



Association of Army Dentistry (AAD)

AAD 2024 Summer Newsletter

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On June 14, 2024, our Army turned 249 years old. This year's theme is "Honoring the Past, Defending the Future" with the focus on the Army's support for our nation, past, present and future. For 249 years, the U.S. Army has answered the call to defend and support America against both foreign and domestic challenges, and we'll continue to do so in the future. Our Army is the best trained and most prepared in the world, making it ready to face any obstacle it may encounter, including natural disasters, public health emergencies and, of course, our nation's adversaries.

Since the 1600's and through the 19th century, when it was demonstrated that intact incisors and canines were required to open powder cartridges, dental care was initially provided to Soldiers primarily by medical surgeons and the occasional Soldier or hospital steward who happened to have dental training. It wasn't until 1901, that the Army formally recognized the importance of oral health and a dedicated Army dental service and established a core group of thirty contract dental surgeons; followed by the establishment of the US Army Dental Corps on March 3, 1911. Since then, thousands of Army Dental Officers, NCOs, Enlisted Soldiers and Civilians have served with honor, in support of Soldiers and our Army. Army Dentistry is critical to the readiness, health and wellness of Soldiers. Having the best trained and most experienced dental team, supported by the best technology and equipment, will ensure the Army accomplishes its many missions. As people are the most important resource in any organization, I'm reassured that our future continues to look promising, as evidenced by the some of the newest and brightest Army Dental Corps Officers whose UCSF Dental School graduation and promotion ceremonies I attended earlier this month.

Those of us who have served, understand and appreciate the professional and personal benefits from having been a part of Army Dentistry. We need to continue our "service" by sharing our experiences and encouraging others to consider joining and/or staying with Army Dentistry in some capacity. The Association of Army Dentistry exists to honor our past by recording and preserving the history of Army Dentistry and prepare the present and inspire the future by supporting Army Dentistry through engagement, recognition and mentoring activities.

Thank you to those who have supported and/or continue to support the AAD by volunteering their time and talents and by donating their treasure. I encourage those who have yet to get involved to contact any member of the AAD Board of Directors or one of our committees to ask how you can help.

M. Ted Wong, MG, USA (Ret)
President and Chairman of the Board, AAD

University of California San Francisco School of Dentistry Army Promotion and Oath Affirmation Event, 7 June 2024

MG, USA (Ret) Ted Wong, DDS, MHA

This is the season for graduations and promotions of Army Dental Corps officers at dental schools across the country. I had the honor and privilege to participate in the 2024 UCSF School of Dentistry Commencement Ceremony on June 7, 2024, and the promotion and reaffirmation of oath ceremonies for three incoming US Army Dental Corps officers: Captains Sonja Chestnutt, Samantha Garcia and June Lee. As a UCSF alumnus ('84) and retired Army Dental Corps officer, it was a personally rewarding experience to witness three exceptional UCSF graduates transition into the Army Dental Corps, being supported by many families and friends. Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army in San Francisco, Mark Benton, Sr., presided over the ceremony and promoted CPT Chestnutt who had several family members serve in the military, including her grandfather, Army Colonel (Ret) Joseph Stankewitz, DC, 63G. I had the honor of promoting CPT Garcia, whose father, Daniel Garcia, served as an NCO in the 82nd Airborne Division and was one of several family members who inspired her to join the Army. CPT Lee was promoted by CPT Ryu, a West Point graduate, Army medical officer, and childhood friend who encouraged her to join the Army. All three aspire to become the best dentists and Army officers they can be, and look forward to professional growth, service to others, and leadership opportunities offered by the Army Dental Corps. CPT's Chestnutt and Garcia were selected to attend Army Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD) – 1 Year Residency at Joint Base Lewis-McCord (JBLM). CPT Lee will attend the AEGD-1 year program at Ft Carson. It is reassuring to know that the health and readiness of Soldiers will be in skilled and capable hands, and that the future of the Army Dental Corps is bright and robust.





Membership - The AAD is YOUR Organization!

The Association of Army Dentistry (AAD) is thankful for the ongoing support and loyalty of our members. Your efforts to promote membership in our organization are vital to our long-term success. Furthermore, the AAD encourages those who would like to become actively involved in our organization to contact us. The AAD is your organization.

