

# MEDICAL NEWS

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## SAVING LIVES, IMPROVING READINESS

### More than 330 Military Health Care Professionals graduate

By Sarah Marshall,  
USU External Affairs

During a ceremony steeped in tradition, more than 330 uniformed professionals received their long-deserved medical, graduate nursing, dental and biomedical science, public health and clinical psychology degrees on May 20 – Armed Forces Day – at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) 38th commencement exercise at the Daughters of the American Revolution Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C.

Graduates in uniform were active duty officers in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force or Public Health Service, and after walking across the stage in their academic regalia, they received their diplomas and left the stage, before changing back into their military uniforms – making for a unique ceremony. Graduating medical students returned to recite their respective service commissioning oath, led individually by each Surgeon General. They were then promoted to their next rank.

Commencement speaker Dr. Ronald R. Blanck, chair of USU’s Board of Regents and former Army Surgeon General, explained that USU is unique – not because of its great education, research, or patient care delivered by faculty and students, but because of the synergy between two professions – health care and the military, he said. They share the same values of integrity, courage, commitment and leadership, he said, and especially, service.

“Service is at the core of health care, and at the core of the military – others before self,” Blanck said, speaking from 32 years of experience in the military.

He told the graduates, including public health service and civilian graduates, that health care, the military, and family, are all equally important.

“You’ve chosen fields of service, in health care and in the military – service to your professions, service to your patients, service to those you lead, service to your colleagues,” Blanck said. And it’s important to find a balance between those competing demands – being aware of those demands is the first step in achieving that balance, he said.

He went on to impart several words of advice.

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(U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Chelsea Troy Millburn/Released)

**Musician 2nd Class James Brownell of the U.S. 7th Fleet Band plays the tuba for hearing impaired students to feel the sound vibrations with their hands during a community engagement at Tuong Lai Specialized School. Pacific Partnership is the largest annual multilateral humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Asia-Pacific and aims to enhance regional coordination in such as medical readiness and preparedness for manmade and natural disasters.**

## Pacific Partnership 2017 departs Da Nang, re-affirming warm ties with the city

By Petty Officer 1st Class Micah Blechner  
Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific

Pacific Partnership 2017 departed Da Nang, Vietnam, on May 18 after completing ten days of disaster response training, medical and engineering subject matter expert exchanges, cooperative health engagements and community relations events.

This year marks the fourth consecutive year and the eighth time the mission has visited Vietnam in the past 11 years.

“Our time in Da Nang was another fantastic opportunity to continue our cooperation with the people of Vietnam, working together to improve our capability

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# Revamped Fisher House at WBAMC reopens

By Marcy Sanchez

William Beaumont Army Medical Center  
Public Affairs Office

The Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher House located on the William Beaumont Army Medical Center campus reopened after being closed for over a year for renovations, May 12.

The Fisher House, as it is commonly referred to, provides military-affiliated families room and board at no-cost to them throughout the duration of inpatient service members, retirees or veterans care at local healthcare facilities.

"This Fisher House is a home away from home for families in a time of need," said Col. John A. Smyrski III, commander, WBAMC. "Our force consists of Soldiers from across the United States. When patients' loved ones come to provide support, the Fisher House is conveniently located within walking distance to our hospital."

The Fisher House at WBAMC provides six rooms, two suites and four smaller rooms, in addition to a shared kitchen, dining room, living room and laundry room. Additionally, guests

don't have to be staying strictly for service members, retirees or veterans; the no-expense lodging also provides a place to stay for service members who may be in the area visiting hospitalized immediate family members in any of the region's hospitals.

"We provide them with a safe and clean environment to stay in," said Alice Coleman, manager of the Fisher House at WBAMC. "If their (service member, veteran or retiree) is in the hospital sick, the last thing they need to worry about is where they will be staying and the expense of it."

Since its inception in 1994, nearly 4,000 families have found a home away from home at the Fisher House at WBAMC. Renovations involved the house's entire interior from the kitchen to each of the six bedrooms, which were outfitted with new furniture, beds and amenities.

"Everything is new," said Coleman.

"Families have a roof over their head, a place to eat, sleep, it's nice and warm when need be and cooled when it is hot, and in a secure building.

"Having family close eases the (patient's) mind. We've had many families mention how a heavy burden was lifted knowing their families were staying at the Fisher House," said Coleman.

For military spouse Jessenia Cruzlaporte and her family, the Fisher House has provided comfort during a worrisome time as her husband undergoes surgery in El Paso.

