

The Point

A newsletter for and about the people of the
**U.S. Army Medical Research
 and Materiel Command**
Spring 2009



Commander of Fort Detrick and USAMRMC Set to Retire



MG George W. Weightman

Most people at Fort Detrick know MG George W. Weightman, Commander of the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (USAMRMC), as a general officer who remembers everyone's names, rides his bicycle to work, and takes the time to ensure that the Soldiers and

civilians are taken care of, physically and mentally, on the installation.

One of his mantras is basic—the Golden Rule—treat others as you would want to be treated. And after 36 years of service, the U.S. Army will say farewell to one of its finest general officers. Weightman, a Vermont native, says

he plans on retiring to Winston-Salem, North Carolina, to be closer to his daughter since his two sons are currently serving in the Army. He has not chosen his second career but would like to do something service related. “I would like to do something that contributes to society.”

In fact, Weightman went from being an infantryman into the medical field because he wanted to not only do what he was trained to do but to impact society. “As a captain, I was frustrated that we trained a lot but never really got to do what we trained to do. I became interested in the medical field because my roommate was studying medicine plus I had two sisters who were in the medical field,” said Weightman. “I was only married for a year before I got into the medical field. Perhaps this wasn't the smartest choice financially, but it worked out.”

And when considering Weightman's years of service and distinguished career, “worked out” is certainly an understatement. He served as Chief, Department of Primary Care and Community Medicine at Keller Army Community Hospital in West Point, New York. Next, he was Director of the Womack Army Medical Center before commanding the Medical Element, Joint Task Force Bravo, Soto Cano, Honduras. He commanded the McDonald Army Community Hospital, Fort Eustis, Virginia, and

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CDMRP Receives Funding for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury Research

This past year marked a dramatic increase in psychological health and traumatic brain injury research when the Office of the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) was given \$301 million to advance the military's understanding of how these injuries occur and how they can be treated. Falling under the auspices of the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command at Fort Detrick, Maryland, the CDMRP granted 201 awards with the unprecedented fiscal 2007 funds, according to Director CAPT Melissa Kaime, U.S. Navy. Mild traumatic brain injuries and psychological health issues, especially post-traumatic stress disorder, can have many overlapping symptoms, said Kaime, which is why

CDMRP is researching them together. "We have the money now that we can fund the entire spectrum of research," said Kaime. Although CDMRP primarily directs cancer research, the directorate and its staff have the experience and expertise to manage the \$301 million, said Kaime.

Since its inception in 1992, CDMRP has been responsible for directing and supervising \$4.7 billion in congressional appropriations for peer-reviewed research aimed to prevent, control, and cure disease. "I think Congress has seen what we've done over the years and sees the value of the way we do things," she said. The scientific selection process started with reaching out to experts in the field

and asking "Where are the gaps in the science?" After "garnering" their input, a smaller integration panel of senior clinicians and scientists set the investment strategy of the program, identifying research areas needed to bridge the science that already existed while looking into future possibilities. "They distilled down in concrete terms where the gaps were in research that we needed to fill," said Kaime.

The program analyzers then sent the call out to the public at large and received more than 2,000 responses of different types and directions of scientific research requested.

Organizing the proposals into proper categories so they could be evaluated

based on scientific merit by expert peer review panels became the next priority. On each panel, scientists and medical professionals were paired with family members and patients who had suffered traumatic brain injuries or psychological health illnesses to give the review process another dimension, said Kaime. "(These illnesses) can have a profound impact on families," said Kaime. Having "laymen" involved helped direct the research to the service members and families who could actually benefit from future positive impacts that may come from the research, she added. "They're there to ask the bigger questions ... like 'how is this going to help us,'" said Kaime.

By receiving a rating from the "robust" and "rigorous" review process, the strengths and weakness are hashed out through the months-long transparent process. The proposals then go through an integrity check and are approved by multiple layers of leadership in the Department of Defense's medical commands. "I'm very excited about the ones we selected," said Kaime. "We may have only funded 10 percent of the proposals, but it's the very best science has to offer." Contract negotiations for the 201 grants were finished last September, and CDMRP is currently going through the process again on a smaller scale with the fiscal year 2008 funds of \$92 million for deployment-related medical research, including additional funding for psychological health and traumatic brain injury among the requested research topics. "We couldn't do this if we didn't have a strong base at MRMC," said Kaime. "It's not just CDMRP; it takes an entire team."

*Sarah Maxwell
USAMRMC Public Affairs*

USAMMCE Hosts 2009 New Year's Reception and Guest of Honor



MG George Weightman presents MSG Juan Villaman (USAMMCE Senior Enlisted Advisor) the O2M3

MG George Weightman flew from Fort Detrick, Maryland, to Pirmasens, Germany, to attend the U.S. Army Medical Materiel Center, Europe's (USAMMCE's) New Year's Reception. Among the 140 guests were Mayor Scheidel, Members of State Parliament Norbert Stretz and Thomas Weiner, and high-ranking members of the local fire department, the police department, the German Army, German businesses, and American Army units.