The link to our membership form is provided below.

[AAD 2024 Membership Form](#)

Website Development Update

COL, USA (Ret) Frank Nasser, Jr., DDS, MHA

After several months of working with volunteer programmers, the Board of Directors with the recommendation of the Website Project Team and the ad hoc Contract Review Team voted in early May to hire a private company, Red Spot Design, to take on programming duties for the AAD. While we are grateful for the efforts of the volunteers, it was apparent that the customized nature of the desired website required professional expertise with the skill and time to focus on the task. Since early May, the company has made substantial progress in redesigning webpages and uploading content. They have also been instrumental in suggesting improvements to the website designs originally developed by the AAD Project Team.

This has been a challenging and, at times, frustrating, endeavor. Anyone actively involved with custom website development will attest that a high level of effort and time is required. The Project Team is confident that with the expertise of Red Spot Design programmers, a novel, engaging and informative AAD website will be the result and worth the effort.

We thank all our members for their patience and continued support.

Active Component News



Army Dental Corps Chief



*U.S. Army Dental Corps
Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234*

June 14, 2024

Members of the Army Dental Care Family:

For 249 years, the United States Army has stood strong in defense of this nation. I am incredibly proud of the commitment, resilience, and dedication demonstrated by our Soldiers and the families that support them.

When the nation calls, our Soldiers have answered. No matter the challenges faced, we have continuously stood behind the oath to protect the American way of life.

I am honored to serve with the world's finest men and women. Remember the sacrifices of those who gave their last to the Nation.

Happy 249th Birthday, United States Army.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen J. Tanner'.

*Stephen J. Tanner
Colonel, U.S. Army
Chief, Army Dental Corps*

Army Dental Corps Chief

25 June 2024

Basic Officer Leaders Course (BOLC) Class 241 welcomed twelve new dental officers to the Army Dental Corps during Corps Day on June 12.

These young officers learned a brief history and structure of the Dental Corps, options for Long Term Health Education and Training (LTHET), and had an opportunity to meet with Senior Leaders in the U.S. Army Dental Corps.

The time concluded with a social sponsored by the Association of Army Dentistry where they were welcomed into the Corps.



Army Dental Corps Chief

15 April 2024

It is my pleasure to announce the officer, non-commissioned officer, Soldier, and civilian winners of the 2024 Dental Corps Chief Awards of Excellence.

Congratulations to all winners along with my appreciation to all nominees. Winners will receive a Corps Chief coin, personal letter of recognition, name engraved on the plaque at the Corps Chief's office and an award for personal display. Additionally, the Association of Army Dentistry awarded each recipient with a \$50 gift certificate, AAD coin, and a one-year membership in the AAD.

- Civilian-Category I: Ms. Karen Ciota, JBLM, Wash.

- Civilian-Category II: Mr. Charles Graham, Fort Eisenhower, Ga.
- Junior Enlisted Soldier: SPC Aadam Temmis, Fort Campbell, Ky.
- Non-Commissioned Officer: SFC Aleksandria Pavlenko, DHA – Italy
- Junior Officer: MAJ Gamal Baker, Fort Liberty, N.C.
- Dental Education: COL Adam Lincicum, Fort Eisenhower, Ga.
- Exceptional Service and Leadership: LTC Demarcio Reed, Ft. Eustis, Va.

21 April 2024

It is an honor to announce that CPT Aaron Colamarino has won the prestigious 2024 Patrick D. Sculley DDS Board of Regents Award.

This award is open to graduates of the previous academic year from all advanced dental education programs in the Defense Health Agency (DHA) — all specialties, all services. One finalist from each service presented at the Federal Services Dental Educators Workshop in April.

All finalists provided outstanding presentations, but CPT Colamarino became the 2024 Sculley Award winner. He is pictured with the Uniformed Services University (USU) President, Dr. Jonathan Woodson, and the Postgraduate Dental College Executive Dean, Dr. Drew Fallis.

This tremendous accomplishment represents the culmination of three years of taxing work. His work has been published in the Journal of Periodontology (<https://doi.org/10.1002/JPER.22-0505>).

CPT Colamarino currently serves as an assistant professor in the Department of Periodontics, Army Postgraduate Dental School, Postgraduate Dental College, Uniformed Services University. Congratulations to CPT Colamarino!



