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News Release

USU, "The West Point for Military Medicine" Hosts Showing of Powerful Documentary about Nation's Military Medical University

BETHESDA, MD. – The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences' (USU) F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine Dean Larry Laughlin, M.D., Ph.D., is hosting a special showing of the documentary "Fighting for Life" during the Association of American Medical Colleges Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas.

This powerful and emotional documentary focuses on the role USU plays in educating leaders in military medicine and looks at the care they provide to servicemen and women injured in combat. Academy Award-winning filmmaker Terry Sanders produced the documentary, which was the brainchild of Mrs. Tammy Alvarez, president of the "Friends of USU" organization. Alvarez's son, Navy Lt. Bryan Alvarez, is a 2005 graduate of USU. The film tells the story of the courageous battle of some of the wounded troops, their struggles, and also the stories of a large number of USU alumni and faculty who work to save their lives.

"I started out to make a film about the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, 'the best medical school no one's ever heard of,' as its students called it. It was to be an in-depth portrait of this very special institution, the 'West Point' of military medicine, which has trained more than 25% of current active duty military physicians," said Terry Sanders, two-time Academy Award Winner and producer of the film. "The film was to explore why, in spite of the school's great value, excellence and reputation, Congress and the Department of Defense kept trying to close it. But the Iraq War intervened, and the film grew until it became an odyssey through the world of military medicine in a time of war."

USU is a traditional academic health center with a unique set of programs all dedicated to preparing health care practitioners to take care of those in harm's way, whether they are troops in battle abroad or those hurt in disasters at home. Students are educated in a broad range of military relevant topics, including advanced trauma life support, preventive medicine, patient care in flight and medical considerations following biological attack and combat stress control. The School of Medicine has a year-round, four-year curriculum, which is nearly 700 hours longer than other U.S. medical schools. USU grants the degrees of M.D., Ph.D., Dr.P.H., M.P.H., M.S., and M.S.N. Many of its graduates are supporting operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, offering their leadership and expertise. Approximately one-fourth of all active-duty military medical officers are USU graduates.

The film will be shown at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, Tuesday, Nov. 4 at 8 a.m. Media interested in attending the special showing should contact TSgt Andre Nicholson by cell phone at 703-623-1703 or Ms. Sharon Willis 301-651-6944.