

THE DENTAL CORPS BULLETIN

Useful Links

[AEGD 1-Timeline](#)
[Application Link](#)

Important Dates

04-17 Nov 2023:
AEGD-1 Selection
Board Convenes

01 Dec 2023:
AEGD -1
Selection Board
Results Published

January 2024:
AEGD-1 Location
Assignments
started

March 2024:
AEGD-1
Locations
Finalized

NLT April 2024:
HPSP Officers
receive active
duty orders



SPECIAL EDITION: ARMY HPSP AEGD-1 YEAR PROGRAM





A MESSAGE FROM THE 29TH DENTAL CORPS CHIEF, COL TANNER

Don't let dental school be the best dentistry you will ever do! Be all you can be. Take advantage of the Army's Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD) program.

The American Dental Association recognizes the military AEGD programs as the best GPR/AEGD programs in the country. Following the program, you will be years ahead of your dental classmates in your scope of practice, knowledge, skills, and confidence.

The AEGD program provides the optimal way for Officers and their family to transition into the military and Army dentistry. The AEGD Program:

(1) Provides an extensive one on one coaching and mentorship experience with dental specialists in oral surgery, prosthodontics, periodontics, endodontics, restorative, and at some locations, orthodontics and pedodontics.

(2) Develops a rapid family of lifelong friends, colleagues, mentors, and instructors. It's amazing the camaraderie you will develop among your peers, spouses, and mentors. At the AEGD program you not only work hard but play hard together.

(3) Prepares you to successfully operate in the military environment and culture. You will have the skills, knowledge, and confidence to operate independently at small general dentistry clinics and mentor those with less experience.

(4) Makes you more competitive in the civilian sector and for selection for postgraduate specialty residency. Statistically, those who completed an AEGD program have a higher selection rate for specialty training.

(5) Provides you with the opportunity to receive a higher paying bonus. Those who complete the AEGD program can complete an advanced practice certification which makes you eligible for up to a \$35K general dentistry bonus compared to the \$20K general dentistry bonus.

Personally, the AEGD program was one of my most professionally rewarding experiences. It was a great welcome into the Army Dentistry family for me and my family. The mentors and friendships developed enriched me and my family. Throughout my career, I found general dentists who attended the AEGD program performed at a significantly higher level and had a smoother transition into the Army than those who did not graduate from an AEGD program. If given the opportunity, complete an AEGD program! You will not regret it!





A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF OF GRADUATE DENTAL EDUCATION, COL STARK

Congratulations on your almost achieved goal of becoming a dentist! Now, it's time to take the next step and apply for advanced training. Pursuing an advanced education in general dentistry (AEGD-1-Year) residency is a pivotal decision that will greatly impact your career; however, I have no doubt you are fully prepared to take on the important work needed to *be all you can be*.

The knowledge and skills acquired throughout the 12-month program are priceless. Participation in our nationally recognized and accredited AEGD-1-Year residency programs provides the chance to apply new skills and safely explore clinical and scholarly interests. Residents learn valuable hands-on techniques from board-certified specialists, and they gain high-quality didactic training from mentors and consultant subject matter experts.

Residents who complete the fun and rewarding 12-month program gain the experience needed to offer optimal care to Warfighters. With consistent practice and careful case selection, residents can hone their skills and earn credentials to serve them well in future assignments.

The residency also lays a solid foundation for further specialty training. Individuals completing an AEGD residency are highly competitive for future Long Term Health Education and Training opportunities in specialties like orthodontics, endodontics, periodontics, and oral and maxillofacial surgery. Individuals interested in specialty training should strongly consider completing an AEGD program.

The programs are led by experienced Army Dental Corps officers and leaders who provide counseling, write letters of recommendation, and share insight for success in the military. The directors and faculty members involved in our GDE programs have a strong commitment to the success of the programs and welcome your requests for information. My administrative specialist, Ms. Edith Fields, and I are also fully dedicated to assisting you throughout this journey.