Reserve Component News

U.S. Army Reserve Dental Corps News

The Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) at Tufts University School of Dental Medicine (TUSDM) in Boston, Mass. celebrated the commissioning of five dental graduates on May 20, 2024. LTC Eduardo Olegario, the Tufts HPSP faculty advisor, was present at the ceremony held at historic Fenway Park. LTC Olegario is the Director of Clinical Operations for the 455th Dental Company Area Support.

The Tufts HPSP program also sponsored an Army recruitment lunch on May 21, 2024. The guest speaker was MAJ Andrew Jenzer, Program Director, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Residency at Womack Army Medical Center, Fort Liberty, N.C.



Five TUSDM dental graduates attend their commissioning ceremony at Fenway Park with HPSP advisor LTC Olegario (fourth from right).



MAJ Jenzer (second from right) with Tufts dental students and HPSP advisor LTC Olegario (at far right) during an Army Recruiting event.

Spouses' Corner

Presented by The Spouses and Surviving Spouses Committee

A Salute to Army Spouses on Independence Day

By Susan (Sue) Allen

Army families living on or near an Army post are fortunate to experience the full-throated patriotism that surrounds holidays like Independence Day, Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Bands, cannons, parades and a lot of red, white and blue help feed a spirit united by service to our country. Although cities and towns across America celebrate these holidays, too – many with extravagant pageantry – military installations have a reputation for doing it right.

As the Gulf War kicked off at the beginning of August 1990, pride in our military was at its peak, especially at installations with hundreds of deployed soldiers. Support groups stepped up their activities. Families across the country traded in the red, white and blue ribbons and bunting that were prevalent just a month earlier for yellow ribbons tied around trees. And American flags adorned houses and storefronts. It was Independence Day patriotism on steroids.

Gary and I were in the Washington, D.C., area during the Gulf War, but had previously been at Fort Bragg, N.C. (now Fort Liberty). We knew a lot of dental personnel who were preparing to deploy. I volunteered for the Pentagon's family hotline and quickly learned of the shared concerns of active-duty and reserve officer, NCO, and enlisted spouses. It was frightening and challenging for many, but Army spouses remained strong.

Based on those experiences, I wrote the following poem in the summer of 1990. It was first a gift for Carolyn Lefler upon the retirement of her husband MG Bill B. Lefler, the 20th chief of the Army Dental Corps. Three years later, we were back at Fort Bragg when the Pentagon Public Affairs office called to ask if I would be willing to change the wording from "Army wife" to "military wife." They wanted to present it to Barbara Bush during the military farewell for her husband, George H.W. Bush, our 41st President. Like any proud Army wife, I said "no." Gary, of course, quickly brought me to my senses, and I agreed to the change. A beautiful, framed rendering of the poem became the farewell gift for Mrs. Bush from the men and women of the Armed Forces.

Although I present this poem in its original "Army Wife" format, it easily applies to all of us. I believe that Army spouses are bound together by deep patriotism tinged with the apprehension that we carry in our hearts. Happy Independence Day to all Army Dental Spouses and Surviving Spouses!

Silent Support

When I depart, will they know of my life?
The life, that is, of the Army Wife?
Will they know I'm proud of what I have done,
Of what I have seen, and where I have gone?
Will they know that I chose, I volunteered,
To stand beside the one I hold dear?

My Country asked me to give and to serve
In silent support ... and without reserve.
Like the eagle above I spread my wings.
Protected my home, and all that it means.
I stayed behind with a fear that was deep.
And my private prayer ... "the peace, please keep."

The lyre of life is the music I play,
In harmony I've guided each day.
I balanced my family, my friends ... myself,
Tried to be faithful and tried to give help.
I quietly watched my family grow
The years have gone by ... and what does it show?

Our work together will never be done.
I'll always be there ... our battles are one.
And where does hope find a home that is safe,
A home where duty has beauty and grace?
The answer's clear when I look at my life.
It's found in the heart of each Army Wife.

© Susan Allen 1990

AAD Vision and Strategic Pillars

Dental Education, Mentoring/Morale and Esprit de Corps, and Army Dentistry History are the AAD's Strategic Pillars which are highlighted in this edition of the Newsletter.