"I didn't know about (the Fisher House). It's a new experience. I was worried, but I needed to be here for my husband; he needed us," said Cruzlaporte, who currently resides near Alamogordo, New Mexico. "(Staying at the Fisher House) helps because from Alamogordo it's two hours driving. Here, I can be really close to him."

Cruzlaporte first learned about the Fisher House through her husband's chain of command. What she didn't expect was the cost-free lodging services the house offers. According to Cruzlaporte, she was unaware the stay was free prior to checking in. With the financial burden lifted, she feels at ease and is able to focus on her husband's recovery.

"We're really close to him. If something happens, we can go to the hospital immediately," said Cruzlaporte.

The Fisher House at WBAMC is staffed 24/7. Inside access is limited to staff and families staying at the house. The house operates strictly off donations and welcomes guests on a first-come, first-served basis.

"We're proud and honored to have a Fisher House here on our campus," said Smyrski.

For more information, please call (915) 742-1860.

## Military Medical News

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Photo By Marcy Sanchez  
Col. John A. Smyrski III, commander, William Beaumont Army Medical Center, John Ost III, director, Army Fisher House Program, Alice Coleman, manager, WBAMC Fisher House, and Command Sgt. Maj. Donald George, command sergeant major, WBAMC, cut the ribbon to the newly renovated Fisher House on the WBAMC campus, May 12. The Fisher House provides military-affiliated families room and board at no-cost to them throughout the duration of inpatient service members, retirees or veterans care at local healthcare facilities.

## • Saving lives (Continued from front page)

"Always listen ... be decisive, but never thoughtlessly. Be visible ... people will behave the way you do, so set that example. Remember that if you avoid a decision, you're actually making a decision not to act, so decisiveness is part of that," he said. Health care today is much more of a team sport, he added, so value what team members bring to the table.

"Refer, discuss, communicate ... and

always keep that patient in the center of what you're doing with your teammates." He concluded, "At the end of the day, realize we're very fortunate -- we all are -- in taking care of the best patients in the world. The men and women of the uniformed services, active, guard, reserve, retirees, and their families. What a privilege it is."

Among the graduates were 159 Doctor of Medicine degrees, 34 mas-

ter's degrees, 15 Doctor of Philosophy degrees, and two Doctor of Public Health degrees, from USU's F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine. USU's Daniel K. Inouye Graduate School of Nursing conferred 55 Doctor of Nursing Practice degrees and three Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Science degrees, and USU's Postgraduate Dental College conferred 69 Master of Science in Oral Biology degrees.

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# Marine awarded Navy and Marine Corps Medal for heroic actions

By Cpl. Dallas Johnson  
Marine Forces Reserve

Cpl. David Qualls, a motor transport assistant operations chief with Marine Wing Support Squadron 471, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, Marine Forces Reserve, was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal at the 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment headquarters in Houston, Texas, May 20, 2017.

Qualls received the highest non-combat decoration for his heroic actions at the scene of a car collision on the morning of Sept. 12, 2014.

While returning to Camp Geiger, Qualls and Cpl. Nathan Bryson, now a Marine veteran who recently served as a motor transport operator for Headquarters and Support Battalion, School of Infantry East, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, came upon a car collision on the Sneads Ferry Bridge in Sneads Ferry, North Carolina.

When the Marines stopped, a Marine already at the scene quickly

approached Qualls and Bryson to see if they had a fire extinguisher. Qualls quickly realized it was a major accident; multiple vehicles had collided with each other, hitting the retaining walls on the sides of the bridge and were critically damaged.

One of the vehicles, a white sports utility vehicle which had severe body and frame damage was slowly catching fire. Flames and smoke were visibly coming from the engine compartment.

"After we were asked for a fire extinguisher, I just knew something was off," said Qualls. "I looked over at Cpl. Bryson and said, 'Do you think we should go check it out?' We immediately got out and went to help."

The white SUV was driven by Larry Flesher, an electrical technician from Valdosta, Georgia. While driving to work, he suddenly struck a vehicle, causing another vehicle nearby to hit him. Flesher, pinned inside the smoky vehicle, suffered a broken femur, arm and ankle.

According to Qualls' award summary, had he and Bryson not arrived when they did, Flesher would have surely died in the fire.

"This award is the highest award for non-combat valor," said Lt. Col. Vincent Dawson, the executive officer of Marine Aircraft Group 41, Marine Forces Reserve. "This award recognizes his bravery; putting himself between a fire and a person trapped in a vehicle, and the danger he put himself into."

