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A Day in the Life of Bushmaster



Learning to Care for Those in Harm's Way

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Honorable Melvin R. Laird, key figure in creation of USU, passes away at 94



The Honorable Melvin R. Laird, former congressman and secretary of defense under President Richard Nixon, stands center behind the former commander-in-chief as he signs the charter that created the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. Laird passed away on Nov. 16. He was 94. (Courtesy Photo)

By Sharon Holland

The Honorable Melvin R. Laird, former congressman and secretary of defense, passed away Nov. 16 at the age of 94. Widely touted as one of the best defense secretaries the nation has ever had, Laird was key to the establishment of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU).

As secretary, Laird was responsible for the successful transition to an all-volunteer force (AVF). However, as a champion of health care and medical research, he recognized that medical recruitment was the primary weakness in the AVF. When he discussed the establishment of the nation's "medical academy" with Congressman F. Edward Hébert, chair of the House Armed Services Committee, Laird recognized that USU was both the solution and the cornerstone of the AVF.

Hébert had long advocated for the establishment of what he styled "the West Point of military medicine," but had been rebuffed by successive administrations. Hébert engineered the passage of the bill that established the university and created the Health Professions Scholarship Program, and Secretary Laird persuaded President Nixon to sign it.

Laird recruited both David Packard, his deputy secretary of defense, as first chair of USU's Board of Regents, and Dr. Anthony Curreri, a prominent thoracic surgeon from the University of Wisconsin, as USU's first president. He assisted them in recruiting other regents and led the effort to fund the original campus buildings. When the next administration questioned

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**On the cover**

Students take part in a casualty exercise during Medical Field Practicum 202, or Operation Bushmaster, at Fort Indiantown Gap north of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The scenarios tested the students' medical knowledge in a variety of situations. See story on pg. 8. (Photo by Tom Balfour)

Nurses discuss 'Fearless Leadership' at USU Bagin Lecture

By Bernard S. Little, WRNMMC
Public Affairs staff writer

"It's the time for nursing science," said Marion E. Broome, Ph.D., a registered nurse and guest speaker during the Uniformed Services University's Daniel K. Inouye Graduate School of Nursing's (GSN) Lt. Col. Isabelle Bagin Memorial Lecture on Nov. 10 at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

The dean and vice chancellor for nursing at Duke University, Broome discussed "Fearless Leadership, Using Nursing Science to Improve Health," during her presentation.

She explained nursing science includes organized knowledge ("collective genius") which must be continually improved upon in order to provide the best patient care possible.

"I believe it is the unique role of nurse leaders in all areas to co-lead health outcomes improvement initiatives. However, to do that, we must mobilize knowledge, analytic abilities, expertise and most important, the public's trust," Broome said. "We have to do this in partnership with our patients, families and the communities we serve," she added.

Broome said environmental forces and economic factors will drive changes in health care, and nurses must continue their legacy of "speaking out and advocating" for patients. "I think we have to use our knowledge and science to be able to improve health in this country, because frankly, if not us, then who?" she asked.



Marion E. Broome, Ph.D., a registered nurse, and dean and vice chancellor for nursing at Duke University, discusses, "Fearless Leadership: Using Nursing Science to Improve Health," during Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences' lecture at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center on Nov. 10. (Photo by Bernard S. Little)

She explained the issues facing health care include "disparities in longevity [amongst individuals and groups]; social determinants; healthy aging and dignified, peaceful dying; the role of personalized/precision medicine; innovative models of care that engage the individual, family and community; and data driven decision-making goals."

To face these and other challenges, Broome explained that nurse leaders must "act now to build nursing cultures capable of massive and transformational change – change that will alter the way education and patient care is perceived, delivered and evaluated."

She also encouraged nurse leaders to "embrace new thinking that gives nurse educators and researchers 'permission to fail' as innovation emerges." Nurse leaders must also be "transformative, authentic, empower others, challenge themselves, support creativity, professional, team players,

competent, learn from failure, and effective communicators. They must be able to "see what 'can be'...not just 'what is.'"

Dr. Carol A. Romano, dean of the GSN, agreed, adding that nurses should "embrace challenges to their roles, exert fearless leadership, and improve health care for those we serve."