Dental Education/Mentoring

Tau Sigma – Medical University of South Carolina
COL (Ret) Mike Cuenin



The letters Tau and Sigma represent transition and scholarship. The red crest represents the courage needed when facing the challenges of transition. The wheat represents the continual harvesting of success in all future endeavors.

Under the leadership of Dr. Michael Cuenin and Dr. Theresa Gonzales, both Colonels, U.S. Army, Retired, the Tau Sigma cohort at the James B. Edwards College of Dental Medicine (JBECDM), Medical University of South Carolina was begun some 10 years ago. Doctors Cuenin and Gonzalez teach at the College of Dental Medicine. The group is composed of Army, Navy, Air Force and US Public Health Service pre-doctoral

Dental Students who are either on an HPSP (Health Professional Scholarship Program) or interested in pursuing a career in military/government dental health care. The composition of participants changes as the needs of each service component changes. Currently the majority of members are committed to active-duty service obligations from their scholarship to the U.S. Army Dental Corps.

Cuenin serves as the faculty advisor for the group. Monthly meetings include sharing scholarship opportunities, as well as guest speakers meeting with the group to share their experiences. We have found that recent graduates are the best to help



our members transition to active duty. This past spring for example we hosted a visit from U.A. Navy LT J. Parker Northrop (at far right in the group photo below) who briefed the Tau Sigma Pre-Military group during a lunch and learn.

Dr. Northrop is a JBECDM alumnus (Class of 2019) who is currently stationed at Naval Air Station Sigonella, Italy, with the U.S. Navy Dental Corps. LT Northrop completed a 1 year Advanced Education in General Dentistry Residency in San Diego, Calif., following graduation from dental school. He shared with the group his military career to date, including his deployment on the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt. LT Northrop is currently applying for graduate training in prosthodontics with the Navy.

At the Honors Convocation Ceremony in May 2024 eight members of the Class of 2024 were commissioned. The group is pictured below with one Navy, one Air Force and six Army Newly commissioned Dental Officers. Dr. Theresa Gonzales and Dr. James Lowe (USAF, Colonel Retired) had the honors with the assistance of the U.S. Army Medical Recruiting Station - Charleston staff. We are confident that these young men and women are better prepared for their careers with the preparation they receive through our efforts. Anyone interested in forming a chapter at their university is welcome to contact Mike Cuenin (Associate Professor & Director, Graduate Program in Periodontics, James B. Edwards College of Dental Medicine 173 Ashley Avenue, MSC 507, BS 119A Charleston, SC 29425 email: cuenin@musc.edu)



Mentoring/Esprit de Corps

Army Dental Corps Welcomes 12 New Officers into its Ranks

The Office of the Chief, Army Dental Corps, and the San Antonio Chapter of the Association of Army Dentistry hosted a small social event on the southern banks of

San Antonio's La Villita on Tuesday, June 11, 2024. The social blended a mix of 12 newly accessed Army dentists with a mix of seasoned and experienced officers from both the Dental and Medical Service corps. Eleven of the new officers recently graduated from dental schools around the country, the twelfth is currently in his second year as a Health Professional Student Program (HPSP).

The new officers engaged with past and current leaders of the Corps with the opportunity to ask a myriad of questions about the Army and future opportunities. At the same time, the attending talent were able to share stories from both the new and old about the training they were about to embark on during their Basic Officer Leaders Course at the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence (formerly the AMEDD Center and School). The group conversed about their past and futures over Texas style barbecue at Smoke BBQ's RiverBar location on the banks of San Antonio's Riverwalk.

The event successfully allowed the representatives of the Association of Army Dentistry and the Army Dental Corps to connect with the future of the Dental Corps amidst the culture of San Antonio, Texas. The evening ended with everyone full of great Texas barbecue, some new connections and a few laughs shared amongst the new officers and veterans.





Army Dentistry History

The AMEDD Historian, 30 September 2020, pp. 12-13.

Nolan Andy Watson, the Army Center for History and Heritage

Army Dentistry has always sought to find the best candidates. This article from the *AMEDD Historian* highlights the on-boarding of some of the first Army Dental Corps candidates.

The text of *On-Boarding: Qualifications for Early Dental Corps Members* is presented in its original, nonedited form, as it appeared in *The AMEDD Historian* in September 2020. Additionally, the link to the article is provided below.

