



Association of Army Dentistry (AAD)

AAD Winter Newsletter

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To Our Esteemed AAD Members and Friends,

"You may be lost, but you are not forgotten. For those who have traveled far, to fight in foreign lands, know that the soldier's greatest comfort is to have his friends close at hand. In the heat of battle, it ceases to be an idea for which we fight. Or a flag. Rather we fight for the man on our left, and we fight for the man on our right. And when armies are scattered and the empires fall away, all that remains is the memory of those precious moments that we spent side by side."

LT Jack Durrance, The Four Feathers, 2002

As 2024 comes to a close, this will be my final President's Message. It's been an honor and pleasure to serve as president for this distinguished organization, not just because of the many accomplishments made over the last couple years but, more importantly, because of the opportunity to work with such dedicated, talented, and selfless brothers and sisters who volunteer their precious time to serve on and with the AAD Board of Directors. People are the most precious resource in an organization, and they need to be nurtured, kept safe, trained, treated with respect, led with compassion, and developed to be the best that they can be. Whether in garrison or in an operational setting, we must be able to rely upon and trust the people that surround us, and they must be able to rely upon and trust us. It does truly come down to fighting/working for those we serve and for those with whom we serve.

The last two years as AAD President has been a microcosm of my career, during which I worked with and met amazing, motivated, and committed people as we pursued our mission. I leave hoping I had some positive effect on the AAD and the men and women with whom I worked. I know I've enjoyed toiling with the AAD team as we overcame challenges and enjoyed many triumphs and am a better person for it. I will take with me many wonderful memories. I want to highlight the stepping down by several outstanding board members, John Storz, Art Scott, Bob Stieneker, and Larry Hanson, who have volunteered a tremendous amount of their time and talents to the AAD as officers, directors, and committee chairs. We are grateful for your long and dedicated service to the AAD and wish you all the best as you pursue other interests. We welcome others to follow in their footsteps and join the AAD and consider volunteering your time and talents as we honor the past, support the present, and inspire the future of Army Dentistry.

In my recent travels, I was fortunate to meet a former 91E and now a 63B and commander. I encourage you all to read an excerpt of Colonel Redmond's intriguing professional journey later in this newsletter, which highlights the principles of setting high goals, working hard, persevering, and above all, receiving excellent mentorship at all levels. I will be so bold as to say David's experience is ubiquitous within Army Dentistry, whether as a whole or in parts. Never underestimate your positive impact on people and your ability to influence those around you.

Happy Holidays, Happy Christmas, and Happy New Year to all!

With warmest regards,

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

Welcome to the New AAD Website

By COL (Ret) Frank Nasser, Executive Director, AAD

<https://associationofarmydentistry.org>

Hopefully all our members have had an opportunity to view the new and highly informative AAD website. The site is the culmination of an effort spanning more than 12 months that required countless hours of work on the part of volunteers and professional programmers. The goal was to create a website that built upon the successful elements of the original website, encapsulated the mission of the AAD and professionally represented U.S. Army Dentistry.

The inauguration of the website has gone smoothly. As with any new technology, a few questions have arisen. Here is a brief list of those FAQs from members and the responses provided.

1. **Why can't I log in?** Typically, the issue is a simple fix. Often the Username is not correctly entered (or is incorrect in the database). Your username is your email address and is case sensitive. Every person logging in for the first time must Reset the Password.
2. **Why can't I Reset my Password?** This can sometimes be a programming glitch or due to incorrect information posted in the database. The first thing to try is to confirm the Username is correctly entered when you attempt to Reset the Password. If the problem persists and you are using a smart phone, try to log in on a desktop or laptop. You can also clear cache on your computer and see if that works. If still unable to Reset the Password, call or email us and we will assist you. (P.S. Always check your Spam or Junk folder just in case the Reset Password message was filtered by your email program.)
3. **Why am I getting Renewal notices when I already paid my dues?** All accepted payments by credit card on the website automatically update the account status of the member and no further Renewal notices should be received. When a member chooses to pay by check and mails the payment to the new AAD address, the process is not automatic. Apart from delays in mailing and check-handling, there is a manual administrative action required to update the account status. Until that is completed, renewal notices continue to go out. If you pay by check and still receive a renewal notice, simply ignore the notice.
4. **What should I do if I notice an incorrect entry on the website or want to add something?** We are asking every member to feel free to provide their comments and input, especially in the case of correcting misleading or erroneous information. This is YOUR website.