Air Force Col. Marla De Jong, Ph.D., interim associate dean for research at the GSN, explained that the late Army Nurse Lt. Col. Isabelle Bagin, after whom the memorial lecture is named, "valued nursing education, science, scholarship and military nursing practice."

To encourage future nursing students to pursue careers as Army nurses, Bagin bequeathed funds to be used for scholarships, educational activities, research and other scholarly purposes such as the Bagin Memorial Lecture.

Dr. Jonathan Woodson named to USU Board of Regents

By Sharon Holland

Jonathan Woodson, M.D., former assistant secretary of defense for Health Affairs, was appointed by the secretary of defense to serve as a member of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) Board of Regents. Woodson was officially sworn in as a member of the board on Dec. 9, 2016.

"I am very pleased with the appointment of Dr. Jonathan Woodson to the Board of Regents," said retired Army Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Ronald Blanck, chair of USU's Board of Regents, former Army surgeon general and chairman of Martin, Blanck and Associates, who administered the oath to Woodson at the swearing-in. "He brings a wealth of experience not only in government, but in the military and in academics. We are extremely fortunate to have him on the Board."

Woodson, a vascular surgeon, is the director of Boston University's (BU) Institute for Health System Innovation and Policy, based in BU's Questrom School of Business, and Larz Anderson Professor in Management and Professor of the Practice. He also holds appointments as a School of Medicine professor of surgery and a School of Public Health professor of health law, policy, and management at BU. Prior to his appointment by President Obama as assistant secretary, Woodson served as the associate dean for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs and professor of Surgery at the BU School of Medicine.

As assistant secretary, Woodson was principal advisor to the secretary of defense for Health Issues and administered the more than \$50 billion Military Health System (MHS) budget. He oversaw the care for more than 9.4 million beneficiaries worldwide and led a force of more than 133,000 military and civilian doctors, nurses, medical educators, researchers, health care providers, allied health professionals, and health administration personnel throughout the world, providing the United States with an integrated health care delivery and expeditionary medical, educational, and research capability.

Woodson is a graduate of the City College of New York and the New York University School of Medicine. He received his postgraduate medical education at Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School, and completed residency training in internal medicine and general and vascular surgery. He is board-certified in internal medicine, general surgery, vascular surgery, and critical care surgery. He also holds a master's degree in Strategic Studies, with a concentration in strategic leadership, from the U.S.



Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Jonathan Woodson, M.D., was appointed by the Secretary of Defense to serve on the Board of Regents at Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. (Photo by Boston University)

Army War College. In 1992, he was awarded a research fellowship at the Association of American Medical Colleges Health Services Research Institute.

Woodson is the recipient of the 2009 Gold Humanism in Medicine Award from the Association of American Medical Colleges. He is a brigadier general in the U.S. Army Reserves and was deployed in Saudi Arabia in Operation Desert

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Retired Rear Adm. (Dr.) William Roberts named Uniformed Services University senior vice president

By Sharon Holland

The former commandant of the Department of Defense's Medical Education and Training Campus in San Antonio, Texas, and more recently the Military Health System's functional champion, retired Navy Rear Adm. (Dr.) William Roberts was selected as the senior vice president of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences' (USU) newly-established Western Region office in San Diego, California. As senior vice president, Roberts is charged with supporting the University's education and research mission, and developing and fostering strategic partnerships with Military Health System sites throughout the Western United States that are key to USU student education.

"I am thrilled and humbled to be joining the USU team in order to support the University's high-performing, interdisciplinary professionals as they educate and train the Military Health System's future leaders," said Roberts, who began his new duties on Nov. 1.

"I am very pleased to welcome Dr. William Roberts to the USU senior leadership team. Bill has had a very distinguished career in the Military Health System as a clinician, educator and administrator. He has tremendous experience leading complex organizations and has a strong commitment to our students and our mission. Bill will play a key role in USU's future," said Dr. Richard Thomas, USU's President.