Several members of Qualls' family attended the ceremony.

"I'm incredibly proud of him, the whole family is," said Bert Qualls, uncle of Cpl. David Qualls. "He's got a great heart and we wouldn't expect anything different from him. He's a person of valor."

Per Federal Regulation code 10 U.S.C. 6246, the Navy and Marine Corps Medal is awarded to any person who distinguishes them self by heroism not involving conflict with the enemy. For acts of life-saving,

or attempted lifesaving, it is required that the action be performed at the risk of one's own life.

Bryson was also awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal in a ceremony on April 17, 2017.

"Being a Marine definitely affected my reaction," said Qualls. "But being a Marine and having another Marine come for help, I couldn't just sit back and do nothing. This is what we do."



*Cpl. David Qualls, a motor transport assistant operations chief with Marine Wing Support Squadron 471, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, Marine Forces Reserve, stands at parade rest while he waits to be awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal at the 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment headquarters in Houston, Texas, May 20, 2017. In 2014, helped save a man stuck inside a burning vehicle. According to Qualls' award summary, had he not arrived when he did, the man would have surely died.*



*Above: The family of Cpl. David Qualls, a motor transport assistant operations chief with Marine Wing Support Squadron 471, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, Marine Forces Reserve, listen attentively as Qualls receives his Navy and Marine Corps Medal at the 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment headquarters in Houston, Texas, May 20, 2017. In 2014, Qualls and other Marines helped save a man stuck inside a burning vehicle. According to the award summary, had he not arrived when he did, the man would have surely died.*

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(U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Madaillein Abbott) **Cmdr. Curt Larson, Deputy Commander for Pacific Partnership 2017 (left), Ms. Thu Hahn, Da Nang Peoples Committee Department of Foreign Affairs (DOFA) Deputy (center) and Ms. Susan Sutton, Deputy Chief of Mission U.S. Embassy Hanoi (right), perform the ceremonial first dig at a groundbreaking during Pacific Partnership 2017 Da Nang, May 12. Pacific Partnership is the largest annual multilateral humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Asia-Pacific and aims to enhance regional coordination in areas such as medical readiness and preparedness for manmade and natural disasters.**

## • Partnership (Continued from front page)

to respond to disaster relief and sharing medical and engineering best practices,” said Captain Stanfield Chien, Pacific Partnership mission commander.

Pacific Partnership and Vietnamese personnel conducted subject matter expert exchanges for a humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) workshop that culminated in a field training exercise.

Three separate engineering projects were carried out by Vietnamese service members, U.S. Navy Seabees and Marine combat engineers at the Hoa Lien Nursery School, Hoa Hai Medical Clinic, and Hoa Nhon Community Center. Pacific Partnership personnel from aboard the Fall River participated in games and activities at Tuong Lai Specialized School as part of a community relations project.

Around the city of Da Nang, a nine-member component of the U.S. Seventh Fleet Band performed at various schools and gave public performances at Bach Dang Street, the Dragon Bridge on the

Han River and Bien Dong Beach Park.

“Pacific Partnership 17 and the U.S.N.S. Fall River’s visit to Da Nang show the depth of the U.S.-Vietnamese partnership, particularly in capacity to coordinate regional humanitarian assistance and disaster response.

Personnel from the United States and Vietnam worked together to train local medical professionals; build new classrooms for area school and a new multi-function community shelter, highlighting our shared focus on enhancing medical care, education and disaster preparedness as a driver for sustainable social and economic development,” noted U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Ted Osius.

The visit by USNS Fall River to Vietnam is in conjunction with the 22nd anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between the United States and Vietnam. Along with other cooperation, Pacific Partnership underscores the deepening relationship between the United States and Vietnam.

# Coordinated response: Coalition forces conduct first joint crash exercise

By Staff Sgt.  
**Marjorie Bowlden**  
380th Air Expeditionary  
Wing

Members of the United States, French, Australian and other Coalition air forces recently participated in a joint crash response exercise at an undisclosed location here, May 16, 2017.

This was the first exercise of its kind at this location, said a wing safety officer with the French air force, or l’Armée de l’air. Its purpose was to test how effectively different components of Coalition services were able to work together in the event of an aircraft crash.

“It was the first time everyone [all Coalition partners] participated with multiple services, including medical teams, explosive ordnance disposal and security,” said the French wing safety officer. “This permits us to improve little by little by observing the entire chain of first responders.”