Thanks to all our members for your continued support and patience. Any member wishing to directly help the organization may contact us at any time.

Wishing you all a Happy Holiday season and a healthy New Year!

Discover Your Army Dentistry Ancestry

By Susan Allen

"Not to know what has been transacted in former times is to be always a child. If no use is made of the labours of past ages, the world must remain always in the infancy of knowledge." *Cicero (106-43 BC), Roman politician*

Personally, one of the most interesting – albeit challenging – aspects of working with Frank Nasser on developing the new AAD website has been discovering resources and compiling the Army Dentistry History Timeline. (associationofarmydentistry.org/army-dentistry-timeline/)

Beginning with historical books and documents my husband, Gary, has collected over the years and the exceptional work of John King, we then turned to Googling "U.S. Army Dentistry." Some of the resulting references were personal memories and comments that did not have sufficient documentation or were too unique to one individual for us to immediately include in our timeline. Other Google entries, however, proved to be valuable resources that triggered additional research. We have been cautious in adding entries to the timeline to ensure the greatest level of accuracy. Additionally, we have only included photos that are in the public domain or for which we have permission from the owner.

We hope and anticipate that the Timeline will draw visitors to the website to learn more about Army Dentistry and the Association of Army Dentistry.

Did you know?

- In 1776 Paul Revere performed the first recorded case of military forensic identification on the remains of Major General Joseph Warren about ten months after Warren's death at the Battle of Bunker Hill. His identification was based on a wire fixed dental bridge, which included an ivory cuspid and bicuspid Revere had made for Warren shortly before the Battle of Lexington in 1775.
- The Appropriations Act of 1885 authorized Army personnel to provide dental services to families of military personnel and military retirees. Over the years, Congress authorized and withdrew authorization for this service several times.
- On November 11, 1901, Hospital Steward William A. Birch became the first African American to serve as an Army dentist. He provided dental care to soldiers in the Philippines.
- The first dental unit of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) arrive in France on August 8, 1917. CPT Robert T. Oliver, who was in charge of the unit, was promoted to colonel while serving in France. In 1919, COL Oliver became the third chief of the Army Dental Corps.
- The one-year Army Dental Internship Program opened on July 1, 1939, with eight civilian dentists. Upon completion of the program, the dentists were eligible for commissioning as first lieutenants.
- In 1951, Dr. Helen Myers, a newly commissioned captain, became the first woman to serve as an Army dental officer and reported for duty at Fort Lee, Va.

- On April 1, 1973, MAJ Alfred F. Tortorelli became the last Army Dental Corps officer to leave Vietnam, signifying the end of Army dental services in Vietnam.
- On January 29, 2014, the Army turned to the Oral Health Research Institute at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis to evaluate a pharmaceutical-grade antiplaque chewing gum, intended for soldiers. The gum, which is nicknamed "Combat Gum," contains a compound developed by the Army known as KSL-W, a novel antimicrobial peptide. Kai Leung, a microbiologist for the U.S. Army Dental and Trauma Research Detachment, at Great Lakes, Ill., was the principal investigator.

These are just a few of the historical events and contributions of U.S. Army Dentistry included in the online History Timeline. Do you know of specific events, research discoveries or other milestones in Army Dentistry that might be appropriate to add? We welcome your suggestions. Please send your submissions with as specific dates as possible to assoc.army.dentistry@gmail.com, so our Timeline Team can review and verify the information.

We invite you to explore the AAD's online History Timeline and to discover the history that unites all members of the Association of Army Dentistry – officers, NCOs, Enlisted Soldiers, Civilians and Spouses.