Committing to training requires sacrifice, but it's worth it. I hope you will leap at the opportunity to attend an AEGD residency. During my time as a dental student, I was selected to start a residency in pediatric dentistry, which prevented me from participating in an AEGD program. While I appreciated the chance to begin my specialty training early, I can't help but feel like I missed out on a unique experience whenever I visit an AEGD program or talk to a recent graduate.

I am honored to advocate for the outstanding officers representing Army Dentistry in our GDE programs. It is a privilege to celebrate your successes and provide support during challenging decisions. However, applying for an AEGD-1-year residency is one of the easiest decisions you can make.





AEGD-1 GRADUATE: A NON-TRADITIONAL PERSPECTIVE

By: CPT Andrew Jefferson

Introduction

I recently graduated from the Fort Jackson AEGD-1 year program at the end of July 2023. This past year was both challenging and rewarding. The decision whether to pursue the AEGD-1 is a difficult one for many new Army Dental Corps Officers, but one that was ultimately a great fit for me.



CPT Jefferson's clinic role during Operation Beyond the Horizon in DomRep was to capture BWs & PAs.

A Young Mustang

My experience with the Army Dental Corps began well before dental school. In 2009 I enlisted in the US Army Reserves (USAR) to pay for college and chose to be trained as a dental assistant (68E). At this point in my life, all I knew about dentistry was

that my dentist was a cool guy, and I was vaguely interested in the field. It was during Advanced Individual Training (AIT) where my vague interest blossomed into a desire to pursue a career as a dentist. It was also during AIT that I learned about the Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP). From that point on, my goal was to become a Dental Corps Officer through the HPSP.



Claire, Wesley, and CPT Anderson enjoying an outdoor adventure during their time in South Carolina.

Simultaneous with my undergraduate studies at Brigham Young University, I fulfilled my obligations in the USAR by attending battle drill assemblies (BTAs) once a month and annual training (AT) for two to four weeks during the summer. AT events took place across the United States and even outside the continental United States (OCONUS) to work in active-duty clinics in Hawaii and provide humanitarian aid in the Dominican Republic (DomRep). These experiences deepened my commitment to become a dentist.

I met my amazing wife, Claire, prior to applying for dental school. During our courtship we had several open conversations regarding our professional pursuits, particularly with the Army and the lifestyle that comes with active-duty service. With an open mind, she agreed to join me in this adventure. I received my dental education at Roseman University located in South Jordan, Utah with the benefits of the HPSP. Coincidentally, we found out just two hours after our son, Wesley, was born that we were assigned to Fort Jackson, SC for the 1-year AEGD. We knew it would be a lot of change for us in a short amount of time, but we looked forward to the new experiences. We faced a long cross-country move for what we knew would be a short-term position, but we viewed it as a chance to explore a different part of the country. I believed the AEGD-1 would provide the skills needed to thrive in today's dental climate regardless of staying on active-duty or into private practice.



AEGD-1 GRADUATE: A NON-TRADITIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Why do the AEGD-1?

I was fortunate enough during my studies at Roseman to work with several faculty members who were retired military or are presently serving in the USAR. They unanimously recommended we pursue the AEGD-1, if provided the opportunity. Each of these providers explained how the residency established a firm foundation for the rest of their careers, both in the service and in private practice. I decided to follow the counsel of the mentors, and I am 100% grateful that I did.

The US Army AEGD-1 programs are unique compared to their counterparts in the civilian sector. The following are my top reasons I would recommend the AEGD-1:

Mentorship: Each program has an assigned mentor for each specialty. At Ft Jackson, most of the mentors worked out of the same clinic we did. If we had ANY question regarding diagnosing, treatment plans, and procedures, the mentors were always willing to help provide direction. This one-on-one instruction led to working through several difficult cases and extensive learning opportunities.

Clinical Competence: Coming out of dental school I had only completed 4 crowns – that required at least three appointments each, needed a solid 2-3 hours for a basic class II, and only had half a lecture regarding implants. By the end of the program, I had placed multiple implants, completed quadrant dentistry with ease, taking care of several single unit crowns in a single appointment using CAD/CAM technologies, and had a wealth of surgical exposure – both periodontal and OMFS related. The experiences, procedures, and outcomes of the program are beyond empowering as a new dentist.