A native of Washington, D.C., Roberts was raised in Europe while

his father served as a diplomat in the U.S. Foreign Service. He earned his bachelor's degree (cum laude) from Princeton University, his Doctor of Medicine degree from George Washington University, and a Master in Business Administration degree from Edinburgh Business School in Edinburgh, Scotland. He was commissioned a lieutenant in the Navy's Medical Corps in May 1979, completed his surgical internship at the Naval Regional Medical Center San Diego, and graduated from the University of Chicago Emergency

Medicine residency, where he served as chief resident from 1987-1988.

In addition to his last assignments, Roberts' Navy career included serving as senior medical officer on the USS New Orleans and USS Durham with deployments to the Western Pacific and Indian Oceans; clinical and leadership positions at the Naval Station, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, and Naval Training Center Clinics in San Diego; and emergency medicine staff tours at



Retired Navy Rear Adm. (Dr.) William Roberts has been named senior vice president of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences' newly-established Western Region office. (Photo by Tom Balfour)

Naval Medical Center San Diego and at the U.S. Naval Hospital Guam where he also served as director of Medical Services and as chief of the medical staff. Roberts later served as chair of the Emergency Medicine Ambulatory Care department at the Naval Medical Center San Diego (which comprised the Navy's first Emergency Medicine residency) and as commanding officer of

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University NCO balances duty, writing career

By Christopher Austin

Army Sgt. 1st Class Ruth Hunt is known at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) as the Army senior enlisted advisor and non-commissioned officer in charge of Laboratory Animal Medicine (LAM), but few are aware she's also a published author.

Her most recent publication is a poem titled *End of Watch*, which she wrote to cope with peers who had passed away. It appears in *Proud to Be: Writing by American Warriors, Volume 5*, an anthology series of writings from Service members.

"[I enjoy writing because] you can get every thought, feeling and experience out on paper without feeling judged. It's your choice to share your writings, and you choose which specific works you wish to make public," Hunt said. "I've found that the stories I'm most terrified of telling openly are the ones that seem to receive the biggest response. Writing connects people when readers discover they may be experiencing something similar to the story you have shared. When they see how you made it through, it reassures them that they can make it as well."

A writer since grade school, Hunt has been pursuing her interest alongside her military career. Currently, she is enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts degree program at University of Maryland University College, majoring in English. She is scheduled to graduate in May 2017 with the intention to begin her master's degree immediately after.

A high school teacher encouraged her interest in writing, giving her a handmade journal to write down ideas.

"The journal was a high school graduation gift that I've kept with me. I have different journals for different things," Hunt said. "I have one for my kids; I keep a book of quotes for each. I write funny stuff they say in there. A lot of [the longer things I write] are in Word documents. The high school journal is mostly for short poems or experiences I am having at that moment."

While most of her work is non-fiction, Hunt likes to relax by reading works of fiction, particularly the works of authors such as Kim Harrison and Kelly Armstrong.

She cites Maya Angelou, particularly her poem *Why the Caged Bird Sings*, as one of her influences.

Hunt's first publication was in college. *More Than a Soul Mate*, was a non-fiction short story about herself and her adopted son as they dealt with her upcoming deployment. It appeared in *Mothers and Other Creatures, a bioStories Magazine Anthology*.

"Part of the final for my college course was to submit a work somewhere for publication.



Army Senior Enlisted Advisor for Laboratory Animal Medicine Sgt. 1st Class Ruth Hunt, balances her career in the military with writing. Her second published work was released this year in "Proud to Be: Writing by American Warriors, Vol. 5." (Photo by Sharon Holland)

Whether we got in or not, we had to show the teacher that we had done all the steps and sent it in. So I just searched for a journal that kind of fit the story, submitted it and, sure enough, they got back to me and told me they'd like to publish it," she said. "It was cool that it came out of a college assignment."

Originally from Corpus Christi, Texas, Hunt first enlisted in the Army 16 years ago. She says she's always cared for animals, and decided to pursue a career in the Army because it is the only branch with veterinary technicians.

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VA Patient Safety team offers GSN Doctor of Nursing Practice Students lessons on effective leadership, ‘Just Culture’

By Sarah Marshall

An atmosphere of trust, in which individuals are rewarded for providing safety-related information, is essential to fostering a “just culture” – and ultimately providing safe, quality care, according to members of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Center for Patient Safety (NCPS), who recently offered a seminar to the Daniel K. Inouye Graduate School of Nursing (GSN) Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.