Senior Leader Monolith

The much-anticipated dedication of the Senior Leader Monolith took place on November 22, 2024, at the Army Dentistry Monument at the U.S. Army Medical Department Museum. While the museum is still in renovation mode and is closed to visitors, they were very gracious and supportive in allowing us into the museum grounds. Special thanks are also due SFC (Ret) Jim Dycus. Jim made sure that the grass around the monument was cut and the monument itself washed and cleaned.

CPT Caitlyn Menicucci, the current Executive Fellow at the Dental Corps Chief's Office, served as the dedication's Master of Ceremony. MG (Ret) Ted Wong welcomed all the attendees. COL Ana Lichelle Aldana spoke to the historic role of the Reserve Component in the provision of dental care for Soldiers and MG (Ret) Russ Czerw did the same for the Active Component. He expounded on the role of Army Dental Corps leaders from Dr. Marshall, the Father of the Army Dental Corps, early Army dental leaders to our leaders of today. MG Czerw and COL Tanner, Chief, U.S. Army Dental Corps, then bestowed upon COL (Ret) Bob Stieneker honorary membership in the Dental Corps for his many years of contributions to Army dentistry, both while on active duty and in retirement.

At the conclusion of the ceremony MGs Czerw and Wong were joined by COL Stephen Tanner, COL Lichelle Aldana, and COL (Ret) Stieneker for the unveiling of the Senior Leader Monolith.

A reception was held at the Huey Pergola immediately after the unveiling.

U.S. Army Medical Department Television (MEDVID-TV), U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence (MEDCOE) recorded the ceremony and that video which is available at

<https://www.dvidshub.net/video/944714/dental-corps-monolith-re-dedication>



Army Dentistry Monument



Senior Leadership Monolith



COL Aldana, MG Wong, COL Tanner, COL Stieneker, MG Czrew



Group Photo

The AAD Personal History Project

Within the pages of the new Association of Army Dentistry website, visitors will find references to the AAD's Personal History Project. This project supports two of the association's organizational pillars:

- Honoring the service of those, past and present, who serve the Nation via Army Dentistry
- Being a repository for the accomplishments and history of Army Dentistry

Personal histories add to the repository of formal history reports, books and periodicals, and enhance our knowledge by connecting voices and faces from our past with current and future readers. They also inspire unit pride and provide unique insights that may influence others. We encourage our members to consider writing a personal history of an important individual in Dental Corps history or sharing their personal stories about overcoming obstacles, unique contributions to improving Army Dentistry or individuals who made a significant impact on the lives of others. Guidelines and helpful tips for writing a personal history are available online.

The following condensed version is from the personal history of COL David Lee Redmond, commander of the United States Military Academy Dental Health Activity. It highlights his journey from an enlisted Soldier to a Dental Corps officer and commander. COL Redmond's entire story along with photos from throughout his career, which we highly encourage you to read, will be posted on the AAD website in late January 2025.

<https://associationofarmydentistry.org/aad-personal-history-project>

Personal History: COL David Lee Redmond

A story of the positive influence of mentorship and the strength of character and commitment across a career as an enlisted Soldier, Medical Service Corps Officer and Dental Corps Officer

My name is David Lee Redmond. I was born January 13, 1969, and grew up in Kansas City, Kan. While I was growing up, my father was in the U.S. Air Force during Vietnam. After his initial obligation, my parents divorced. My father, who moved to Chicago, always encouraged me to join the service for an education and to travel the world. My mother, who remarried and remained a stay-at-home parent in Kansas City, provided a foundation for study habits and priorities that would prove beneficial later in life.

After graduating from high school, I pursued careers that did not require college, but ultimately failed to find a career path. In 1991, I decided to join the Air Force. Unfortunately, the Air Force Recruiter was out to lunch when I arrived at the recruiting station. The U.S. Army recruiter noticed me waiting and struck up a conversation. After a few hours of discussing many occupations, I committed to a six-year obligation as a dental specialist. I left in March 1992 for basic training at Fort Sill, Okla. I was convinced I had made the right decision because the military would provide a steady paycheck, free housing and funding for my education.