380th Air Expeditionary Wing personnel answered the simulated call with medical and EOD teams to multiple sites. These teams worked hand-in-hand with Coalition partners to get the situation under control.

The exercise was mainly organized by l’Armée de l’air, said Lt. Col. David, 380th Air Expeditionary Wing chief of safety. However, this kind of training is key for the Coalition.

“This is developing relationships,” said David. “We try to deal as often as we can with Coalition partners. We share the airfield, we share the mission, so we want to work as closely with them as we can.”

Staff Sgt. Brad, team leader with the 380th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron EOD flight, had not worked with French military members before, he said. The training was a challenge, especially because of language barriers, but it was also valuable experience for him and his Airmen.

“There’s a lot of workings that go into it, and I think practice is the main thing,” said Brad. “We train all the time so we don’t have to actually have to get into that situation without knowing what to do. If it ever happens in the future, at least we have a general idea of how everything is going to happen.”

Though the final report is not yet complete, and despite a few communication shortfalls, the exercise went well overall, said David. The training opened avenues to pursue further training between Coalition partners to strengthen joint capability.

“We saw a bit of the different processes between what we do, what the Americans do, and how all of it could blend together on the day of an accident,” said the French wing safety officer. “The most important thing is communication and, above all, that we train together regularly.”



(U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Marjorie A. Bowlden) **Members of the 380th Expeditionary Medical Group medical operations flight prepare a French pilot for transport during a joint crash exercise at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia, May 16, 2017. Coalition forces responded to exercise locations at two different sites, testing how well partner first responders would work together in the event of an accident or incident.**

## Association to commemorate 100th anniversary

The Second (Indianhead) Division Association is searching for anyone who served in the Army's 2nd Infantry Division at any time. This year the association will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the division which was formed in France during World War I. For information about the association and our annual reunion in Arlington, Virginia from September 13 - 17, 2017, contact Secretary-treasurer Bob Haynes at 2idahq@comcast.net, call 224-225-1202, or visit www.2ida.org.



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Miscellaneous

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**Jaime Corwin, HR Manager**

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# Spiritual fitness meets physical fitness

By 1st Lt. Kayla Christopher  
45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

ZHOVKVA, Ukraine — The Army’s performance triad lists physical activity as one of the most important pillars of overall health.

While physical fitness helps build the cardiovascular and muscular strength required to be a Soldier, in a similar way, spiritual fitness builds the mental and emotional readiness and resiliency it takes to be a strong Soldier.

To build both physical and spiritual fitness, the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team unit ministry team conducted two separate spiritual fitness training events, both leading the Thunderbirds on a hike through the hills around the Krekhiv Monastery near Zhovkva, Ukraine.

The 45th IBCT is deployed to Ukraine as part of the Joint Multinational Training Group-Ukraine, an international coalition dedicated to building professionalism within the Ukrainian army and increasing the Ukrainian army’s training capacity.

“It’s a peaceful break from the operational stress of deployed life, said Staff Sgt. Kevin Rond, the unit’s religious affairs NCO. “It gives Soldiers a chance to connect with nature, and disconnect from the mission mindset; at the same time, the physical aspect

helps release endorphins which help us handle stress.”

The training event was conducted twice, both in May and June, due to high interest from the 45th IBCT Soldiers.