[On-Boarding: Qualifications for Early Dental Corps Officers](#)

On-Boarding: Qualifications for Early Dental Corps Members

By Nolan A. (Andy) Watson, ACHH

There have always been challenges providing a technically proficient force to care for the military. Ensuring that care providers are capable and clinically knowledgeable is understandably of great importance. There are policies and procedures in place today to determine these attributes through certifications and boards of review, but how did it work roughly 100 years ago, when there was need to validate the practitioners of a new specialty? In this instance the Dental Corps had to define standards to fill their new branch and then later expand.

The first formal step for the inclusion of dentists into the Army occurred on 2 February 1901, when Congress passed legislation directing the Army Surgeon General to employ thirty civilian contract dentists. The resolution provided an early opportunity for some, but ability, skill, and dental knowledge needed to be determined. Candidates for the positions had to be graduates of a medical or dental school, be between the ages of between 24 and 40, be of good character (complete with testimonials), pass an officer candidate physical, and pass an exhaustive examination of theoretical and practical dentistry under the scrutiny of a board of review. Dental school graduates who were already in the Army Hospital Corps were excused from the examination portion.

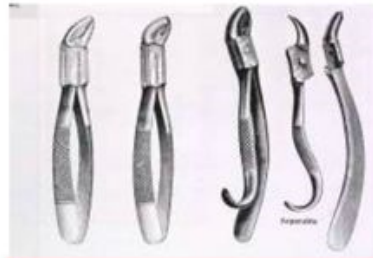
There had been considerable political pressure in the previous years to establish a Dental Corps within the Army, led by the National Dental Association. (The NDA had been the American Dental Association until 1897 and resumed that name in 1922.) There were no national standards for dentistry that the Army could adopt, and the NDA could help draft those standards, while also using those new standards to press states to adopt them for dentists. The Army's specific needs were addressed through the physical examination, which was intended to ensure resilience, especially since the contract dentists could be assigned to duty in the Philippines or other arduous and hazardous duty assignments.

The Surgeon General, George H. Torney, named the first three contract dental surgeons to serve on the dental examining board and as supervisory dental surgeons. The examination began in Washington, D.C. in late February 1901. To ensure their academic knowledge the candidates were examined on: anatomy, physiology, histology, physics, chemistry, metallurgy, bacteriology, orthodontics, oral surgery, as well as many other aspects of dentistry. One wonders of the depth of these subjects in 1901.

According to Surgeon General reports, an average score of 75% was required in each subject for the theoretical portion and 85% for the practical portion. The usual time allotted for the complete examination was 10 to 12 days, but the tests normally ran 2 weeks in length. Candidates were not authorized quarters or travel allowances during their examinations. The candidates were given 2 hours for each subject to provide written examinations, with the total written examinations lasting about a week. Practical exercises in demonstrating dental skills and techniques were facilitated by onsite dental tools and equipment.

By December 1901 the examinations were complete and 71 dentists had been examined, with 28 selected to fill the 30 positions. There was criticism on the difficulty and thoroughness of the examination and board process. However, critics were reminded that the selectees were representing the dental profession nationally and would need to be the best examples available for Army service.

Dentistry became an official part of the Army on 3 March 1911, with the passing of H.R. 31237, which provided for a Dental Corps. The resolution provided 60 positions in the new Dental Corps. The standards for the Army Dental Corps were similar to the previous ones for contract dentists, but there were some changes to reflect the new commissioned status. The appointees must be citizens of the United States, be be-



The sort of extraction forceps Dental Corps candidates would have used in the practical examination.

tween the ages of 21 and 27, and they were required to pass the physical examination required for appointment in the Medical Corps. These requirements were in addition to the previous dental educational and practical skills that were to be determined by examination. The results were again supervised by three board members, with the Secretary of War authorized to select the board members. Each examining board was to consist of two commissioned dental surgeons and one Army physician.