In his speech, COL Mitchell Brew, Commander of USAMMCE, praised the partnerships with local communities. He is very thankful for the outstanding work that the 400 employees, mostly local nationals, accomplish

every day. Through these accomplishments, lives are saved, which makes our work very important, says Brew. In crisis situations, we work around the clock. COL Brew's Commanding General, MG Weightman, one of the highest ranking officers in the Medical Command, presented the "Order of Military Medical Merit" to Waltraud Kieborz-Weis, Anita J. Joerg, and MSG Juan Villaman. Lord Mayor, Dr. Bernhard Matheis; Chief of Police, Mr. Andreas Sarter; and local Fire Chief, Mr. Fritz Kiefer were presented with "Friend of the Regiment" certificates.

Source information provided by Herr Erik Stegner from the Pirmasenser Zeitung



USAMITC Improves Efficiency with Lean Six Sigma Process



The U.S. Army Medical Information Technology Center's (USAMITC's) mission is to provide information management, technology, and services by implementing and sustaining an integrated and protected medical information enterprise to enable health care delivery and improve the health status of our Warfighters and military family. USAMITC oversees approximately 377 contracts to accomplish this global mission. Project directors and project managers or anyone who prepares a nonpersonal service contract determine the correct documents and the information required for a complete and accurate purchase request. Customer feedback from procurement service during fiscal year 2007 indicated that customers were confused and frustrated with the process. USAMITC embarked upon Lean Six Sigma, an improvement method that uses data to identify and eliminate process problems.

USAMITC formed a team of subject matter experts to implement a Lean Six Sigma project on January 14, 2008 to improve USAMITC's nonpersonal services contract purchase cycle time and reduce the errors of missing, poorly defined, or incorrect information. The team, with the help of various stakeholders, worked for 9 months to develop and implement improvement solutions.

One of the tenets of Lean Six Sigma is evaluation of the process and not of the personnel involved. This is often where the breakdown in efficiency occurs. The team learned what many other Lean Six Sigma project teams discovered by looking at the process and not the people—no one person really knew the overall process. Every checkpoint within the process had different criteria and expectations. With no common standard, multiple revisions were common and the cause of inefficiency.

USAMITC benefited from the team's effort by decreasing the average cycle time from 162 to 44 days (exceeding the goal of 60 days cycle time) and improving the Sigma Quality Level from .2 to 2.3. Sigma Quality Levels offer an indication of how likely errors are to occur within a process. Procedures, instructions, and examples reduced the error rate from 90% to 21%. USAMITC avoided \$2.2 million in costs by streamlining the process and improved the quality of service and manpower efficiency.

USAMITC's customers ultimately benefit from the prompt release of funds, speedy acquisition processing, and timely schedules ensuring mission support of our nation's Warfighters and their families.

Betty Lehman, Certified Lean Six Sigma Green Belt, USAMITC Operations

USAMITC Assigned to Manage the Military Health System Veterinary Services System Management Program



Military working dogs play an important role in our nation's military force. To help maintain their health readiness and ensure they receive the quality care they deserve, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs and the Army Acting Surgeon General signed a memorandum of agreement to allow the Military Health System and U.S. Army Medical Information Technology Center (USAMITC) to develop a centralized management software program for use at veterinary treatment facilities. Currently, veterinary services data are stored in either disparate local systems or hardcopy files, creating an inefficient system for tracking the health records of the animals. The Veterinary Services System Management (VSSM) program will generate electronic medical records, within a centralized data repository, to document and store lifetime clinical treatment history and deployment status of

animals. This will allow leadership to assess deployment readiness, improve care to the animals, and conduct surveillance for environmental exposures or emerging infectious diseases that may affect humans in the same environments. "This system will

allow the DoD Veterinary Service to track health trends in large populations of animals, provide for the state-of-the-art care for animals, and provide valuable information for interfacing with the human side of One Medicine," said Lt. Col. Kay Burkman, chief of epidemiology for the DoD military working dog veterinary service at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio. According to Martin Enserink, a writer for www.sciencemag.org, One Medicine is an initiative to merge animal and human health science to benefit both. VSSM also will aid the DoD in controlling potential threats to the military by tracking zoonotic diseases communicable to humans. The system will monitor health trends across animal populations to alert decision makers about potential threats to the health of the force. The program is vital to the DoD because the government is deploying military working dogs in rapid numbers around the world to

support the Global War on Terrorism and homeland security missions. To effectively support these important missions, animals must be healthy and ready for deployment.

