

THE INNOVATOR

Optimizing Combat Casualty Care



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Staff Sgt. Rachel Hammill uses an alcohol swab to wipe the arm of a retiree before administering the COVID-19 vaccine at the expanded Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

USAISR Soldiers on Frontline of JBSA-Fort Sam Houston Vaccination Effort

Story and photo by Dr. Steven Galvan
USAISR Public Affairs Officer

Soldiers from the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research (USAISR) at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas (JBSA-FSH), are on the frontline of the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination effort. Four USAISR Soldiers are currently supporting the Brooke Army Medical Center expanded COVID-19 vaccination site at Fort Sam Houston which will be manned by Soldiers and civilians from several units on post. The larger facility is

scheduled to increase the vaccination capability for all U.S. Department of Defense beneficiaries in San Antonio, which includes active duty service members and their families, retirees, and civilian and contract employees.

"It's a combined effort, subordinate units with its great leaders and Soldiers should provide support where possible," said Sgt. Maj. Jennifer Francis, USAISR Senior Enlisted Leader. "Taking care of people is the right thing to do and this mission does exactly that. The USAISR will always answer our

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CDR's Corner



Col. (Dr.) Mark E. Stackle
Commander

"Optimizing Combat Casualty Care"

Team ISR,

It has been a busy few months since the last issue of *The Innovator*. Since that time, we celebrated the winter holidays and welcomed in a new year. In February, the entire state of Texas experienced a historic cold spell that ravaged the area with ice, snow, and subsequent power outages and severe water damage. Concurrently, we continued our diligent perseverance in the fight against the COVID pandemic. Throughout these dynamic events, however, the one thing that has remained constant is your tremendous commitment to combat casualty care and the care for the patients in the Burn Center. Even during the worst of the devastating winter storm, while the rest of the city remained paralyzed due to icy roads and loss of power, many of you continued to come to work to make sure that we accomplished the most critical elements of our mission. Your unwavering dedication to our organization during such a trying time was inspiring to me, and I want to personally thank you for your continued dedication to our patients and our research.

We also experienced some great news on the COVID front. In De-

ember, the COVID vaccine became available to many of the ISR staff and nearly two-thirds of the ISR team have received the vaccine at the time of this writing. Additionally, the number of cases in the San Antonio area have dropped to the lowest level in many months. While these are causes for optimism, I ask that we continue to remain disciplined in our COVID protection measures of mask wearing and social distancing both at work as well as when we are out in the community. For those teammates that remain ambivalent about receiving the vaccination, I ask that you take some time to get more detailed information about any concerns you might have. The vaccination will only reach its maximum benefit when a greater majority of the population receives it. Based on the vastly improved COVID environment and high vaccination rates, we plan to gradually increase our research activities and the number of people in the building over the next few months.

The last thing that I would like to address is the Extremism stand-down



Col. (Dr.) Mark Stackle provides opening and welcome remarks during Spouses Day.

Story and photos on Page 4-5

training that we recently conducted. I am incredibly grateful for the outstanding job that 1st Sgt. Roberson, Sgt. 1st Class Wingerter, and Sgt. 1st Class Jimenez did leading our sessions. I thought the resulting conversation was extremely valuable and provided a good starting point for what I hope becomes continued dialogue within your work sections and departments. I continue to believe that the diversity of background and experience within the ISR continues to be one of our greatest strengths and allow us to identify innovative solutions to the most challenging patient care and research questions.

Finally, I would like to end by saying "thank you" to everyone for all that you do every day. It has been a difficult last few months, but I firmly believe that things will continue to improve as we head into the summer. Stay committed, vigilant and continue to look out for each other. I am proud of you and proud to be part of the ISR Team.

"Forge the Future"

THE INNOVATOR

Vol. 9 No. 1

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Nation's call with highly intelligent and motivated people.”

Staff Sgt. Rachel Hammill is one of the first USAISR Soldiers to augment the vaccination effort.

“I am very excited to be a part of this effort to vaccinate Americans,” she said. “I feel many American people look at Soldiers as strictly warfighters, but it's not always true and it's a great feeling to be able to help out on the home front. I also would like to go back to a world where masks are no longer necessary.”

The four USAISR Soldiers will rotate every two months after required training is completed. Their duties will include screening and escorting vaccine recipients, as well as preparing and administering the vaccines. Hammill's duties include ensuring individuals are healthy enough to receive the vaccine, delivering the vaccination itself, and then monitoring the status of all patients for 15 minutes to ensure they do not experience adverse reactions.