The three-hour clinical team training seminar was part of the Organizational and Systems Leadership in Healthcare course, taught in the first year of a three-year DNP program. The seminar consisted of scenario-based case studies, which incorporated ethical dilemmas and decision-making challenges. The team emphasized the importance of effective “leadership-follower” and “just culture,” which they explained helps create highly reliable organizations in support of patient safety and mitigating risk.

The VA Patient Safety team included Dr. Robin Hemphill, NCPS director; Gary Sculli, director of NCPS’s Clinical Team Training Program; and Dr. Keith Essen, who works in the NCPS’s Office of Quality, Safety and Value. The team explained a “just culture” is an atmosphere of trust, where individuals are encouraged and rewarded for providing essential safety-related information. When



Gary Sculli, M.S.N., director of the VA National Center for Patient Safety's Clinical Team Training Program, recently gave a lecture to Graduate School of Nursing students at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, offering lessons on leadership and creating a "just culture." (Photo by Sarah Marshall)

individuals feel they can report an issue to leadership, even their own errors, without fear of reprisal, the organization is able to learn about its failures and will then be able to continue improving care delivery.

A leader is only as good as the information they possess, Sculli said, and team members should be feeding that information to the leader. “You, as a leader, want the team participating with you,” he said.

A nurse and former airline pilot, Sculli explained that a team that’s engaged will relay pertinent, safety-related concerns to its leadership. To

engage a team, he suggests leaders balance their focus on the people and the task at hand. At times, it might be best to solely focus on the task – during a “code blue” (a hospital emergency code for cardiac arrest), for example, there’s no time to pause, and take into account how a team member feels about retrieving the crash cart. But in other situations it’s more important to focus on the team – perhaps an employee is falling behind in their work. Instead of a leader berating them, focus on the individual, and whether they’re dealing with a personal crisis, that might be impacting their work.

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A Day in the Life of Bushmaster

From Oct. 8-21, fourth-year medical students from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences' (USU) F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine, the Daniel K. Inouye Graduate School of Nursing, and visiting foreign students, took part in Medical Field Practicum 202, also known as Operation Bushmaster. In the mountains at Fort Indiantown Gap, north of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, students were tested on the skills they've learned over the course of their four years at USU.

Exercises included helicopter evacuations, simulated injured service dogs, and a variety of simulated casualty scenarios. While the operation is meant to test the students' knowledge of military medicine, its overall intention is to challenge participants' leadership and teamwork skills.