Following basic training and Dental Specialist military occupational specialty (MOS) training in 1992, I traveled to Panama to begin my first assignment as a dental technician. I worked daily with my assigned dentist, MAJ Carlos DeLeon, who noticed that I was an insecure young man away from home for the first time in my life. He began to mentor me, encouraging and challenging me to push myself. MAJ DeLeon believed in me and constantly ensured I stayed positive with my outlook on life.

My stories of failures became a part of my past. I found myself speaking things into existence through faith. I trained my body to perform well on the fitness test and took college courses at night. I even volunteered to work in the evenings supporting dental emergencies for two semesters so I could attend college during the day ... Within 30 months, in the spring of 1995, I received an associate of science degree from Panama Canal College. Before graduating, however, I applied early and received a two-year ROTC Green to Gold Scholarship to attend Jacksonville State University, Ala., beginning in the fall of 1995.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1997, I became a commissioned officer in the Medical Service Corp. Fort Campbell, Ky., was my first assignment. During the next six years. I worked a few different jobs in a combat support hospital, including maintenance officer of the motor pool in charge of vehicle maintenance, followed by executive officer for a headquarters company taking care of Soldiers. ... My final

position, which I obtained through an interview selection, led me back to the Dental Activity as the company commander ...

I was dual hatted as the company commander and executive officer of the Fort Campbell, Ky., Dental Activity.

Eventually, I was ready to apply to dental school and the Health Profession Scholarship Program (HPSP) in 2003. As a new dental student at the University of Louisville College of Dentistry, I was on cloud nine and completely elated. However, that quickly faded once every course syllabus was handed out. I realized it would take great sacrifice to accomplish this doctorate degree. I believe that my prior service as an enlisted Soldier, noncommissioned officer and Medical Service Corps officer shaped my work ethic and ambitious desire to become a dentist ...

In 2008, I graduated with a Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD) and was re-commissioned as a Dental Corps officer. My first assignment was at Fort Sill, Okla., as a general dentist at a clinic with patients who were all trainee Soldiers either in basic training or occupational school.

Eventually, it was time for a change of scenery. I wanted to pursue the traveling opportunity my father and I always discussed. I contacted my branch manager and asked to be assigned somewhere overseas. Grafenwöhr, Germany, was available, and I accepted the position as a general dentist. In 2011, I attended an Exodontia Oral Surgery Program at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. Under the mentorship of COL Steven Rubczak. Upon returning to Germany, I served under the mentorship of COL Tamer Goksel, an Oral Maxillofacial Surgeon, as officer-in-charge of Vilseck Dental Clinic, Germany. I then returned to Grafenwöhr Dental Clinic as its exodontist until 2014.

In 2014, Human Resources Command offered me a once-in-a-lifetime position to construct a dental clinic in Florida at Eglin Air Force Base. I accepted without hesitation and began the construction of a dental clinic for the 7th Special Forces Group at Eglin AFB, Fla. This position lasted from 2014-2017. Working with the Special Forces Command was interesting and beneficial. I learned a lot about the frequency of deployments and providing sound dental care due to these circumstances. Dental pain could lead to failure of their classified missions, so I always provided the best care and put their needs first like my former mentor COL Rubczak taught me.

Another reason I loved this assignment is my spouse. I met Mimi in 2016 along with my stepdaughter Lyra, who was four years old at the time. While dating, Mimi made it clear that she and her daughter were a package deal. If I wanted a relationship with her, then I needed to accept her daughter as my own. I did so wholeheartedly, and we became a family. We eventually added a daughter named Ewa and a Jack Russell Terrier named Charlie.

In 2019, I began the Comprehensive Dentistry Residency at Schofield Barracks. After two years completing many comprehensive cases and a master's degree in oral biology from the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences (USUHS), I graduated with a well-earned certificate.

In 2021, I navigated through the AIM2 cycle to find my next duty assignment. My wife Mimi and I decided we wanted to experience Germany together and placed it as our top selection.