USAMITC is the VSSM Program Management Office. "VSSM will become a one-stop system for assessing the health and readiness of the GOA force for all Services," stated Pamela Porch, USAMITC Program Manager for the VSSM program. "It will also integrate with other military health systems to help leadership report the readiness of its force and to enable zoonotic disease surveillance and prevention." USAMITC has made significant progress with the VSSM program. In April, the center accomplished its first milestone by obtaining approval of the VSSM Defense Business Transformation certification package, which is mandated for all information technology business system acquisitions or modernizations costing more than \$1 million. The USAMITC Program Management Office began the certification process in June 2007 and successfully led a system through the certification with high ratings and minimal changes.

The Veterinary Services Activity is expected to modernize and automate current veterinary processes to better meet the demand of today's veterinary needs that support the Global War on Terrorism and homeland security missions. The ability to centralize animal health records and access information from any location will support the Warfighter by providing senior leadership with timely and accurate readiness and zoonotic surveillance information.

USAMITC Public Affairs



USAMRAA: Progressing Toward Contract Excellence

As contracting professionals, we are all charged with providing on-time delivery of the best value and the best quality products and services. Many of the metrics captured by acquisition activities relate to workload growth in dollars and actions and the size of the workforce. The messages conveyed by workload and workforce metrics are that more is being done with less and/or that the cost per dollar obligated has been significantly decreased. They typically do little to measure services in terms of product or service quality, timeliness, or value.

At the U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity (USAMRAA), processes and procedures are being implemented that will directly impact the quality, timeliness, and value of the products and services being delivered. The U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command has implemented the Balanced Scorecard Strategic

Management System. USAMRAA has established objectives that focus on employee development under the Learning and Growth perspective; measure processes under the Internal Process perspective; and from a Resources perspective, ensure that the financial support to implement programs is available, leading to improved customer service. This article addresses some of these initiatives.



Quality Programs

Quality Assurance Program. As a member of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Procure-

ment) (DASA[P]), Procurement Management Review Advisory Team, USAMRAA has assisted in the development of contracting tool kits used to evaluate Army contracting activities. Each tool kit is designed to review specific functional areas within each acquisition activity. USAMRAA also provides senior acquisition professionals to travel with the DASA(P) team to assist in Procurement Management Reviews (PMRs). USAMRAA's participation on the Advisory Team and with PMRs has significantly improved the quality of its products, helped the organization focus on the most pressing issues in acquisition, and allowed it to implement best practices observed during PMRs.

USAMRAA has assigned a senior procurement analyst to provide continuous review of contract and assistance agreement files and has adopted

the DASA(P) Contract Execution tool kits for continuous evaluation of file compliance.

ISO 9001. USAMRAA is an ISO 9001-certified organization. It has developed quality manuals and procedures to ensure implementation of acquisition policies, routine internal and external inspections, and hands-on management involvement. USAMRAA managers meet monthly to review ISO objectives and develop actions for continuous improvement. Each year, two internal audits and one external audit are conducted. A recertification audit is completed once every 3 years. USAMRAA has more than 80 individuals certified as internal auditors and 1 lead auditor.

Lean Six Sigma. To improve efficiency and reduce contracting costs, USAMRAA has embarked on an ambitious Lean Six Sigma (LSS) project to reduce overall turnaround times for simplified acquisition purchases. This project includes the definition and deconstruction of each individual step in simplified acquisition purchases to build a value stream map. Interestingly, many of the processes within contracting have very little variance. USAMRAA found a 6% variance among contract specialists, a 1% variance among customer service centers, and almost no variance for when a procurement request is received by USAMRAA. A substantial variance was found in the completeness of procurement packages submitted by USAMRAA customers. One of the goals of LSS is to improve customer procurement packages, which will reduce contracting costs and lead times. As a result of the project, USAMRAA fully expects to see a 15% reduction in simplified acquisition cycle times. Furthermore,



USAMRAA fully expects to transfer efficiencies found in this study to all other acquisition categories.

Information Management/ Information Technology Initiatives

Hardware and Software Programs. USAMRAA has purchased both laptops with docking stations and dual-monitor screens for each employee. The laptops with docking stations provide workforce flexibility and enhance the ability to work remotely. The dual-monitor screens are designed to simultaneously view electronic contract files and PD2 files. The deployment of laptops with docking stations is scheduled to be completed by March 2009 and the dual-monitor screens by the end of February 2009. Hardware deployment is key to ensuring a total information management/information technology solution for USAMRAA.