Photo by Tom Balfour



Photo by Sharon Holland

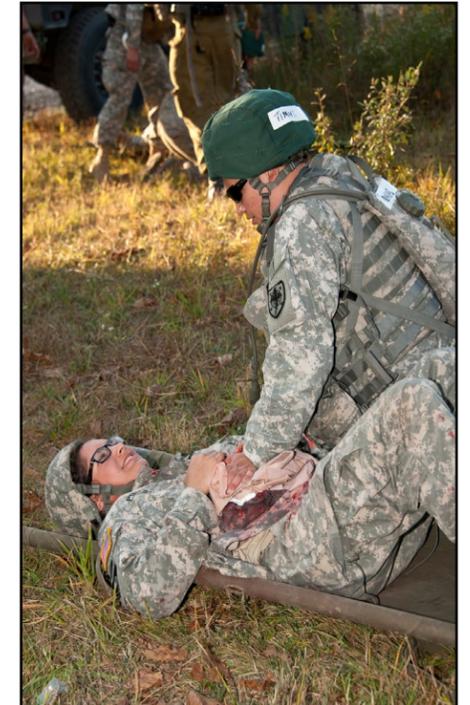


Photo by Tom Balfour

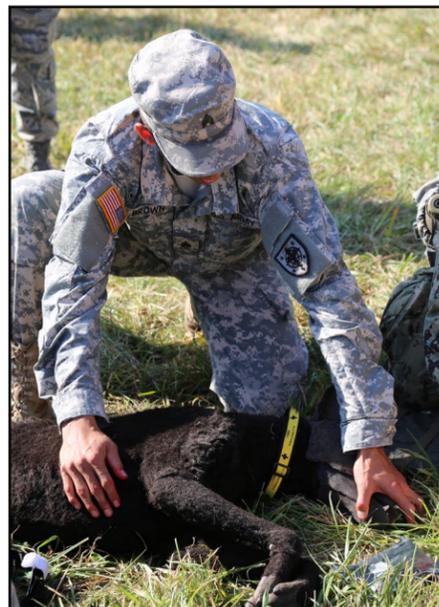


Photo by Sarah Marshall



Photo by Sharon Holland



Photo by Sarah Marshall



Photo by Tom Balfour

Operation Bushmaster, continued



Photo by Sarah Marshall



Photo by Sarah Marshall



Photo by Sharon Holland



Photo by Tom Balfour



Photo by Tom Balfour



Photo by Tom Balfour



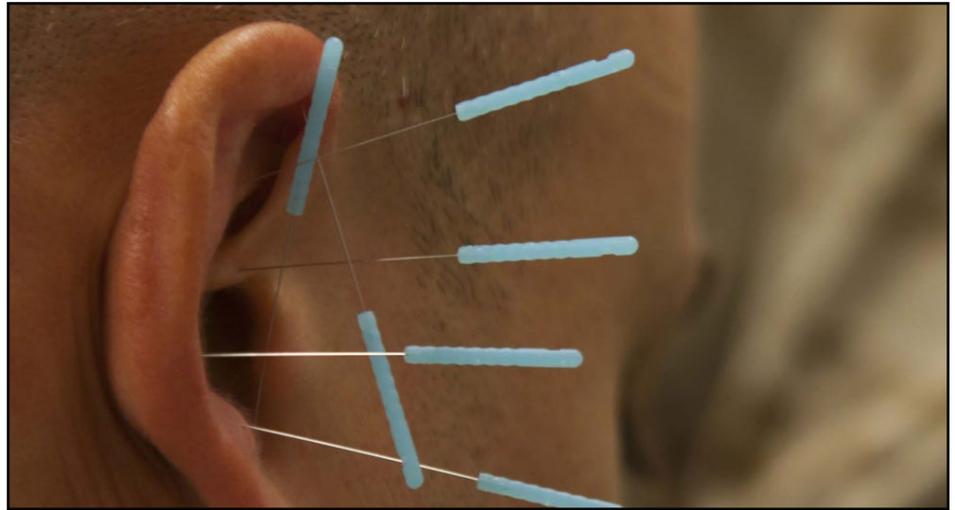
Photo by Tom Balfour

On point: USU making strides to integrate battlefield acupuncture

By Sarah Marshall

After surviving an IED attack that killed several comrades, three Soldiers subsequently suffered pounding post-concussive headaches consistent with mild traumatic brain injury, and assorted musculoskeletal injuries, along with profound grief and anger. Upon receiving battlefield acupuncture, the Soldiers each reported decreased musculoskeletal pain and headaches, and a “state of calm and relaxation.” In another instance, a 19-year-old Marine suffering from severe low back pain reported being nearly pain free – with an increase in range of motion and flexibility – after receiving just 10 acupuncture needles.

These anecdotal responses from the field demonstrate the value of integrating this emerging integrative therapy throughout the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Experts at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) recently published an article in the American Academy of Nursing’s Nursing Outlook, highlighting their efforts to incorporate integrative medicine, including battlefield acupuncture, as part of their ongoing efforts to continue supporting the warfighter. Dr. Patricia Hinton Walker, vice president for Policy and Strategic Initiatives at USU, was the primary author, along with Dr. Arnyce Pock, associate dean for Curriculum in the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine (SOM), Catherine Ling, assistant professor in the Daniel K. Inouye Graduate School of Nursing’s (GSN)



Acupuncture needles protrude from the ear of a patient at the combined aid station on Camp Leatherneck, Helmand province, Afghanistan. (Photo By Marine Sgt. Paul Peterson)

Family Nurse Practitioner DNP and Ph.D. programs, and Kyung “Nancy” Kwon, senior research manager, and Megan Vaughan, project manager, from the Defense Veterans Center for Integrative Pain Management (DVCIPM).