Upon arriving in Germany in 2021, COL Goksel assigned me as the executive officer of Rheinland Pfalz Dental Health Activity in Germany. For my next assignment, I opted-in for nominative Dental Corps command selections and was chosen to be the commander of United States Military Academy (USMA) West Point Dental Health Activity.

In April 2024, I was selected for promotion to colonel. From 1992 as private Redmond, a young Soldier with hopes and dreams, I achieved my goal of being a colonel. I reached out to all my mentors and thanked them because when I wanted to quit, they encouraged me to continue my service and to keep showing up. I did and now I'm COL David Redmond, commander of USMA West Point Dental Health Activity with more than 26 years of active-duty service. As for my future, I plan to continue as a servant leader to our Soldiers in hopes their careers can turn out even better than my own.



*Private David Redmond,
Fort Sill, Okla., March 1992*



*Promotion to Colonel by Tamer Goksel while
DENTAC Commander at West Point, 2024*

News From Around the U.S. Army Reserve Dental Corps

MAJ Tadros M. Tadros, an endodontist, was recently inducted as a Fellow of the American College of Dentists (ACD) during its Annual Meeting and Convocation, which took place from October 16 to 17, 2024, in New Orleans, Louisiana. MAJ Tadros is the Brigade Dental Surgeon for the 804th Medical Brigade in Devens, Massachusetts. A Fellow in the ACD is a prestigious honor that signifies leadership, excellence, and meritorious achievement in dentistry.

MAJ Tadros earned his Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from the University of Washington School of Dentistry in Seattle, WA. He received his Endodontic Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies at Boston University School of Dental Medicine. MAJ Tadros is also an associate professor at Tufts School of Dental Medicine and a Board-Certified Endodontist with private practices in Hudson and Nashua, New Hampshire.



MAJ Tadros was inducted as a Fellow of the ACD.



MAJ Tadros (L) and COL McGovern (R), newly inducted ACD Fellows, meet with COL Pete Guevara (middle), ACD Vice-President, at the ACD Annual Meeting.

COL Lichelle Aldana completed the Joint Combined Warfighting School (JCWS) Hybrid course in November 2024. The 40-week program included three weeks of resident instruction at the National Defense University in Norfolk, Va., and 37 weeks of distance education, during which students learned operational-level warfighting, joint planning, and the integration of various governmental and non-governmental organizations. COL Aldana is the 63B USAR Comprehensive Dentist Consultant to the Surgeon General and currently serves as a Joint Planner for the US Army Reserve Element of the European Command. COL Aldana serves on the Board of Directors of the Association of Army Dentistry.



COL Aldana (front row, 2nd from left) completed the JCWS-H course at Joint Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virg.

Spouses Corner

Anyone who has spent time in the military is familiar with the numerous travel opportunities. Traveling with a spouse, partner or family is part of the "military adventure," especially for those who have been assigned overseas. Often, travelers feel as if there is comfort in numbers. Together we can handle anything is their rallying cry. For those who are single and those who have lost a spouse, traveling can appear to be a bridge too far. In the following articles, Pris Trawick, widow of COL (Ret) Sid Trawick, and COL (Ret) Priscilla Hamilton, former DENCOM commander, share their expertise as seasoned single travelers.

On-Our-Own Travel Choices

By Pris Trawick

Wanderlust ... Is it a genetic trait or something we develop during our nomadic lives? My mother swears that at age two I would stand by the door, arms upward, saying "Go. Go." to every guest who entered the house. Maybe that's why it didn't seem strange to begin my adult life as a camp follower.

On graduation day from dental school Sid signed up to join the Army because they promised an assignment to Europe. So off I went with a one-year-old son who thought the airplane was the biggest playpen he'd ever seen. That three-year assignment in tiny Gelnhausen, Germany, was so enchanting that it led us to a fabulous thirty-year career including two tours in Germany and one fabulous four-year tour in Italy. During those periods living in Europe, we traveled as a couple and as a family, and I served as the tour chairman many times. Trust me, I'd let my driver's license expire before my passport! After retirement and settling in San Antonio, travel has continued to be my occupation and my passion.