Military Leadership Instruction: The AEGD-1 provided an opportunity to acclimate to Army responsibilities beyond clinic duties. Think of it as a “buffer year” to learn how the Army Dental Corps operates before being put into a position of responsibility in a unit.

Work-life balance: I was able to be home as much or more than when I was in dental school. We enjoyed many weekend road trips as a family and my wife enjoyed making friends locally and joining a community choir. There were some nights I stayed late for lab work or applying finishing touches on a presentation out of personal preference. For the most part though, I was home by 1700. For families that need assistance adjusting, there are Army resources to help with childcare and spousal employment.



Pictured from Left to Right: LTC(P) Brandon Gage, Ft Jackson AEGD-1 Director; CPT Andrew Jefferson, JBLM DENTAC; COL Stephen Tanner, 29th Army Dental Corps Chief.

Closing Remarks

Being prior enlisted offered the unique perspective of watching my fellow co-residents grow from brand new Army dentists into exemplary Army Dental Corps Officers. I would strongly recommend everyone consider the AEGD-1, even if you think you want to specialize. The 1-year will only strengthen your application and you will be better prepared for any career path. The experiences gained are truly unparalleled.



LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES IN AEGD-1 YEAR PROGRAM

By: CPT Kyle Duffee, 2023 Class President of Fort Jackson's AEGD-1 Year Program

Please tell us a little about your background and what led you to dentistry.

I graduated from the University of Wyoming with a B.S. in Chemistry and went onto the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to complete an M.S. in Chemistry. It was there that I decided to pursue dentistry as a career. I wanted to find a career that was focused on service and utilized the scientific knowledge I had accumulated during my education. Dentistry seemed a great fit for that. It was at the same time that I decided to apply for the Army's HPSP scholarship. I knew I wanted to practice in the military due to the excellent mentorship available and as such I knew from the beginning that I wanted to pursue a one-year AEGD program as well. After completing my D.D.S. at the University of Colorado, I went on to complete the AEGD residency at Ft. Jackson, SC.

Why did you decide to complete a 1-Year AEGD? How did you rank your location? How did it enhance your skills coming out of dental school?

This program was an excellent way to refine all the skills I learned in dental school and get exposure to several new procedures across all disciplines. I completed many surgical third molar extractions, tissue grafting of all types including GBR, ridge preservations, free gingival grafts and connective tissue grafts. I learned oral and IV sedation techniques and completed several molar endo cases.

Before I even began dental school, I knew I wanted to do a 1 year AEGD since every dentist I've spoken too highly recommended these programs. When I neared graduation, I completed the AEGD application and ranked my preferences of which the Army currently has seven locations: Ft. Jackson, SC; Ft. Carson, CO; Ft. Moore, GA; Ft. Campbell, KY; Fort Sill, OK; Ft. Bliss, TX; Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA. I had lived in the Carolinas previously, so I knew I was going to enjoy my time at Ft. Jackson.

What are some key takeaways from the program? Would you recommend it to incoming 63As?

The one year AEGD program is an excellent experience that I am grateful for. I recommend all newly graduated dentists pursue this program as it provides excellent mentorship at the beginning of our careers. The Army has excellent resources available. We had several Prime Scan and Prime Mill units available so I got extensive instruction in CAD/CAM techniques. We had a CBCT in our clinic that allowed us to greatly improve our diagnostic data. We also had a laboratory attached to our clinic with two excellent lab techs that I could work directly with on cases. Communicating with them directly was a major benefit in fabricating high-quality prostheses. We also had a full suite of 3D printers and was able to complete the vast majority of my cases through a digital workflow. Additionally, we had excellent assistants, many of which had experience working in specialty clinics and as such were very knowledgeable and helpful. Above and beyond these resources, the greatest strength of these programs is the mentors that provide the instruction. We had a mentor in each specialty that I could consult with for every case. The Army has excellent specialty residencies and many of these highly trained specialists act as mentors to these AEGD programs. I would plan with them for each procedure and as I gained confidence in procedures, they would allow me to work with increased independence. The mentor-to-resident ratio is very near 1:1 so it was never an issue finding the assistance I needed. Mentors would stay after hours often to help answer any questions we had. They provided excellent one-on-one instruction and guidance that was invaluable for me at the start of my career and is the primary reason why I would recommend this program to any graduating dentist. After completing the one year AEGD program, I feel prepared to work as a competent general dentist serving the soldiers of the U.S. Army.