Workload Distribution Tool. USAMRAA has developed a workload distribution tool to manage contracts and assistance agreements assigned to each contract specialist. This tool tracks the award type, complexity based on a 1 to 5 complexity rating, and the quantity or volume of workload assigned to the contract specialist. Each element is used to generate a workload factor that allows a supervisor to manage and normalize the volume of work each employee

receives. Contract specialists use the tool to individually manage the status of their actions.

Electronic Contract Award File. The electronic contract award file has been developed and is scheduled to deploy in January 2009. It contains all of the documents typically found in a hard-copy file. Each file is organized as a six-part award file that mirrors the contract checklist. This effort will bring USAMRAA fully into the paperless environment. The reason for purchasing dual-monitor screens is to allow for simultaneous viewing of the procurement desktop file and the electronic award file.

Electronic Contracting Officer Representative (COR) Database. In August 2008, USAMRAA deployed an electronic COR database. The database currently contains 2,470 awards and 438 CORs, including a copy of the COR training certificate, training completion date, and COR recertification date. It allows USAMRAA to manage COR training, award assignments and certifications, and communicate the latest acquisition changes to each COR. The COR database is hyperlinked to the Electronic Contract Award File.

J&A Logs. USAMRAA maintains an electronic J&A log for all sole-source acquisitions regardless of dollar value or award type (GSA, limited source, etc.). The log contains a PR number and Award number to cross-reference to the actual award and is scheduled to be hyperlinked to the Electronic Contract Award File upon implementation of the electronic award file.

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Checklists. USAMRAA has developed the following contract file checklists based on the type or method of contract award:

- ✓ Simplified Acquisition Procedures – Services
- ✓ Simplified Acquisition Procedures – Supplies
- ✓ Construction
- ✓ Research and Development
- ✓ Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)/ Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR)
- ✓ GSA
- ✓ Commercial Services
- ✓ Assistance Agreements

In some contracting activities, one checklist is used for all actions. The rationale for using different checklists is to minimize confusion since USAMRAA contract specialists are required to process all requirements.

New Products and Ideas Web Site. USAMRAA has developed a New Products and Ideas Web Site that affords contractors and research institutions a mechanism for submitting unsolicited proposals. The program is designed to capture unsolicited proposals based on the category of the product (pharmaceutical, medical device, etc.) and the stage of development (research, prototype, off-the-shelf, etc.). Unsolicited proposals are forwarded directly to a subject matter expert based on the category and stage criteria. USAMRAA has received approximately 340 unsolicited proposals and has responded to those proposals in less than 30 calendar days.



Personnel Initiatives

Intern Programs. USAMRAA, like most acquisition activities, is having great difficulty attracting and retaining journeymen-level contract specialists. While the organization continues to advertise to meet personnel needs, it also uses its intern programs to attract future contract specialists.

Currently there are 12 interns in USAMRAA's Student Career Experience Program (SCEP). Under this program, students working toward masters degrees gain experience within the contracting activity while completing their degrees. After 2 years, students can be hired on a noncompetitive basis. Additionally, the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases has 5 Department of the Army interns assigned and 3 Army Medical Department procurement military interns. The organization has advertised under the Lab Demo Program for DJII (GS5–10)/DJIII (GS11–12) positions, which allows it to expand the promotion potential for entry-level hires. Upon completion of level II certification in contracting, individuals can be promoted noncompetitively to DJIII positions.

Training. USAMRAA places a high priority on training. All supervisory contract specialists and contracting officers are level III-certified in contracting and are members of the Army Acquisition Corps. Approximately 91% of USAMRAA's DJIIIs (GS 11 and 12) are certified at level II in contracting, and 100% of DJIIs (GS 5–10) with more than 24 months in contracting are certified at level II. The organization continuously tracks

learning points and reports every 6 months with a goal of achieving 20 CLPs during the reporting period. In the past fiscal year, USAMRAA had 98% completion of CLPs with the exceptions as a result of illness. As part of its continuing education program, USAMRAA holds regular "Banging the Basics" sessions to ensure that employees stay well informed on current acquisition changes.



Metrics

One of USAMRAA's objectives under the Internal Process perspective is to improve acquisition efficiency. The organization captures procurement lead times for procurements less than \$25K, between \$25K and \$100K, and between \$100K and \$5.5M. Other measures include:

- DAWIA Certifications
- CLP Status
- Competition Statistics
- Small Business Program Goals
- Contract Compliance Inspection Results
- Unsolicited Proposal Response
- ISO Actions

*Terry McCune, Branch Chief
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USAMRMC Unveils Military Medicine Exhibit at Local Museum

In a ribbon-cutting ceremony, the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (USAMRMC) unveiled its new military medicine exhibit at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine (NMCWM) in Frederick, Maryland, on Wednesday, 25 March 2009. The updated exhibit, "Building on Our Past: Military Medicine into the Future," relays the continuing story of advancements in military medicine pre-dating the Civil War up to modern times.