When I became a widow, the approach altered from "where do we go next" to "how do I handle this on my own?" It was quite a shock to realize I would have to carry my own skis on the slopes! Fortunately, there had been some lessons learned via others who faced that question before me. One male client/friend (all my clients are friends or have become such) had learned to love travel because his wife introduced him to the pleasure of exploring the globe by car, plane, train or ship. When he lost her, he came to me saying he wanted to do something simple to see if he could learn to travel solo. His initial adventure on his own was a cruise on the Mississippi. One of the first evenings, he met two couples who did not know one another but all were of a similar age. They laughed so much during their first encounter that my client said the highlight of each day was at the bar and dining table comparing their individual day's adventures. He returned telling me that he was thrilled to learn that travel could be fun on his own even though it would be very different.

For sure, any type of cruise or organized tour will provide the opportunity to share experiences, meals and events with several people who must have similar interests, or they would not have joined the trip. If you prefer history with classical lecturers, there are trips with such a focus. If you always wanted to expand your culinary repertoire, believe me the cooking classes and food focus tours are abundant! And remember wine enhances most cooking endeavors, so what can be bad about diving into culinary explorations? And these days there are many cruise and tour companies that offer promotions that eliminate the dreaded Single Supplement.

For those seeking a planned adventure to share with other "quick to adapt" passengers, there are mystery tours. You will be given limited basic information about your trip: some hints about the necessary wardrobe, general level of physical activity, general temperatures, dates of travel, but very little else. These trips are definitely geared to an open-minded, adventurous personality. One friend fell in love with her first attempt at this when she met some other people who now all plan their mystery trips together.

A dear friend entered this solo world at a much-too-early stage of her life. She was gracious enough to share some of her coping techniques and advice, which we've included below. Remember life is short, eat dessert first and get out there to do whatever you want to do!

Flying Solo

By Priscilla H. Hamilton, DMD, MHA, MSS, COL (Ret)

When I was taking flying lessons (an exceedingly long time ago), the most terrifying and exhilarating experience was my first solo flight. And so it was when I found myself a widow at the age of 44. Whether it's the death of a spouse, a divorce or just being on your own, it's easy to fall into a dark place and let your world get very small. Grief, fear and anxiety can become dominant emotions. In my case, a close friend's mom gave me an opportunity to travel with her to new places, visit old friends along the way and gain some confidence that life would be OK again.

I spent the next 14 years of my time on active duty 'flying solo'. There were many opportunities to travel with my job. I was with colleagues for the professional parts of the journeys, but I also took advantage of exploring on my own. Here are some of my observations.

It may be more comfortable traveling with a friend in the beginning. There are financial considerations because making a reservation for one on a travel package or cruise can be more expensive than traveling with a companion. However, as a solo traveler, you also may be able to take advantage of a great discount at the last minute to fill a vacancy on a trip.

It's fairly easy to get a great seat for one to a show or the theater. Sometimes it flummoxes the *matre d'* or wait staff when you are dining by yourself. Don't be surprised if you're given a table by the kitchen door or the bathroom. Sometimes I've been outright ignored as a patron because I was by myself. In that case, I went elsewhere!

Whether male or female, your personal safety and security while traveling alone need to be paramount. You can be an easy target for theft or assault. Be observant. Stay in better/upscale accommodations and rely on the hotel concierge/staff for reputable transportation recommendations. In Mexico City for the FDI meeting, the hotel gave me a room on a more secure floor that was just for women traveling alone. I did stride confidently the few blocks to the National Anthropological Museum by myself and without incident, which raised a few eyebrows.

You are your own scheduler. You have the flexibility to do what you want, when you want. You don't have to wait on anyone else or compromise. Take as much time as you like to read all the informational plaques in a museum, see the sights that interest you or go on an adventurous hike.

You have to make your own travel arrangements, but you can also rely on an expert to assist you! Remember that you will have to schlep your own luggage, so pack accordingly. Check out Magellan's or TravelSmith websites for ideas.