CPT Duffee Presenting at the Hinman Dental Conference.



LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES IN AEGD-1 YEAR PROGRAM

By: CPT Kyle Duffee, 2023 Class President of Fort Jackson's AEGD-1 Year Program

What does a typical day/week look like as an AEGD 1-Year resident?

Our schedule was rotation based. Each day we would be assigned to a comprehensive care, sick call, or specialty rotation where we had an assigned mentor and would schedule our procedures according to the appropriate rotation. Typically we saw patients Monday through Thursday and reserved Friday for didactic lectures. These lectures covered every discipline and extended the content we were taught in dental school. This allowed us to focus on each specialty and ensure each resident got equal exposure to as many different procedures as possible. Throughout the year we had additional special courses such as the endo/pros/perio short course in Ft. Gordon, and the Combat Casualty Care Course at JBSA. We would also have other specialists come and give guest lectures such as oral and maxillofacial radiology, orofacial pain, pediatric dentistry and even forensic dentistry. We were able to attend and present table clinic posters at the Hinman Dental Conference as well. Each resident prepared a literature review of a specialty topic and prepared a poster board to present. My poster board was on "Dental autogenous transplantation," a specialty endodontic procedure where a tooth (typically a third molar) is transplanted to replace a non-restorable tooth (typically a first molar). I presented ways to use CBCT and 3D printing to digitally plan these procedures to improve outcomes.

You were President of your class. Could you speak more about this role and what it entails?

I was the president of my residency class which meant that I would have monthly meetings with the residents to get feedback on their experience of the program and then relay comments and concerns to the program director. I would also coordinate accountability when we were away at conferences. Fortunately all of my co-residents were excellent colleagues and very professional, personable people so they made my job very easy. This leadership position helped me develop better communication skills since I needed to mediate between concerns of my fellow residents and the expectations of the mentors. Fortunately everyone in the program was highly professional and this allowed us to come to healthy resolutions when the rare problem did arise. These communication skills are fundamental to any military leadership position no matter the branch: dental, medical, infantry, artillery, you name it, so I was thankful for the opportunity to be the class leader.

Where are you PCSing to now and what will your role be there?

I am going to Ft. Carson, Colorado to be a general dentist in the DENTAC. I'm excited to bring the skills I learned in my residency to serve to soldiers of the 4th Infantry Division. Colorado Springs also happens to be my hometown, so I'm looking forward to being close to my family members again.

Residents treating patients at the Combat Casualty Care Course at Camp Bullis, San Antonio.





SEDATION COURSE OFFERED IN AEGD-1 YEAR PROGRAM

By: LTC Zachary H. Highberger, Ft. Jackson AEGD-1 Year Mentor

The 2023-2024 Sedation Course is part of the annual AEGD-12 Month training schedule. The goal of this course is to provide graduating residents credentials in minimal/mild conscious sedation training, with a focus in enteral and Nitrous-oxide anesthesia. This course is not specific to the Fort Jackson AEGD-12 Month Residency Training Program, but it is offered to educational programs throughout the U.S. Army Dental Enterprise. The AEGD-12 Month Sedation Course satisfies requirements set-forth by the American Dental Association (ADA), The Commission of Dental Accreditation (CODA), The United States Army Graduate Dental Education (GDE) Committee, and The Defense Health Agency (DHA).

As a Fort Jackson AEGD-12 Month Residency Training Program mentor, along with other stellar staff, it was my distinct pleasure to be involved with this program. The residents are provided 72-hours of didactic and clinical training in the areas of minimal/mild enteral sedation, nitrous-oxide inhalation sedation, and an orientation to moderate anesthesia training. Training also focuses on local anesthesia pain control, local anesthesia techniques, and peripheral intra-venous (IV) access modalities.