George Wunderlich, Executive Director, National Museum of Civil War Medicine; MG George Weightman, Commanding General, USAMRMC and Fort Detrick; Betsy Estilow, President, National Museum of Civil War Medicine Board of Directors; William Holtzinger, Mayor, city of Frederick; and COL Judith D. Robinson, Fort Detrick Garrison Commander cut the ribbon to the updated USAMRMC exhibit

George Wunderlich, NMCWM Executive Director, said, "the city of Frederick provided the wounded and the sick with care, compassion, and healing starting in 1861. In our modern day, the city of Frederick, the personnel at Fort Detrick, and our biotech community continue that tradition."

The new exhibit features a time line beginning in the Revolutionary War era and continuing to the present day that describes military medical advances and technologies that have evolved as a result of military activity in both the United States and worldwide. Many of these medical advancements have greatly impacted and continue to impact civilians as well as Soldiers. The exhibit is flanked by two life-sized Soldier manikins, one a 68W Combat Medic/Health Care Specialist and the other clothed in modern chemical defense gear. Pictures show the current challenges faced by Combat Medics on the battlefields of today. An infectious disease component discusses USAMRMC's role in vaccine devel-

opment through history and describes diseases that continue to threaten our troops worldwide. Another component discusses USAMRMC's future directions in military medicine, including improvements in combat casualty care and regenerative medicine.

"The exhibit will not only inform those visitors about our history, but in combination with the museum's educational outreach and professional development opportunities, it will inspire the next generation of medical advancement and life-saving innovation," said MG George Weightman, Commanding General of USAMRMC.

The formal partnership between NMCWM and USAMRMC began in August of 1997. In 2004, MG Lester

Martinez-Lopez, Commanding General of USAMRMC, officially opened the first exhibit to interpret modern day military medical advancements. Last year, while visiting the museum, CSM Michael Kelly noticed how out of date the exhibit had become in just a few years because of medical advances that have come from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, and plans were set in motion to create a new, updated version.

"This museum shows the continuum of advancements in medical care. The MRMC exhibit shows not only the advancements of Fort Detrick but in our other subcommands," said Weightman.

*Tiffany Holloway
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USARIEM and the U.S. Coast Guard Work Together to Save Lives



From 2004 to 2008, the U. S. Coast Guard (USCG) conducted, on average, more than 28,000 search and rescue (SAR) cases and rescued more than 5,300 people annually. These statistics do not include the USCG's response to Hurricane Katrina, in which it rescued 33,544 people alone. However, the search part of SAR is not always successful, and, in some

cases, the person coordinating the search effort needs to decide whether to continue actively searching for victims. This decision is very difficult, and the USCG's policy on the suspension of search efforts focuses on three primary questions: (1) Is the victim (or victims) alive? (2) Is the correct area being searched? (3) Has the search area been covered adequately? In ad-

dition, other factors, such as changes in the weather, information about the victims, and dangers to rescuers, also are considered. Pertaining to the first question, the USCG Office of Search and Rescue asked the USCG Research and Development Center (R&DC) for recommendations to improve the quality of information available on the survival of victims over time following an incident.

The R&DC worked with the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine (USARIEM), Natick, MA, and several other organizations, and early in December 2008, submitted a proposed set of new tools to the Office of Search and Rescue and recommendations for their use in USCG SAR operations. The tools are models—part of a computer software application—that simulate the responses of victims' bodies to heat and cold exposure. These recommenda-

tions describe how the models should be used in the context of operational needs, USCG policies, and the limits of the models themselves.

USARIEM developed a model that simulates a SAR victim's heat loss (and, sometimes, heat gain) and loss of water. The model is a rational one, comparing heat generation due to a victim's metabolism against heat loss to the surrounding air and water through the victim's body fat and clothing. The model also estimates the rate at which a victim is losing water through sweating, breathing, and urinating. The heat and water balances are dependent upon a victim's sex, height, and weight; whether the person is immersed to the neck, chest, or waist, or in a life raft; the type of clothing the victim is wearing; and on the weather and water conditions. The model predicts a victim's core body temperature and total water loss

over time. The victim's predicted death occurs at the time when either of these two parameters reaches a critical fatal temperature or dehydration condition.

The R&DC also developed a second model using accident statistics from a United Kingdom database that employed a statistical approach to create equations that estimate survival probability with the passage of time based on the victim's description, the surrounding water temperature, and other variables. The R&DC then used these data in combination with the USCG case data to develop a maximum survival time guideline for victims in the water (the third model). The purpose of the guideline was to provide information on the longest expectation of survival for the existing water condition.