“I am also tasked to pick up the vaccines from cold storage and make sure we have enough pulled up and constituted for doses enough for people,”



Pfc. Colin Perry prepares a vial of COVID-19 vaccine at the Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston vaccine site.

added Hammill. “If we draw up too many we have to try and find people who want the vaccine because it will expire six hours after they are drawn up.”

Sgt. Alfredo Ramirez, a medical laboratory specialist at the USAISR is also among the first four Soldiers to assist

in the vaccination effort.

“As part of the core team for the COVID-19 vaccination tasker, I am grateful to be working towards ensuring our American citizens are safe from this awful virus,” said Ramirez. “This feeling is only heightened by the fact that every individual who receives the vaccine is very grateful and enthusiastic to be the next line of defense towards herd immunity.”

The USAISR will rotate Soldiers every two months until the vaccination facility is no longer needed. Until then, they will continue working to do their part to vaccinate everyone who wants the vaccine.

“Despite the hours being long, I feel accomplished knowing I am improving the welfare of service members and their dependents, and DOD civilians and contractors,” said Ramirez. “Additionally, I am urging anyone who has not made an appointment to receive the vaccine to make one as it is doing your part for the rest of the population.”



Sgt. Joseph Lashlei administers a COVID-19 vaccine at the drive thru section of the expanded COVID vaccine site Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

USAISR Highlights Combat Casualty Care Research, Burn Care to Spouses



Col. (Dr.) Mark Stackle provides opening and welcome remarks to kick-off Spouses' Day before providing an overview brief of the Institute.

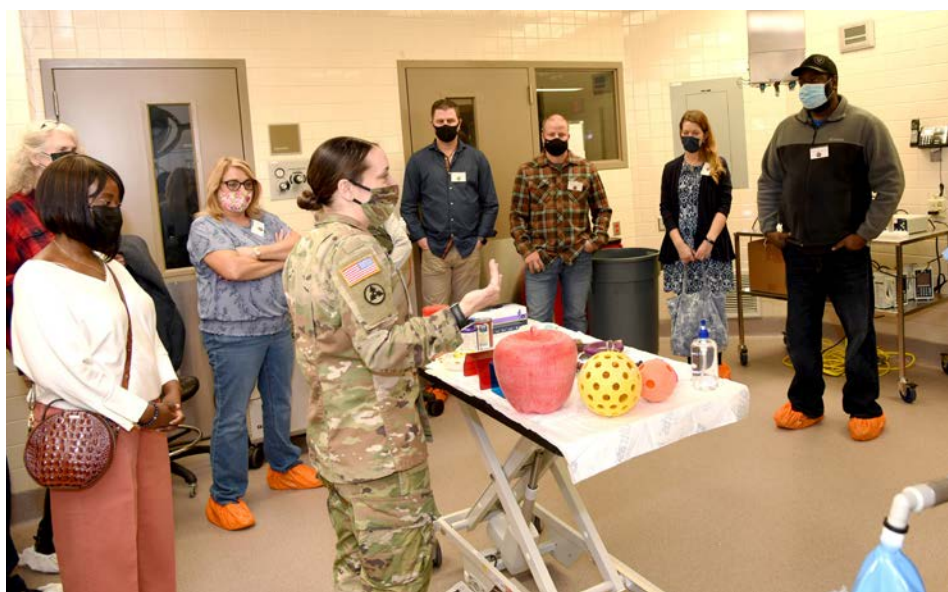
Story and photos by Dr. Steven Galvan
USAISR Public Affairs Officer

The U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research (USAISR) at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas, held a Spouses' Day on February 23 to give the spouses of all staff members a firsthand opportunity to see how their significant others help support combat casualty care research and provide the best medical care at the only U.S. Department of Defense burn center. Appropriately, the idea for the event originated with USAISR Commander Mark Stackle's own wife, Melinda, who teamed with Maj. (Dr.) Laura Riddle, the Chief of the Veterinarian Support Group, to coordinate the occasion.

"As spouses, we really enjoyed the chance to meet and interact with fellow ISR spouses, thus building and strengthening our community," said Stackle. "As spouses, we are de facto ambassadors for the Army and the ISR, and this event gave us a much better understanding of the great work

our spouses do in support of research and patient care."

The event itself began with a brief command overview by Col. Stackle, after which the group of 20 attending spouses were given a tour of the Burn Center and select research laboratory areas.