Battlefield acupuncture, an auricular (ear) acupuncture procedure, uses small, stud-shaped acupuncture needles inserted into points on the outer ear, stimulating nerves that modify pain signals in the brain. This, in turn, ameliorates pain and stress associated with illnesses or trauma in the body. These needles are semi-permanent, so they can stay in the ear longer for lasting stimulation. Since the ears are almost always accessible, this therapy can easily be accomplished without disrupting other medical procedures, and generally the patient should experience a reduced pain period lasting anywhere from a few minutes to several months, according to the article. While the

duration of its effectiveness varies between patients, it is quick, safe, and easy to learn. It also has minimal to no side effects, and there are no concerns with drug interactions. It’s also cost-effective – the cost of a single need is about 50 cents.

The downside, however, has been a lack of evidenced-based research to show its effectiveness, according to Dr. Trip Buckenmaier, DVCIPM program director. However, over the last several years, this has been, and continues to be, an active area of research, he said. “We’ve been successful at stimulating the research community, and have made great strides in incorporating integrative medicine in the military, particularly acupuncture.”

While the use of acupuncture has a long history in Chinese medicine, and has been widely used to treat pain, auricular acupuncture was believed to have first been described

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Alvarez, Cunningham, selected as employees of the quarter

By Christopher Austin

Nelly Alvarez, deputy director of Security, and Annette Cunningham, program support specialist at the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine (SOM), were selected as the senior and junior employees of the third quarter of 2016, respectively, at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU).

Alvarez has worked at USU for 18 years, 12 of which were in Security. She was selected based on her performance of duties during her time as acting Security director during the selection of the current director, Chris Mottler. She also implemented a unique personnel screening system that streamlined the process for SOM applicants.

In addition, Alvarez implemented new processes for overseeing suitability and eligibility of security investigation packets, served as the primary liaison between Security and the Admissions and Registrar's offices. Alvarez also served as the primary liaison for USU with the Office of Personnel Management, the Consolidated Adjudication Facility, and other security agencies. Currently, she monitors the Electronic Questionnaires for Investigation Processing system used by incoming students, oversees suitability and clearance investigations for all federal employees, and manages re-investigations.

"Ms. Alvarez has been highly efficient in the management of time and attendance of the Security Department. She effectively monitored the department's leave



Nelly Alvarez, deputy director of Security, has been selected as the senior employee of the third quarter of 2016 at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.. (Photo by Tom Balfour)

requests, sick leave, and tour of duty, ensuring they are recorded properly into Defense Agency Initiative," Mottler said in his recommendation letter for Alvarez. "She worked closely with Civilian Human Resources to certify the department's time and attendance in a timely fashion."

Mottler went on to compliment Alvarez's commitment to aiding customers and her "can-do" attitude, in addition to the quality of her work in her many duties.

"Ms. Alvarez's dedication has proven to be an outstanding attribute to the USUHS Security Department, as well as the university. She has demonstrated an unwavering professional attitude as the deputy director of the Security Department," Mottler said in the closing of his letter. "Ms. Alvarez has clearly demonstrated the significant



Annette Cunningham, program support specialist for the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine, has been selected as the junior employee of the third quarter of 2016 at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. (Photo by Tom Balfour)

accomplishments to be nominated for the employee of the quarter."

Cunningham's selection as junior employee of the quarter was based on her excellent service to the university through the administrative support she provides to the Department of Medicine's Clinical Pharmacology Division, the Clinical Research Unit and associated division members.

Her duties include providing support for division operations, handling budgets, movement of funds, managing salaries for contract personnel, and overseeing expenditures to support the department's research and education mission.

"She expertly coordinated the removal of unserviceable

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Melvin R. Laird, continued from pg. 2

the expense and need for the University, Laird called President Carter's Defense Secretary Harold Brown to discuss the challenges of physician recruitment and retention, their importance to maintaining the AVF, and to emphasize that USU was the backbone of the physician recruitment and retention plan – a theme he reiterated on many subsequent occasions.

Laird was always among USU's strongest supporters. Despite being years out of office, he continued to demonstrate his commitment and dedication to the USU mission. In fact, each time the University faced the threat of closure, former Secretary Laird, on his own initiative, would weigh in with whoever the secretary of defense was at the time to voice his support for the University.