The R&DC finally looked at how the

system should be put together and how it should work to best fill the needs of the USCG. The final R&DC product includes the three survival time models and descriptions of how to create information summaries on SAR victims that are tailored to meet USCG SAR needs. The ultimate goal is to provide improved decision support on the survival part of the SAR case picture so that the USCG can make informed and less stressful decisions based on better information. The R&DC recommendations are currently being reviewed by the Office of Search and Rescue. It is believed that a preliminary version of the system can be developed as a stand-alone product for limited field testing by selected USCG command centers during late 2009.

Source information provided by the U.S. Coast Guard Acquisition Directorate



SPC Michael Vallejo, first row, fourth from the right, and his teammates on the All-Army Rugby Team

A Star in the Laboratory and on the Field: SPC Michael Vallejo of WRAIR Makes the All-Army Rugby Team

SPC Michael Vallejo, a 68K, from San Antonio, Texas, is an integral part of the joint Army-Navy malaria vaccine development team at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR). His efforts in the ELISA and flow cytometry laboratory are critical to the understanding of the immunological aspects of malaria vaccine development. The prevention of malaria infection is a top priority to the Army, and efforts to develop an efficacious vaccine have far-reaching implications for the health of the Warfighter as well as for the health of the global community. Remarkably, Vallejo earned his clinical science degree from George Washington University while working in the high-

profile malaria vaccine development division at WRAIR. He will take his Medical Laboratory Technician boards in spring 2009.

In addition to his talents in the laboratory, Vallejo is a winner in another area—he has been playing rugby since his college days at Texas A&M University (TAMU) while earning a dual undergraduate degree in biology and animal science. While at TAMU, he played D-1 collegiate rugby and has maintained his athletic edge by playing rugby for the Washington, DC Super League. In fall 2008, Vallejo was named a member of the All-Army Rugby Team. His sense of teamwork, discipline, and dedication to achieving

goals are apparent in his career plans to become a Non-Commissioned Officer and obtain certification 1 training in combatives as a resource for the Company. Ultimately, Vallejo hopes to leverage his singular leadership skills and devotion to the Army by becoming a Commissioned Officer. His outstanding talents as a member of the All-Army Rugby Team will go far in helping him achieve his personal and professional goals in support of the health and well-being of the Warfighter.

Source information provided by WRAIR

CDMRP Hosts Fall Safety Olympics



Members of the Child Proof Caps Team examine a tire during CDMRP's Safety Olympics

The summer games of 2008 may have come to an end, but the spirit lived on with the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs' (CDMRP's) Safety Olympics held 15 October at Fort Detrick. For several weeks, 11 teams of about 6 people each prepared for a grueling half-day safety trivia event meant to enhance awareness of their surroundings and promote team spirit. After the "opening ceremony," the costumed teams broke into stations that tested their safety prowess.

"We wanted to get the point across but make it fun," said Navy CAPT Melissa Kaime, CDMRP Director.

"Let's face it—it (safety training) isn't usually very exciting."

Kaime said she told her directors about a month ago that she was going to host a safety knowledge competition, and the staff took the ball and ran with it. "They did amazing things to prepare for this," Kaime said, "and it's all voluntary." The leadership tapped into the installation safety office as well as the fire department to distribute safety tidbits in e-mails and to post around the building. According to Bonnie Miller, Kaime's administrative officer and organizer of the event, employees really responded to hunting for the information throughout the

organization. Most teams were then inspired to investigate information on their own, she added.

Dressed in camouflage green—some even with warrior face paint—Team Juliet members were doing last-minute preparations to their "uniforms" and diligently gathering materials before the event started. "We're safety warriors," said team member Evangeline Taylor with enthusiasm. "In honor of the military, we dressed up in camouflage." It wasn't all show for the passionate team. Members took the safety aspect of the event very seriously and held meetings before the event to discuss regulations. Going above and beyond, the team developed a web site devoted to safety information and even created a book, said Taylor.

Although the theme of the day was safety, it provided everyone a chance to work face-to-face with people they knew only from phone or e-mail conversations. "It was really great to make things more personal," said Jennifer Fallas, a Team Isotope participant who had never actually met many of the people who were involved in the event. "It was definitely a team-building exercise." After the competition, Kaime hosted a picnic for the staff and others who work with CDMRP to celebrate the day and to award the top contenders, which was most of the teams. "Even if it saves just one person's life down the road, it was worth it," said Kaime.