75 Soldiers total attended the two training events.

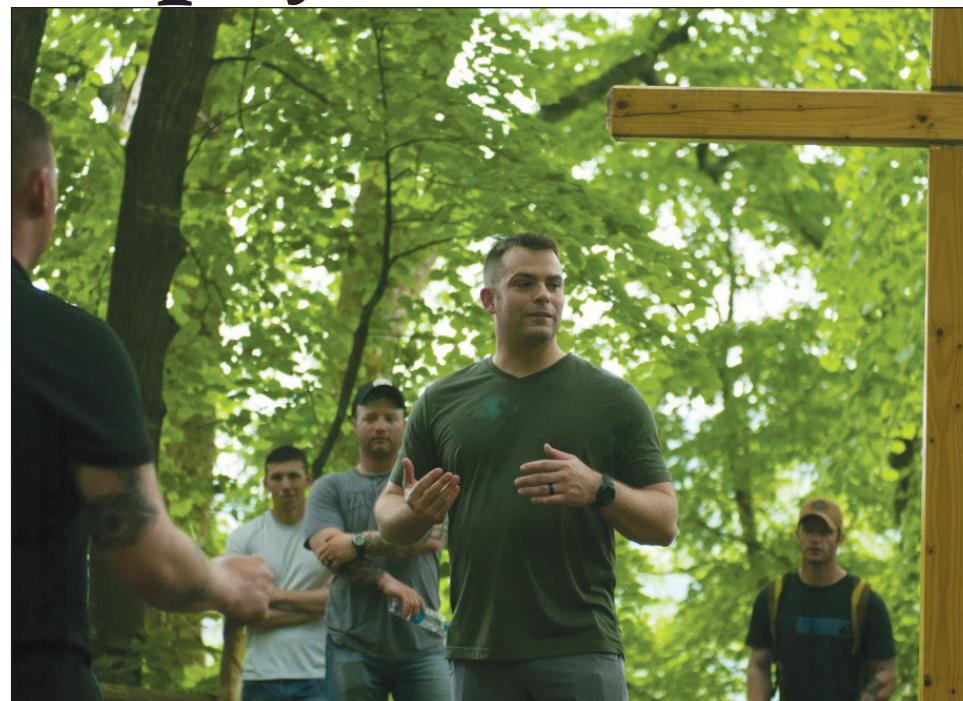
The training events fostered unit cohesion, increased local cultural awareness and served to improve readiness and resiliency by providing physical activity and helping Soldiers decrease stress and refocus on their purpose, explained the brigade chaplain, Maj. Joshua Byrd.

During the hike, the unit ministry team described to the Soldiers how the monastery was founded.

Monks arrived in the Krekhiv area around 1595, and chose to live a simple life of prayer in the caves near where the monastery stands today.

The monastery itself was built approximately 400 years ago. As the monks built a following, more people chose to live a prayerful life in the Ukrainian countryside.

“Just like the original monks left the distractions of their busy life to connect with God and nature, bringing Soldiers to the forest allows them the opportunity to decrease stress and refocus their minds on their purpose and a bigger picture,” Byrd said.



(U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Kayla Christopher, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team)

*The 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team religious affairs NCO, Staff Sgt. Kevin Rond of Allen, Texas, leads Thunderbirds on a spiritual fitness hike at the Krekhiv Monastery near Zhovkva, Ukraine on June 5. The training event fostered unit cohesion, increased local cultural awareness and served to improve readiness and resiliency by providing physical activity and helping Soldiers decrease stress and refocus on their purpose. The 45th IBCT is deployed to Ukraine as part of the Joint Multinational Training Group-Ukraine, an international coalition dedicated to building professionalism within the Ukrainian army and increasing the Ukrainian army’s training capacity.*

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# The Power of Nature

## Green Road Project to study nature's healing effects

**By Sarah Marshall**

*External Affairs, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences*

It's long been said that being outside, experiencing the sights and sounds of nature, can help ease our ailments, but there has been no physiological evidence to prove this theory. Now, researchers at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) are embarking on a collaborative study seeking to scientifically measure the healing effects of nature.

Over the last few years, researchers from USU's Consortium for Health and Military Performance (CHAMP) have been working with architects and engineers as part of an effort known as the Green Road Project. These efforts have led to a Green Road site being built on the Naval Support Activity Bethesda – one of six nationwide – which will help scientifically measure the effects of nature, while providing a tranquil environment for service members and their families. The project is led by the Institute for Integrative Health, with funding by the TKF Foundation, and also includes collaboration with scientists from the University of Arizona at Tucson, the Massachusetts General Hospital, and the National Institutes of Health.

The Green Road site includes a paved pathway that meanders through the

wooded area behind USU, leading over to Sanctuary Hall – living quarters for Walter Reed patients and their caregivers during long-term care. Those who traverse the path can take a seat on a large bench covered by a wooden awning, from which they can enjoy a breath-taking view of the vast wooded area populated with tall trees, white-tail deer, and the sounds of birds chirping – not to mention plenty of fresh air. There's also a pavilion, complete with picnic tables, a babbling water fountain, and a sitting area made out of large rocks right beside a small, trickling stream.

This year, USU researchers plan to begin using the site to measure the healing effects of those who spend time on the Green Road, as opposed to traversing through busier, less "green" parts of the base, explained Patricia Deuster, PhD, professor in USU's Military and Emergency Medicine Department and director of CHAMP. They'll look to enroll service members from all branches, as well as wounded warriors, and caregivers, and any others who can access the base and therefore the site. It's important to look at each of these populations, Deuster noted, to see how a healthy person responds to the different pathways, as compared to how a patient responds, or how a caregiver may respond.

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