Apart from the AEGD-12 Month Sedation Course, residents obtain full American Red Cross Advanced Life Support (ALS) certification. This is a comprehensive course addressing emergency cardio-respiratory intervention and resuscitation.

The United States Army Dental Corps is dedicated to evidence-based care, holding patient safety paramount. The annual AEGD-12 Month Residency Training Program Sedation Course is another layer and method to support this goal.

This annual course cannot be successful without the full support and participation of dedicated staff, residents and adjunct MTF staff. Special thanks are extended to the following Fort Jackson AEGD-12 Month Residency Training Program mentors: LTC(P) Brandon Gage (AEGD-12 Month Director), LTC Ryan Swiss (Endodontics), MAJ April Bumpers (Periodontics), COL(R) Richard Nichols (Periodontics, GDE Chair), Mr. John Evans (Chief, MAHC QMD Division/HESD Director), and COL Susan Cebula (Fort Jackson Dental Health Activity Commander and Chief Administrative Officer, AEGD-12 Month Program).

As mentioned, this annual course is very educational and productive. Many of the Fort Jackson AEGD-12 Month Residents have expressed positive input. Some of their comments are included:

“Great hands-on experience.”

“Enjoyed developing positive relationships with co-residents and mentors.”

“Very important to work with other auxiliary staff and MEDDAC MTF providers.”

“It’s great to learn new ways to make patients more comfortable and less anxious.”

“Knowing how to relieve patient anxiety really improves access to care.”



CPT Clark and CPT Free-Jenkins (IV access lab).



Fort Jackson AEGD-12 Month Residents, Advanced Life Support Course, Moncrief Army Health Clinic, AUG 2023.



PERSPECTIVE OF AN AEGD-1 YEAR PROGRAM DIRECTOR

By: LTC(P) Brandon Gage, Ft. Jackson AEGD-1 Year Program Director

During my senior year of dental school, I was faced with the decision of whether to apply for an Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD) 1-Year program or to begin my career as a full-time clinician. My career plan was to serve my 4-year HPSP service obligation and start a private practice, and I didn't want any unnecessary delays. Because the year spent as an AEGD resident counted as a payback year, I decided I might as well apply, but my expectations were low. I began the program at Joint Base Lewis-McCord, WA in 2006. The AEGD program filled in significant gaps in my dental education that I previously didn't even know existed and allowed me to hone my skills and build my efficiency as a general dentist. I gained experience with complex procedures and with treating complex, comprehensive patients. I also received invaluable mentorship that accelerated my growth as an Army officer. By the time I reached graduation, I felt confident I had received the training necessary to be a successful officer and clinician. I also realized that there are significant advantages to military dentistry and that at some point in my career, I wanted to get involved in education.



My first assignment was with the 561st Medical Company in Grafenwoehr, Germany. In 2009, I transferred to Vicenza, Italy, where I served as a general dentist. After two years, I decided to apply to the AEGD 2-year program. I left Italy early and attended the Ft. Hood AEGD 2-Year Program at Ft. Cavazos, TX (formerly Ft. Hood), from 2011 to 2013. After graduation, I returned to Germany and completed a 4-year tour as a comprehensive dentist. I was offered the position of Assistant Program Director at the AEGD 2-year Program at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, where I served from 2017 to 2020. Since then, I have served as the program director of the AEGD 12-Month Program at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina.

Unfortunately, graduating dental students still seem to lack a basic understanding of the benefits of completing an Army AEGD 12-Month Program. A couple of years ago a resident made a comment midway through his residency that brought this issue to my attention. After presenting a complex case during a patient care conference, the resident exclaimed "So, it turns out this program actually is useful!" Several other residents during the past three years expressed similar surprise at the depth and scope of the didactic and clinical education the 1-year program provides. Graduating dental students weighing the decision to apply must be equipped with facts to make an informed decision to pursue an AEGD 12-Month Program. There are three primary areas where residents receive training that is extremely difficult to receive otherwise: military professional development, advanced didactic training, and advanced clinical training.