He was a WWII Navy veteran and a Purple Heart recipient for injuries sustained during a kamikaze attack on the destroyer on which he was

assigned. He served for more than 16 years in Congress, where he was a member of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee and ranking member of the Labor and Health, Education and Welfare Subcommittees, before becoming secretary of defense in 1969 under President Richard M. Nixon. He was largely credited with securing the return of U.S. prisoners of war from Vietnam. In 1973, he left the position and returned to government service as counselor to the president for Domestic Affairs.

In addition to his expertise in defense, Laird was also extremely passionate about health care and medical research. While a member of Congress, he formed a bipartisan alliance to expand federal funding for the National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as research programs. In 1964, he was presented with the Lasker Foundation's Albert

Lasker Award for his advocacy of medical research, and later the Laird Center for Medical Research at the Marshfield Clinic in Wisconsin, his home state, was named for him. He also continued his commitment to health care and research by serving on the council of directors of the Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine from 1984-1996.

Defense Secretary Ash Carter called the passing of Laird "a loss for the United States and the Department of Defense," in a statement released Nov. 18. Laird, he said, "demonstrated an unfailing commitment to protecting our country, strengthening our military, and making a better world."

"He accomplished many things in his career, but his role in establishing USU may be one of his most enduring and life-saving legacies," said Dr. Arthur Kellermann, dean of USU's F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine.

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Storm, in Kosovo, in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is a former senior medical officer with the National Disaster Management System, where he responded to the Sept. 11 attack on the World Trade Center. Woodson's many military awards and decorations include the Department of Defense Distinguished Public Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, and the Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster.



Edmund Burke, equal employment opportunity assistant at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU), guides runners on the path for USU's Combined Federal Campaign 5k Walk/Run on Nov. 10. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Dillon, U.S. Army)

William Roberts, continued from pg. 5

the Medical Treatment Facility of the USNS Mercy. In 1998, he was appointed deputy commander of the Naval Medical Center San Diego, and subsequently served as the force surgeon to the commander of the Naval Surface Forces in Coronado, California. Roberts' commanded the Naval Hospital in Bremerton, Washington from 2003 to 2006.

Following a one-year tour as deputy director of the Medical Resources, Plans and Policy Division (OPNAV N931) at the Pentagon, Roberts was promoted to rear admiral and was assigned as the Medical Officer of the Marine Corps from 2007 to 2008. He then returned to the Pentagon and to OPNAV N931, where he served as the director 2008 to 2010, followed by a tour as fleet surgeon for the

U. S. Fleet Forces Command in Norfolk, Virginia. Roberts also served as consultant in Emergency Medicine to the Navy Surgeon General and as chief of the Navy's Medical Corps. He has been named a "Hero of Emergency Medicine" by the American College of Emergency Physicians and was selected for their "Excellence in Emergency Medicine" Award.

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"I'm very impressed by Sgt. 1st Class Hunt's creative talent and her ability to achieve this and other professional and personal goals,"

said Army Lt. Col. Larry Shelton, Jr., director of LAM at USU. "This is particularly significant given her current service in two

significant leadership roles at USU. Very inspiring, above and beyond accomplishment!"

VA Patient Safety, continued from pg. 7

"What you have to think about as a leader – the way you interact with your team – is really situation-dependent ... balancing that focus on people and task," he said.

He also suggests leaders engage their teams by using interpersonal skills.

"Greet your team at the start of the day," he said. "Being polite and being interpersonal is a great way to loosen up the team, so they feel relaxed enough to speak up. That's what you want."

It's also crucial to encourage your team to speak up when something doesn't seem "right," or if something doesn't look safe. You must invite participation, and it needs to be done frequently, he said. Much like an airline pilot would brief the crew before each flight, he said, you

should brief your team at the start of each shift, encouraging everyone to speak up if they have a concern.

And as part of "just culture," individuals shouldn't fear they'll be punished for speaking up, nor should they be punished for speaking up, NCPS Director Hemphill added. Of course, when an individual makes a deliberate mistake, they should be held accountable and the appropriate action should be taken. However, when they make an unintentional error, it's important to look deeper into what went wrong and why – perhaps it's a flaw in the system.