Where would they receive the two commissioned dental surgeons for the board? Another part of the resolution allowed for "contract dental surgeons attached to the Medical Department at the time of the passage of the Act may be eligible for appointment..." The examination requirement for the former contract dentists could also be waived, provided that their service had been satisfactory. By August 1911 all 30 contract dentists at the time had been commissioned. Of note, John Sayre Marshall, often referred to as the "father of the Army Dental Corps" was mandatorily retired after receiving his commission at the age of 64. Marshall, a continuous advocate for dentistry in the Army, served during in the cavalry during the Civil War. Later he would receive an M.D. from the University of Syracuse and focus on oral and dental surgery. Also, of the 30 newly commissioned dentists, 16 were part of the original contract dentist group from 1901, and 6 of the selectees later served as Chiefs of the Dental Corps.

The examination and board system was in place to fill future vacancies, and now there were cadre in the Army to oversee and advise on possible changes. It took time to fill the new corps. By April 1914 the Dental Corps had 67 members. Three years later when America entered World War I in April of 1917, there were 86 Regular Army Dental Corps officers. Wartime expansion would increase the Dental Corps to a peak of 4,620 at the close of the war. Reserve and National Guard dentists greatly increased these numbers, but so did the dental board of review system which had been adapted and multiplied for the war effort. The challenging examinations had developed into a system that shaped and increased the Dental Corps from 30 former contract dentists in 1901 to 4,620 Army dentists at the close of 1918.

The Army had worked with a still-forming profession to establish the clinical and military standards needed. As the Army's practitioners gained experience, it could modify its requirements, although not diverging greatly from the civilian clinical standard. Meanwhile, Army standards to be an officer were 'above and beyond' what were needed to be a civilian practitioner, and those would be under Army control over the coming years.



One of John S. Marshall's contributions to the Dental Corps was being chairman of the first examination board for contract dentists.

Sources

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[https://www.cs.amedd.army.mil/borden/bookDetail.aspx?id=8d4d44d2-2ce9-4b0c-9845-](https://www.cs.amedd.army.mil/borden/bookDetail.aspx?id=8d4d44d2-2ce9-4b0c-9845-68294087baa0&pageTitle=A%20History%20of%20Dentistry%20in%20the%20US%20Army%20to%20World%20War%20I)

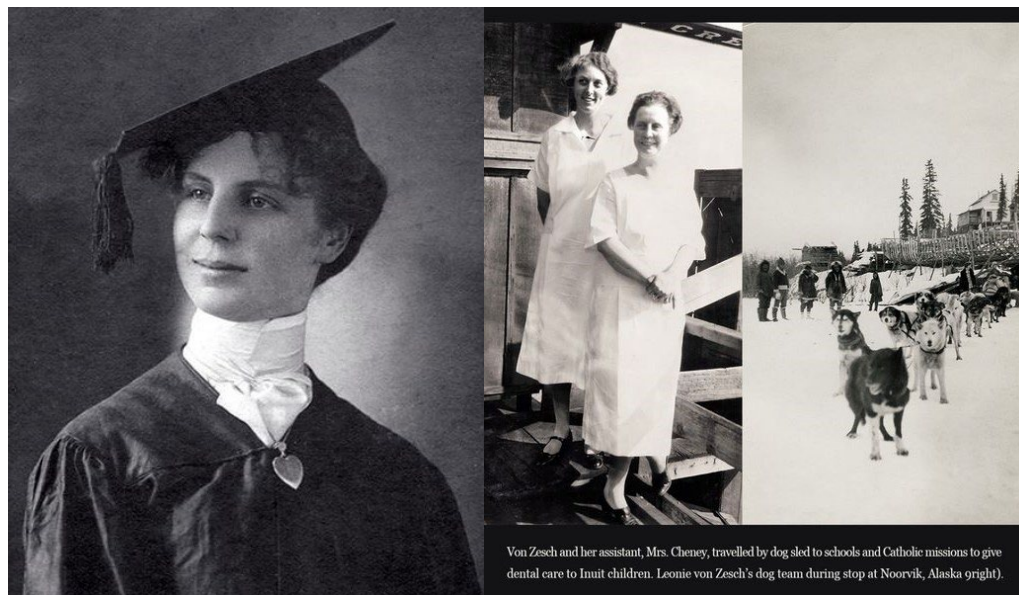
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U.S. Army Medical Department Center of History and Heritage

20 April 2024

1906: Dr. Leonie von Meusebach-Zesch is hired. She is the first female dentist to work for the Army as a contractor. Von Zesch's office in San Francisco was destroyed by the fire that followed the 1906 earthquake. When she discovered the Army was setting up a refugee camp at the Presidio Army base, she offered to perform dentistry for the displaced. She was provided with a tent and became the first, and only, paid U.S. Army woman dentist until 1951.