The transition from a dental student to a fully licensed provider is difficult, and navigating life as an Army Dental Officer at the rank of Captain with minimal to no prior military experience adds a layer of stress that can make the entire process overwhelming. A significant goal of the 1-year program is "to provide residents with adequate military training and guidance to ensure that by the time they graduate, they are prepared to function effectively and independently as an Army Dental Officer." This is accomplished in several ways. All residents attend the Combat Casualty Care Course (C4) and Prehospital Trauma Life Support. Additionally, all residents receive Officer Professional Development seminars during the year that cover military customs and courtesies, proper military bearing, and professional career planning, among other topics. The program also facilitates continuous guidance and mentorship in a controlled and protected environment.



PERSPECTIVE OF AN AEGD-1 YEAR PROGRAM DIRECTOR CONTINUED

By: LTC(P) Brandon Gage, Ft. Jackson AEGD-1 Year Program Director

There is also a rigorous didactic component to the AEGD 12-Month Program. Specialists and visiting consultants provide lectures that cover advanced topics in oral surgery, periodontics, prosthodontics, orthodontics, endodontics, oral pathology, comprehensive dentistry, pediatric dentistry, and orthodontics. Residents also participate in monthly literature reviews, patient care conferences, oral medicine seminars, and implant boards. They prepare a table clinic poster for presentation at a local professional dental meeting and present a professional lecture to other providers for continuing education credit. A question I often hear is: How does the 1-year program differ from what takes place during the AEGD 2-year program?" A common way of describing this difference is that the 2-year program focuses more on the "why", whereas the 1-year program focuses more on the "how". Graduates of the 2-year program are qualified to pursue board certification through the American Board of General Dentistry. The board certification process consists of a written test, an oral exam, and a case-based clinical exam. Consequently, the 2-year program not only develops residents as clinicians but must also focus heavily on didactic preparation for the ABGD board exam. In contrast, all the didactic activities of the 1-year program are focused solely on developing residents into the best clinicians possible. The content is typically much more clinically oriented and focused on providing a strong knowledge base that enables residents to make sound clinical decisions.



ARMY MEDICINE
IS ARMY STRONG!

This brings us to the primary goal of the 1-year program: to develop residents into highly competent clinicians capable of managing complex, comprehensive patients. Residents rotate through the different dental specialties and receive experience and training on advanced procedures in prosthodontics, endodontics, periodontics, oral surgery, and comprehensive dentistry. For perspective, a recent class of residents reported that during dental school they completed an average of 8 units of fixed (crowns, inlays, onlays, etc.), 4 endodontic procedures, 2 implant-supported restorations, 34 extractions, zero periodontal surgeries, and placed no implants. During their 1-year program, the same group completed an average of 61 units of fixed, 23 endodontic procedures, 7 implant-supported restorations, 90 extractions, 28 periodontal surgeries, and placed 7 implants. This is in addition to nearly 100 direct restorations and various other routine procedures. While these numbers are impressive, it's also important to understand that the focus during the program is not on quantity but rather on quality. Residents are given ample time and guidance to ensure each procedure is performed safely and correctly, without the added stress of maintaining production goals.

From the availability of highly trained mentors, dedicated assistants, and skilled laboratory technicians to the state-of-the-art equipment and emphasis on digital dentistry, much more could be said about the benefits of completing an Army AEGD 12-Month Program. A recent graduate left a comment on their end-of-year program evaluation that typifies the sentiment of most graduates: "This program has been so much more than I could have imagined. I have learned so much, and I also have learned tools to figure out things that I may not know. The program is very demanding in terms of presentations, however, I know it was worth it, as I have learned from each presenter. I am very grateful for this opportunity and for the mentors who take the extra time to prepare each day to help us grow in our education!" Regardless of whether you are planning a career in the military or are determined to serve your initial obligation and go into private practice, completing an AEGD 12-Month Program will put you leaps and bounds ahead of where you would be without it.