Maj. (Dr.) Laura Riddle gives an overview of some of the equipment used in the research areas.

"I believe that the event was well-received, and I hope that everyone gained a better appreciation and a sense of pride for how his or her spouse directly contributes to saving our Warfighters on the battlefield," said Riddle.

Frank Kuylen, whose wife Anya is the Business Analyst at the Burn Center, said he was impressed from the minute he walked in the door for the event.

"The immediate welcome, spouses' introductions and confidence that each leader had while presenting showed their true knowledge and absolute care for both their profession and patients," said Kuylen. "Major Riddle was well-prepared and provided a comprehensive tour of the research buildings in such a way as to convey an impression which reflects favorably on the organization."

Another attendee, Russell Roth, whose wife Stephanie is the Acquisition Management Liaison Officer, said he was impressed to see how so much of what is done at the USAISR

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has a trickle-down effect and ends up helping civilians as well as service members.

“I feel that the ISR is doing amazing things, not just to help our service members on the battlefield, but also the public,” Roth said. “I was aware of some of the research being done, but did not realize there was so much more going on. It was great to see how much of the research is forward-thinking and trying to have our service members prepared for what the future may hold when it comes to fighting different types of adversaries in the future.”

Kuylen added that for him, it became apparent there is a solid link between the research being conducted at the ISR for current and future battlefields making the utilization of those findings relevant for the Warfighters today.

“The event was unequivocally informative and welcoming,” Kuylen said. “The coordination and planning from the commander’s wife and each leader who briefed was remarkable. Hats off to everyone and all the research that is being done for both our combat wounded and active duty service men and women.”

Roth said he enjoyed the time he spent at Spouse’s Day and was grateful to learn about the different roles everyone plays within the Institute.

“You can really tell there is a great sense of pride in what everyone is doing, and rightfully so,” he said. “The people working at the ISR should all be proud of what they are doing as they are some of the unsung heroes behind the scenes that many people never hear about. It was great to get to meet them and hear their story.”

Said Stackle, “I think events like this empower spouses to speak more knowledgeably about the ISR, and further build bridges between spouses and our larger community.”



Maj. Ryan Labio explains the transition burn patients go through from the Burn Intensive Care Unit to the Progressive Care Unit.



Dr. James Bynum describes the type of research and the equipment used in the blood research area.



Sgt. 1st Class Dakota Wingerter answers questions about the Burn Flight Teams missions and equipment used during the missions.

Schauer Earns Army Surgeon General's 2020 Physician Recognition Award



Maj. (Dr.) Steven Schauer, center, Nguvan Uhaa, Jessica Mendz, Maj. (Dr.) Ian Hudson, and Capt. (Dr.) Wells Weymouth (62A, battalion surgeon) work together to enroll 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Nightstalkers) medics into two USAISR airway studies seeking to optimize how to manage airway emergencies in the combat setting.

By Dr. Steven Galvan
USAISR Public Affairs Officer

Maj. Steven Schauer from the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research (USAISR) at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas, was presented with the Army Surgeon General's 2020 Physician Recognition Award during a virtual meeting on December 8. The award recognizes Army Medical Corps officers in the rank of Major for exceptional service and accomplishments and is selected from among nominations from numerous senior leaders and consultants across all medical specialties.

Schauer, an Army emergency physician and researcher, is the Capability Area Manager for the Acute Combat Casualty Care Division and was recognized as a top academic in emergency medicine and for the work he accomplished during two deployments in

support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

"It's a huge honor," said Schauer. "It's really a culmination of the opportunities I've had working here and at Brooke Army Medical Center. I believe I was likely selected for the extensive research experience I've gained here, the two deployment opportunities I've had, and the participation in the broadening experience at DARPA [Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency]. This has allowed me to participate in Army-specific research and gain operational experience."

Schauer's research includes selection of the optimal airway devices for medics to carry in prehospital settings, reduction in oxygen supplementation in prehospital settings, the administration of topical antibiotics to open fracture wounds, and studying novel airway devices for use by medical officers at the Role 1.

"I focus my efforts on optimizing

the care delivered by medics at or near the point of injury," said the 10-year Army veteran. "We have the best patient population. It's the only opportunity to take care of patients that I always have something in common with. It's also a group where they are either currently serving or at some point their life chose to serve."

Lt. Col. Jonathan Stallings, Deputy Director of Research, stated that Schauer is one of the most productive scientists at USAISR.