*Sarah Maxwell
USAMRMC Public Affairs*

AWARDS

Fulbright Scholar Grant Awarded to USAMRIID Scientist



Robert K. Pope, Ph.D., an electron microscopist in the Pathology Division of the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID), has been awarded a Fulbright Scholar grant to conduct research at the Institut Pluridisciplinaire Hubert Curien in Strasbourg, France, from May 2009 through June 2010. He will use electron microscopy and other methods to examine the role of calcium in the digestive system of Burmese pythons. Pope worked in Strasbourg in 2005 for 8 months, during which time he and colleague Dr. Jean-Hervé Lignot discovered a unique cell, called the “pit” cell, located in the intestinal mucosa of these reptiles. Burmese pythons are unique in that they feed as infrequently as a few times per year. Thus, they have adapted tremendous mechanisms to conserve energy during fasting. The goal of the upcoming study is to deter-

mine if the pit cell functions to absorb or excrete calcium; Pope believes it absorbs calcium and is excited to test his hypothesis.

He will compare tissues of pythons that are fasting with those of pythons that have recently eaten to better understand the function and regulation of the digestive tract. Pope wants to investigate morphological and physiological responses at cellular and molecular levels. Further research will consist of extracting mRNA to examine gene expression while fasting and at specific time points after feeding. “This will be a great opportunity to modify existing techniques for novel studies,” says Pope, who applied for the Fulbright Scholar grant while an associate professor at Indiana University, before joining USAMRIID in June 2008. He was pleasantly surprised to find out he was 1 of 800 U.S. faculty and professionals who will travel abroad through the program and excited to be awarded the only Fulbright Scholar grant for the Alsace region of France. The program’s purpose is to build mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the rest of the world; the scholarship was established in 1946 under legislation introduced by the late Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas. The Fulbright Program is considered America’s flagship international educational exchange program and is sponsored by the United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. “This research between U.S. and French investigators...will show

how international collaborations can greatly enhance scientific research,” he adds.

Pope’s wife and children will accompany him for the year. He has not yet decided whether he will live in the city of Strasbourg or a surrounding town. However, he would prefer to live in a town because he appreciates the infrastructure and sense of community based on the old medieval stone walls surrounding and protecting the towns that have survived many wars intact. His children will attend either an international French/English school in Strasbourg or an all-French-speaking school and be homeschooled in English.

After completion of the grant, Pope will return to USAMRIID where he plans to perform more “RIID-driven work, focusing on the ultra-structural changes caused by infectious agents.” He points out that studying the structure of the pit cell ultimately fulfills USAMRIID’s objective because “in a general sense, examining the function of these intestines can lead to a better understanding of one of the largest regions of immune surveillance and one of the key barriers to infection.” There are numerous agents that cause tremendous pathological changes in the lining of the digestive tract. He adds that the research findings “may unlock secrets that lead to ways to treat certain types of malnutrition and malabsorption.”

*Megan Kuhns
USAMRIID Public Affairs*

AWARDS

USAMRIID Scientist Receives 2009 STEM Role Model Award

The Department of the Army (DA) proudly announces that LTC Felicia D. Langel has been selected as the 2009 DoD Women’s History Month Foreign Language and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Role Model Award winner.

Langel currently serves as a Principal Investigator at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases. Her dedication to duty, commitment to promoting the tenets of human relations, and inspiration to

future generations of scientists and engineers have greatly benefited the local community, both civilian and military. Langel competed against all other commands from across the U.S. Army and will represent the DA as the Women’s History Month STEM awardee during the Annual Women’s History Month Outreach Program in Arlington, Virginia on 19 March 2009.

Source information provided by the Department of the Army

USAMRIID Soldiers Honored by Carroll Creek Rotary Club



SGT Marison Parrel and SPC Daisy Castro

Two Soldiers stationed at Fort Detrick were honored by the Carroll Creek Rotary Club, located in Frederick, Maryland, on 4 February 2009. U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases SGT Marison Parrel and SPC Daisy Castro were selected as the noncommissioned officer (NCO) and Soldier of the first quarter of 2009 and were selected to participate in the monthly event.

“It was an honor to be recognized for our service and accomplishments by the Rotary Club. We were surprised because we didn’t know what to expect. There were many local community leaders at the breakfast, and they were very informative about what they do and what the Rotary Club is all about. The breakfast ceremony was a great way to show the support that the Carroll Creek Rotary Club has for the military,” said Castro. The club wanted to recognize service members at Fort Detrick for their contributions to our nation. “I appreciate the local Rotary Club for recognizing our service members at Fort Detrick. This is a great opportunity for us to know each other better,” said CSM James Shaheen, Fort Detrick, Garrison.