ADVANCED CLINICAL PRACTICE PROGRAM: ECONOMIC BENEFITS

By: MAJ Michael Mooney, Deputy Consultant to 63As (General Dentists)

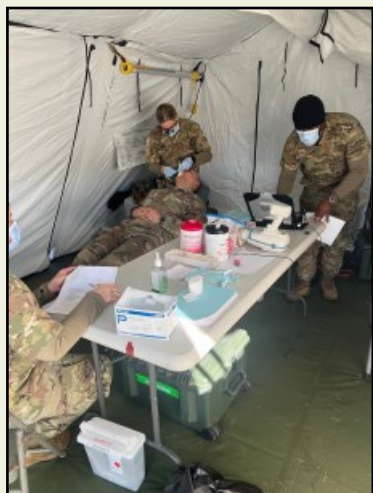
The Advanced Clinical Practice (ACP) Program enhances the clinical and administrative skills of Officers after graduating an Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD) 12-month program. There is NO service obligation that accompanies enrollment, so all AEGD-12 Month Program graduates are highly encouraged to enroll early with the 1-page enrollment form at their first duty station.

The ACP is geared towards Officers that want to continually learn and improve their knowledge and dental skills. The program requires demonstrated clinical competency with 100 extractions, 10 molar root canals along with a broader demonstration of multiple other surgical skills, and prosthetic proficiency. Our goal is to make you competent and confident to diagnose and treat most dental cases either in a hard structured dental clinic or deployed in a single tent by yourself.

The program enables more than just learning advanced dental skills. Those enrolled choose from a broad swath of Army courses such as earning the Expert Field Medical Badge or completing the live tissue Tactical Combat Medical Course to set themselves to a higher standard. These courses will make dentists an asset and not a bystander to any medical emergency they encounter in the military or civilian world.

Successful completion of the ACP program qualifies you to be awarded the designator of "9F". With completion you qualify for an extra \$5,000/year of Dentist pay as well as eligible for a higher multi-year retention bonus of \$35,000/year on a 4-year contract.

The intent of the program is to allow qualified dentists an opportunity to increase their clinical and administrative skills to benefit our patients and the Army Dental Corps as well as growing personally in their military and dental professional skills.





BROTHERS IN DENTISTRY

By: CPTs Aaron and Casey Gringer

Both CPT Aaron Gringer (63B) and CPT Casey Gringer (63A) share a unique perspective on not only choosing to serve in the military as Army dentists, but they were both stationed on the same installation. Given such a notable perspective, both were interviewed.

What was your path to becoming an Army Dentist?

CPT Casey Gringer: I chose to join the Army for many reasons, one being we grew up in a military environment. Our father is a retired Air Force Officer, which was a pivotal factor driving my decision to join the military. Additionally, while in college, an Army recruiter came to speak to my school's pre-dental club, and suggested applying for the Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP). Being accepted to the HPSP made my dreams come true of serving without having to worry about the financial obligation for the next twenty years. Another factor that influenced my decision was the camaraderie and sense of belonging that the Army fosters. The bonds formed among comrades who share a common purpose and endure challenges together are often said to be unparalleled.



Pictured from Left to Right:
CPT Casey Gringer and CPT Aaron Gringer at the 2023 Fort Jackson
AEGD 1-Year Graduation.

CPT Aaron Gringer: Joining the Army was never what I expected to do, but it remains one of the top three best decisions in my life. My father did a full career in the Air Force and both grandfathers were drafted during WWII. Thus, my family owes a lot of gratitude to our way of life to the military, so it is rewarding to continue the tradition. Beyond that, the HPSP scholarship allowed me to pursue school outside of my state school as the financial constraint was no longer present. I was able to attend school at Columbia University in New York with most of my expenses covered and then graduate debt free as a new dentist. Beyond graduation the Army has provided my family and I a comfortable salary, full healthcare coverage, generous PTO/parental leave, and many other benefits while working without many of the production constraints new dentists suffer from. This allowed me to develop my fundamental skills quicker than many of my dental school classmates. The final selling point is the residencies offered by the Army. Since dentistry is free at the point of service to Soldiers, Army dental residents get more repetitions and exposure to advanced procedures than their counterparts in non-VA civilian residencies. Getting this exposure while I was a resident has benefited marketing myself in acquiring part-time civilian work while still completing my pay-back time. As a side note, it was also nice to receive a full salary as a resident as well.