If a nurse gives a patient a snack, when that patient "clearly" had a sign above their bed, warning they could not ingest food by mouth – and then that patient falls ill – it's important

to take a step back, and judge the outcome, not the procedure, Hemphill said. By looking into what went wrong, perhaps you'll discover that the "sign" above the bed was not an effective barrier. When you find such vulnerabilities, she said, correct them in a timely manner, or take them out of the system. This will allow you to continue fostering a safe environment, while providing high quality care.

Air Force 1st Lt. Rachael Antone, a Family Nurse Practitioner student, was among the many who attended the lecture. She appreciated the opportunity, and said it helped her understand the importance each individual has as part of a team.

"It was an excellent class, and the information was clearly presented, and very applicable," she said.

Battlefield Acupuncture, continued from pg. 12

in 1950 as a micro-acupuncture technique by Paul Nogier, a physician in France. Nogier coined the concept of using an inverted fetus homunculus, or “map,” on the outer ear. This “map” is used today as a visual guide of the ear acupuncture points, used to relieve symptoms effecting various regions of the body. Over the years, research has supported the connection between medical diagnosis and the “body” represented on the outer ear. Today, both in the military and civilian sectors, ear acupuncture is practiced by interdisciplinary providers.

Historically, though, the military and civilian medical communities had primarily emphasized an opioid-based approach to pain management, but that began to change as providers gained a deeper understanding of pain and pain management. In 2003, the Comprehensive Pain Center of Excellence evolved, ultimately becoming the now DVCIPM –

the Defense and Veterans Center of Excellence for Pain – at USU. Based on concerns of opiate overuse, in 2008, the military began exploring options to reduce opioid dependence. In 2009, under the then Army Surgeon General Lt. Gen. Eric Schoomaker, the Army Pain Management Task Force was created. Subsequently, under the Task Force leadership of then Maj. Gen. Richard Thomas, holistic, multimodal approaches were developed. Today at DVCIPM, Buckenmaier and an inter-professional team continue to focus on pain research, policy, and training, to include development of complementary integrative pain management approaches within military health care, Walker said.

Through their continued efforts, DVCIPM has initiated education and training programs throughout the Military Health System and VA, implementing battlefield acupuncture training to keep addressing the national opioid

crisis. Their efforts have also led to nearly every DoD facility, and an increasing number of VA facilities, now having at least one individual trained in battlefield acupuncture. Additionally, in collaboration with the VA, USU continues to develop large-scale research studies on proposed initiatives to assess the impact of pain on patient function and quality of life, with changes in the use of opioids and other drugs, emphasizing the use of complementary health approaches. They’ve also been able to collaborate with the VA to develop, test, and implement the Standardized Pain Assessment Tools, such as the Defense and Veterans Pain Rating Scale. The center also serves USU and DoD as the federal medicine representative on the NIH Interagency Pain Research Coordinating Committee that was responsible for the recently released National Pain Strategy document.

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equipment, old files, excess furniture and other material from hallways, offices and lab spaces,” said Dr. Louis Pangaro, professor and chair of the SOM, in a recommendation letter for Cunningham’s selection. “Her herculean efforts did not go unnoticed, earning high praise for the much-improved work spaces from department, SOM and university leadership on a tour of the facility this last August.”

Cunningham’s actions have directly contributed to extending the research capability of USU, Pangaro said. She did this by working closely with Clinical Research Unit managers to coordinate logistical support for researchers and patients across USU, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. She also coordinated support for a Hepatitis C therapy study and a nonalcoholic steatohepatitis study.

“Ms. Cunningham has displayed great initiative; she is a creative problem solver, highly dedicated to the mission of the department and has been invaluable in the growth of the department’s research mission,” Pangaro said. “Without question, she is clearly deserving of the honor of being named junior employee of the quarter.”

Cunningham has worked at the SOM for the last 28 years.

Final Frame



Navy Seaman Angel Jones and Marine Capt. Ronald Calloway cut a cake at Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences' ceremony to celebrate the Navy's 241st birthday at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, Nov. 10. It is Navy custom for the first piece of cake to be passed from the oldest to the youngest to signify the passing of experience and knowledge from the old to the young. (Photo by Mass Communications Specialist 2nd Class Laura Bailey, U.S. Navy)