*Tiffany Holloway
USAMRMC Public Affairs*

Promotions

SPC Shauna Coe

Re-Enlistments

SGT Dan Catrambone
SPC Shauna Coe
SPC Adam Cross
SGT Brooke Green
SSG Travis Lindeblad
SPC Stanley Reams
SPC Jared Whicker

Promotions

Dr. Amy Adler
Ms. Detra Battle
Mr. Roosevelt Harris
Ms. Laverne Harrison

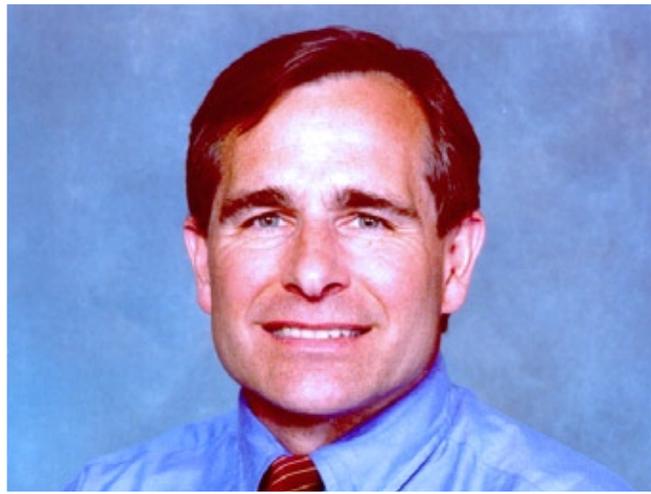
Awards

Dr. Amy Adler
Mr. Hecto Agosto
Ms. Romona Anderson
Mr. William Anderson
Mr. Calvin Ashcraft
Ms. Lucille Battle
Ms. Alice Boarman
Ms. Carson Cancel
Dr. Jeffrey Caudill
Mr. Roosevelt Cunningham
Dr. Philip Ehrenberg
Ms. Jody Ference
Mr. Roosevelt Harris
Mr. Brian Hendrix
Mr. Barry Herbert
Mr. Reginald Johnson
Dr. Robert Kaminski
Mr. Dean Markos
Mr. Andrew Rogalski
Mr. Walter Sanders
Mr. Daniel Santos
Mr. Richard Thomas
Ms. Diane Thompkins
Mr. Kevin Turbyfill
Ms. Fran Tyson
Dr. Maryanne Vahey
Mr. Donald Vance
Ms. Joyce Walker
Mr. William Ward
Ms. Lisa Ware
Mr. Shea Watson
Mr. David West
Ms. Cynthia Whitaker
Dr. Anjali Yadavia



AWARDS

USARIEM Chief Appointed to Scientific Advisory Board



Dr. Michael N. Sawka, Chief, Thermal and Mountain Medicine Division, U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine, was recently appointed to the Scientific Advisory Board of the Partnership for Clean Competition (PCC). A Colorado-based organization, the PCC repre-

sents a unique research collaboration between the U.S. Olympic Committee, U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, Major League Baseball, and the National Football League that is focused on preventing the use of prohibited substances in sports by funding anti-doping research. PCC

research priorities include gaining better understanding of how banned substances are used in sports and the long-term effects for athletes.

Dr. Sawka's research interests include environmental (i.e., heat, cold, and altitude) and exercise physiology, fluid/

electrolyte balance, and rehabilitation medicine. He has published more than 300 full-length scientific papers as well as edited graduate textbooks on environmental physiology and exercise physiology. He is an editorial board member for the *American Journal of Physiology*, *Journal of Applied Physiology*, *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, *International Journal of Sports Medicine*, *Journal of Thermal Biology*, and Oxford Research Forum. He has served on many scientific panels and is currently Chair of the American Physiological Society's Environmental and Exercise Physiology Section. He is active with the American Physiological Society and the American College of Sports Medicine.

Source information provided by the PCC and USARIEM

Commander

the 30th Medical Brigade, Heidelberg, Germany. He then served as Assistant Surgeon General for Force Projection and became the Commanding General for the 3rd Medical Command (Forward) and Coalition Forces Land Component Command Surgeon for Operation Iraqi Freedom. He later served as Commanding General, 44th Medical Command and Corps Surgeon, XVIII Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He was then selected to command the U.S. Army Medical Department Center & School and Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas. After commanding the North

Atlantic Regional Medical Command and Walter Reed Army Medical Center, he was assigned to the Office of the Surgeon General until November 2007 when he assumed command of USAMRMC.

"I never thought that I would become a general officer. I didn't think that far ahead. I'm a 'here and now' kind of guy. I focus on trying to do the best job that I can do. When I started out, my goal was to be a hospital commander and make colonel," said Weightman. Reminiscing over his years of service, Weightman said,

"The Army gives people a chance to serve their country and unit. You grow to appreciate the honorable people you work with who are motivated by service. It doesn't matter if a Soldier stayed in 4 years or 30 years. I appreciate their service. I'm so grateful to the Army for allowing me to serve and giving my family an opportunity to grow. I have no regrets."

*Tiffany Holloway
USAMRMC Public Affairs*