"I gave the profession youth, health, energy, enthusiasm, adequate training, a lifelong devotion, and an unquenchable zest for living. The profession has given me an abundant livelihood, the opportunity to help others, and outlet for my unlimited energy, adventure, travel, association with interesting people, and often a sustenance that was not only material, but also spiritual." - Leonie von Zesch



In Memoriam

Kempf, Kenneth Kaye COL, USA (Ret)

03-26-1927 – 05-20 -2024

COL Kempf's distinguished military career included earning a Bronze Star in Vietnam, assignments in Stuttgart, Frankfurt and Wurzburg, Germany, and a final assignment as chief of Oral Surgery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and consultant to the Army Surgeon General. After retirement, Ken served as the director of the oral surgery residency program at the University of Iowa. He then returned to Wisconsin and was in private practice in La Crosse for 12 years. The link to his obituary is provided below.

[Kempf, Kenneth Kaye, COL, USA \(Ret\)](#)

Jones, Rodney Harwood, COL, USA (Ret)

06-22-1965 – 05-12-2024

The Army Dental Care System mourns the loss of COL Rod Jones on May 12, 2024. A stirring tribute to his legacy and life of service follows. The link to his obituary is below:

[Jones, Rodney Harwood Jones, COL, USA \(Ret\)](#)

14 June 2024

COL Rod Jones A Final Tribute

By COL (Ret) Karen M. Keith



On this date we celebrated the 249th birthday of the United States Army and Flag Day. For many, it is also residency graduation and promotion time. We extend our sincerest congratulations to all! May your skills and talents positively impact all you encounter!

On this date, we also had the opportunity to celebrate an awesome Dental Corps Officer who was laid to rest after a courageous, dignified battle with cancer.

COL Rodney H. Jones passed away 12 May 2024 after enduring a 12-year battle with ALT+ lung cancer – a disease that was predicted to take his life in six to nine months. Always stubborn, Rod lived life to the absolute fullest until the end and he leaves behind a beautiful legacy in his family as well as in the people he touched throughout his Army Dental Corps career. Several Army Dental Corps Officers, past and present, had the honor and opportunity to celebrate his life at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Monument, Colorado, with his extended family and friends. It was a heartfelt and beautiful celebration to be able to pay tribute and share cherished memories of one so dear.

COL (Ret) Donn Grimes posted some incredibly powerful words of tribute that speak to the caliber of human being Rod was – he was a friend, a colleague

and a brother – and he was at peace with passing on – he was ready spiritually and physically. About two weeks before he passed, he no longer had strength to text and could not see nor hear; he had stopped eating – but never complained. A tough and resilient man who survived a horrible cancer beyond all expectations – a quintessential example of a disciple of Jesus Christ and a leader, follower and commander of professionals. A man of excellent character, intelligence and uncompromising integrity; a man of extreme patience and kindness. And above all, one of the nicest people you'd ever meet!

To COL Susan Cebula, Rod epitomized servant leader and selfless service. She further elaborated, "you are my hero and always a great friend. You are the definition of a selfless servant, incredibly humble and quick to compliment, giving praise to everyone else and never taking credit for yourself. You've given so much of yourself to the Army and the Dental Corps. Fighting to make a difference even when you weren't feeling well, whether in the region, multiple commands, as a provider, friend and mentor to me and so many others."

Those of us privileged to have known him for however briefly knew how deep an impact he had on lives. At his celebration, each person who spoke about Rod reiterated the positive, significant relationships he established – how he always sought and saw the good in others. COL (Ret) Mark McDonald spoke brilliantly of how gracious he was no matter the challenge – the dignity with which he could deliver good news and bad, and the way he established relationships that elevated the dignity of others. Paraphrasing the key message I took from Mark's tribute – the values that you saw in Rod, take with you and pay it forward. If you knew him to be generous, be generous. If you knew him as a selfless servant, be that selfless servant. If you knew him as a man of faith, grow and share your faith. Extend the good you saw in him to others – continue his legacy.