BROTHERS IN DENTISTRY

By: CPTs Aaron and Casey Gringer

What is it like having a sibling in the military?

CPT Casey Gringer: It is a unique dynamic. It brings together shared experiences, challenges, and a deep understanding of the demands and sacrifices associated with military service. I am forever grateful to continually learn from my older brother. He was not only a mentor in the residency program but has been one my whole life.



CPT Aaron Gringer: I've really enjoyed having Casey being stationed at Ft. Jackson with me and being able to mentor him. It was an odd feeling having to complete a quarterly evaluation on my own brother though. I was able to help guide him during his early struggles as a resident because I was in his shoes only months before him, which I think benefited him. He also helped me get more exposure to the local community through recreational sports, which I have enjoyed playing with him just like when we were kids.

As someone who completed the 2-Year AEGD immediately following dental school what is your perspective having recently graduated the comprehensive dentistry program and mentoring in the 1-Year AEGD program?

CPT Aaron Gringer: I have appreciated the opportunity to see both residencies from different perspectives. I find there are more similarities than differences. At the end of the day, the mentors make the residency. Ft. Jackson's 1-Year AEGD is run like a condensed 2-Year residency, in my opinion, in that they have a lot of the same didactic trainings and requirements over a shorter time frame. I have come to appreciate having chosen the path of doing the 2-Year as I was able to use my snowbird year to develop my skills in bread & butter dentistry and learned the basics of being an officer in the Army prior to starting residency. As a result, I was able to take on more complex cases during residency because I had more time to complete them and many of the 1-Year residents need their first half of residency to become comfortable with fundamental dentistry and learning how the Army functions.

As a mentor (Aaron), what is your biggest piece of advice for someone considering the 1-Year AEGD?

Go full throttle. The 1-Year AEGD advances your abilities way beyond that of dental school and exposes you to many aspects of the different specialties for those considering going that route. It is priceless as you can challenge yourself, while still having specialty mentors available to guide you through difficult situations. New doctors out of dental school entering private practice without an AEGD are automatically expected to hit production targets with usually no mentorship to guide them through difficult situations that inevitably appear. This leads to a lot of stress and resentment for these young dentists. Therefore, it is very important to take advantage of every day in residency, even as a mentor I wish I could do another year to still improve my abilities.

As a recent graduate of the 1-Year AEGD (Casey), what is your biggest piece of advice?

Residency is just one step in your professional journey. It's important to recognize that learning doesn't stop after completing the program. Dentistry and healthcare are constantly evolving fields, with new technologies, treatments, and research emerging regularly. Embrace a mindset of continuous learning and professional development. Stay updated on the latest advancements, attend conferences, engage in research, and seek out opportunities for further training in our profession and within the military.



RESOURCES FOR HPSP STUDENTS

AEGD-1Yr Packet Questions:

- (1) POC for Last Names A-F: Alta Wright at alta.m.wright2.civ@health.mil
- (2) POC for Last Names H-O: Mi Higgins at mi.h.higgins.civ@health.mil
- (3) POC for Last Names, G, P-Z: Michelle Wilson at michelle.wilson1.civ@health.mil

HPSP Manager:

Mrs. Roxanne O'Neal: roxanne.m.oneal.civ@army.mil

Chief of Graduate Dental Education (GDE):

COL Thomas Stark at thomas.stark17.mil@army.mil

General Questions to the Army Dental Corps:

usarmy.jbsa.medical-coe.mbx.dental-corps@army.mil

Army Dentistry at Work Podcast:

iTunes: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/army-dentistry-at-work/id1536441689>

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/7Hsmc2LwT0OR43yI01ZD7k?si=2w0srT76TQi2knGTkaVwWw>

Stitcher: <https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/army-dentistry-at-work>

LibSyn: <https://armydentistryatwork.libsyn.com/website>