It may be daunting to get over the initial challenge of 'flying solo,' but there's a big world out there to explore. Go for it!

AAD Vision and Strategic Pillars

Honoring Service

Submitted by MG (Ret) Rob Tempel, AAD Board of Directors

Serving Veterans in North Carolina - East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine

Spaine Stephens, Communications Specialist, ECU School of Dental Medicine

Through an innovative community partnership that was born from a commitment to veterans, the ECU Smiles for Veterans program is not only thriving — but also expanding opportunities for North Carolina veterans to receive the oral health care they need.

The program created by the East Carolina School of Dental Medicine and the Veteran Smiles Foundation began in 2018 to provide low-cost or free oral health care for U.S. Armed Services veterans who live in rural and underserved areas of North Carolina. To date, the ECU Smiles for Veterans program has hosted 13 events, served 364 veterans and provided over \$200,000 worth of dental care. Nine more events are planned across the state over the next year.

The program began in western North Carolina at the school's community service learning center (CSLC) in Sylva; the center is one of eight offices situated in rural areas across the state where there was previously little or no access to dental care. The ECU Smiles for Veterans partnership was framed by COL, U.S. Army Dental Corps (Ret.), Dr. Robert Manga, the faculty director of the CSLC-Sylva and COL, Special Operating Forces (Ret.) Dave McCracken, founder of the Veteran Smiles Foundation. From there, the event has taken on a life of its own, expanding eastward to most of the school's other CSLCs.

During the event, ECU students, residents, faculty and staff provide a day of honor and dental care for the veterans from the moment they arrive. Prior to each event, the veterans are screened at Stand Downs and similar events, where it is determined what procedures are needed. The cost of care is covered by existing funds and gifts to the Veteran Smiles Foundation and the ECU School of Dental Medicine.

Patient and veteran Mike Sheppard had to set aside his daily routine and hobbies once the pain in his teeth became too great for him to focus. He sought care at an ECU Smiles for Veterans event in Sylva — and the result was life-changing. "I feel 100% better than I did," Sheppard said after his procedures. "It affects the way you perform. When you can smile and you couldn't before, it means confidence."

MG (Ret) Dr. T. Rob Tempel, the school's associate dean for extramural clinical practices, said the program shows veterans that they matter in their communities — and that their oral health care needs are a vital part of their overall health. "This program emphasizes to veterans that we care about them, their oral health and their quality of life," Tempel said. "It's critical that we provide a resource for veterans to access the oral health care they need as they navigate their overall health."

McCracken said seeing the veterans gather in one place for one purpose was satisfying because it is another step toward providing better all-around care to those who have served. "The goal is to improve oral health across this entire region," he said. "Dental care is where there really is such great need."

Manga said the ECU Smiles for Veterans events have opened doors for veterans across the state. "ECU Smiles for Veterans enables us to thank those who served our country and are in need of dental care; it is an example of the dental school fulfilling its mission to help the underserved and become part of our community," he said. "The concept has laid the groundwork to extend access across other CSLCs across the state to help our veterans."

Dr. William Via '24 volunteered for an ECU Smiles for Veterans event in Spruce Pine last year as a student; it's an experience he said he won't soon forget. "I never have worked with a more appreciative group of patients that also deserve the most appreciation themselves," he said.

In 2021, the ECU Smiles for Veterans Patient Care Fund was created through ECU to boost funding for the longevity of the program through donors. The fund stands to support current and potential programs and events that offer low- and no-cost dental procedures and preventive care to veterans in financial need. As the program has expanded, Delta Dental has also become a sponsor through its mission to expand equity in oral and overall health by partnering with community programs.

"It means a lot to me because it shows people actually want to help each other," said Lloyd Holland of Murphy, one of the first veterans to receive care through ECU Smiles for Veterans. "In North Carolina, people just care more about each other, and this event shows that. It's hard for me to say what I feel, but it feels like a brick has been lifted off my back."