Rod's sons talked about how stubborn and determined their dad was – but that stubbornness allowed him to take risks, to fight hard, and to have many more quality years and experiences with those he treasured. Over the course of his time in orthodontics, in Regional Operations or in command of a Dental Activity or a Region, few knew the health battle in which he was engaged. His focus was always on the welfare of those around him. When his disease prevented him from hearing and speaking, he initiated a group text chat so that he could communicate with his family and friends – *he* took the initiative so he could encourage and support others! Even those nurses and staff caring for him saw the genuine selflessness he exuded.

So many face health battles or personal battles that we will often not know – let's keep them all in our thoughts and prayers and nuance our perspectives to truly appreciate the gift of life and relationships. It seemed so fitting to celebrate his life, his career, his selfless service and leadership on this 249th anniversary of the Army.

Rod's ashes are interred at Pike's Peak National Cemetery.

Rod – may your soul rest in eternal peace! Go rest high on that mountain!
May God hold you in the palm of His hand. You are missed but we are comforted that your suffering has ended.

"I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith."
[2 Timothy 4:7](#), New American Bible



Left to right: COL(Ret) Karen Keith, COL(Ret) Chris Bowen, COL Kelley Tomsett;
COL Pete Guevara, COL(Ret) Mark McDonald, COL(Ret) Donn Grimes,
and U. S. Army Dental Corps Chief COL Steve Tanner

Johnson, Ralph Gordon III, COL, USA (Ret)

01-04-1944 – 12-11-2023

COL Johnson enjoyed a long and distinguished 27 years of service with the U.S. Army Dental Corps. After graduation from the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine, he joined the military and set off on a life of adventure. After retirement from the Army, Ralph spent five years in Saudi Arabia working for the Saudi Aramco Oil Company. The link to his obituary is provided below:

[Johnson, Ralph Gordon III, COL, USA \(Ret\)](#)

Social Media

LTC Mike Hoffman, the AAD's Facebook page administrator, was recently installed as the President of the Army Constituency of the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) at the AGD's annual meeting in Minneapolis, MN. Congratulations Mike!

Mike keeps the Army dental community informed about current news throughout the Army Dental Care System. Visit the AAD's Facebook page for the latest information. We also now have an AAD Instagram page. Follow the AAD on both social media accounts.

[AAD Facebook Page](#)

[AAD Instagram Page](#)

Conclusion

If any of our members would like to share articles and/or vignettes about memorable events from their careers, either before or after retirement, please forward them to the email address below. Furthermore, if anyone is interested in assisting with the AAD's media content and/or serving as an editor of the newsletter, please contact the AAD.

A special thank you once again this edition to Mrs. Susan Allen for her sage advice and assistance in editing and finalizing the newsletter.

As we approach the Independence Day holiday, please keep the young men and women in uniform serving our Nation in your thoughts and prayers on this day and throughout the year. Freedom is not free.

Editor, AAD Newsletter, Ron Lambert, COL, USA (Ret)

assoc.army.dentistry@gmail.com

AAD Officers

M. Ted Wong, MG, USA (Ret) – President

Karen Keith, COL, USA (Ret) – Vice President

Francis E. Nasser, Jr., COL, USA (Ret) – Executive Director

David Ferguson, COL, USA, (Ret) – Secretary

Ms. Wanda Kavanaugh, U.S. Army Civilian, (Ret) – Treasurer

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The AAD is your organization!

The Association of Army Dentistry is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. We are a philanthropic organization dedicated to honoring the past, supporting the present, and inspiring the future of Army Dentistry.



The Association of Army Dentistry

VISION

"The Association of Army Dentistry honors our past, supports the present, and inspires the future of Army Dentistry."

MISSION

"The mission of the Association of Army Dentistry is to advance Army Dentistry by promoting morale, esprit de corps; supporting activities focused on recruitment and retention; providing dental education, and coaching/mentoring; recognizing those who serve and have served the Nation via Army Dentistry; and fostering an appreciation of the history and accomplishments of Army Dentistry."

STRATEGIC PILLARS

1. Morale and Esprit de Corps.
2. Recruitment and Retention.
3. Dental Education.
4. Coaching and Mentoring.
5. Honoring Service.
6. Army Dentistry History.