medicine at Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences demonstrated some of Hero's features to students, including a simulated pulse and blood pressure that can be controlled remotely from the simulator, during a demonstration of the simulators being used during Operation Bushmaster on Sept. 30 under the breezeway. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Stephanie Morris)*