The ECU School of Dental Medicine recently received a grant from CareQuest Institute for Oral Health to more solidly integrate veterans' oral health care into overall health. Part of the grant project also seeks to show the need to facilitate whole-person care for veterans with chronic illnesses and disabilities that include diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease. Data is also needed to show how multidisciplinary teams can address the needs of veterans who have both chronic systemic disease or disabilities and a need for oral health care.

The grant also seeks to include veterans' advocates on the CSLC advisory boards across the state.

"Each ECU School of Dental Medicine CSLC has an established community advisory board that provides guidance and direction for opportunities to serve the community," Tempel said. "The relationships between the CSLCs and community medical, dental and education leaders are essential to the success of the school's mission to provide access to care to underserved populations."

Another key factor that brings the ECU Smiles for Veterans events home is that many of the faculty dentists providing care to patients are veterans themselves.

"Having faculty and administrators who have dedicated their careers to service through the Armed Forces brings an excitement that is hard to describe," Via said. "The service events that the school is able to hold emphasizes the immense need in North Carolina communities, a need that ECU School of Dental Medicine works so very hard to meet."

Editor's Note: In the Fall Edition of the AAD Newsletter, the Honoring Service article spotlighted Bob Burns and his work with handicapped golfers, including military wounded warriors. A couple of minor editorial changes have been made to that article. Please follow the link below to the edited version of the article.

[Honoring Service: Bob Burns](#)

In Memoriam

Hake, Terry Henry COL, USA, (Ret) 12/25/1940 – 11/15/2024

After graduating from Gettysburg College in 1963, COL Hake joined the Army as a Transportation Corps officer. After his initial service, Terry earned a Doctor of Dental Surgery degree in 1969 and completed a combined total of 32 years of service in the Army. The link to his obituary is below.

[Hake, Terry Henry, COL, USA, Ret](#)

Russell, Marilyn A., LTC, USA (Ret) 07/27/1944 – 09/27/2024

LTC Russell's distinguished career saw her serving more than 24 years in the U.S. Army Dental Corps, during which she graduated from the Army's periodontal residency program. Marilyn served as a leader in many key roles across the globe before retiring in June 2016. The link to her obituary is below.

[Russell, Marilyn A., LTC USA, Ret](#)

Rubczak, Steven Paul, COL, USA (Ret) 04/19/1955 – 08/05/2024

After receiving his degree in dentistry, COL Rubczak devoted his entire career to the United States Army. As an oral and maxillofacial surgeon, Steve passed his skills on to countless residents. Key to his greater than 30 years of service, was that Steve considered it an honor and privilege to serve. Please follow the link to his obituary.

[Rubczak, Steven Paul, COL USA Ret](#)

Tortorelli, Alfred, COL, USA Ret 12/07/1937 – 06/25/2024

After graduating from Columbia University Dental School, COL Tortorelli served in the U.S. Army for 22 years, including tours in Vietnam, where as a major he was the last Army Dental Corps officer to leave Vietnam on April 1, 1973. After retiring, he settled in Melbourne, Fla., where he opened a successful oral surgery practice. Please follow the link below to his obituary.

[Tortorelli, Alfred, COL, USA Ret](#)

Broering, Leo F., COL, USA (Ret) 10/18/1940 – 05/31/2009

COL Broering was a graduate of Xavier University and the University of Louisville Dental School. Leo's distinguished service spanned more than 35 years of service. The link to his obituary is below.

[Broering, Leo F., COL, USA Ret](#)

The AAD publishes all obituaries that are brought to its attention in our newsletters. Additionally, the "In Memoriam" searchable database is available on the AAD website.

Conclusion

If any of our members would like to share their personal histories, 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 to Susan Allen for her sage advice and assistance in editing and finalizing the newsletter. Her assistance is invaluable.

With the holidays upon us, we again salute all who have served this great Nation. Please keep the young men and women in uniform serving our Nation today in your thoughts and prayers as they serve around the globe. Freedom is not free. I wish our members a blessed and joyous holidays.

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

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.

AAD Contact Information

The AAD's new mailing address, email, and phone number are listed below.

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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