"His publication record is among the top at ISR in the last five years, which requires a tremendous amount of personal dedication, scientific inquiry and a collaborative spirit," said Stallings. "While a top performer in research, he also found time for two deployments. This had to stand out among his peers, and without a doubt played a role in him earning this prestigious award. Since 2007, I've been blessed to work with many talented physicians in the Army - he is among the top for sure."

Schauer also attributes the several opportunities he's had while at the USAISR and the Command's support that made him competitive for this award.

"I think Major Schauer earning this award is just fantastic for the USAISR and the Research Directorate," added Stallings. "But even more important, it is an opportunity for him to be recognized for all of his outstanding efforts. More than ever, military medicine and our research programs in combat casualty care need talented, driven, physician-scientists who have the ability and willpower to cut through the nonsense and drive innovative solutions to solve military medical problems. He is forward thinking, innovative, and will no doubt have a tremendous impact on military medicine for many years to come."

Batchinsky Named Geneva Foundation Researcher of the Year



Dr. Andriy Batchinsky welcomes Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Crosby, Army Futures Command, before he demonstrates the research projects in his section.

Story and photo by Dr. Steven Galvan
USAISR Public Affairs Officer

The U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research (USAISR) at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas, received word in November that Dr. Andriy Batchinsky was named The Geneva Foundation's 2019 Researcher of the Year. Batchinsky, who has been at the USAISR for more than 20 years, is currently the Manager of the Extracorporeal Life Support Capability Area – a program which focuses on novel advanced mobile forms of organ support for lung, kidney, heart and combined injuries.

"I don't take it as a personal recognition," said Batchinsky. "I feel like it's a great recognition of the team that I have and of the hard work that everyone is putting in. From a personal standpoint, getting a reward is a call to work harder."

Batchinsky was invited to work at the USAISR in 1998 as a postdoctoral fellow by the late Dr. Basil Pruitt who served as both the commander and director of the Institute from 1968 to 1995.

"He stayed to dedicate his pro-

fessional life to the care of combat wounded," said Col. (Dr.) Andre Cap, Director of Research. "I am grateful on behalf of my brothers and sisters in uniform that he chose this path. He has made – and continues to make – breakthroughs which save lives."

Cap added that Batchinsky has been successful at leading a slew important scientific efforts over the years – efforts that have in turn been awarded millions of dollars of Department of Defense grant money. Batchinsky's current research focuses on developing novel heparin-free solutions for various extracorporeal life support technologies that, he says, has the potential to change the application of critical care across the globe. He is also collaborating on a study with USAISR Burn Center Director Dr. Leopoldo "Lee" Cancio to begin a clinical trial testing low flow CO2 removal in mechanically ventilated patients is the first of its kind in the U.S. for a new U.S. Food and Drug Administration-bound device. His team is also working on several projects focused on treatments for COVID-19. Batchinsky said that he has felt a strong connection with the Institute since arriving here.

"The commander at that time, Colonel Cleon Goodwin, was very welcoming as was Lee Cancio whom has been a mentor, collaborator and colleague ever since," said Batchinsky. "Over the years, I have felt responsible to Dr. Pruitt and his legacy in doing the most I can for the wounded warriors, the ISR and critical care community at large."

The Researcher of the Year award was established in 2014 by Geneva's Scientific Advisory Board and is presented annually to the researcher who best exemplifies Geneva's mission of advancing innovative medical research within the U.S. military for the benefit of Warfighters, veterans, their families and the global community.

"This award reflects well on Dr. Batchinsky and the ISR team with which he is affiliated," said Cap. "Personally, I consider him a friend and colleague and am very happy that his achievements have been recognized."

Batchinsky has been named a runner-up for this award twice in the past and has seen the caliber of scientists who have been honored by it. He says it's perhaps a dash of both circumstance and perseverance that scored him the honor this go-round.

"This year, it may be because of COVID and everyone's awareness of lung support and innovation in that area that we've been blessed to lead," he said.

In an email announcing Batchinsky's award to the staff, Col. (Dr.) Mark Stackle, USAISR Commander stated, "This is a tremendous honor and one that is richly deserved based on his work in the realm of acute respiratory distress syndrome and the advancement of Extra-Corporeal Lung Oxygenation technology to improve care on the battlefield. This is another great example of the tremendously talented and committed people that we have here at the ISR."

Burn Flight Team Adds Advanced CCATT Training for Transporting Patients



US Army Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center Burn Flight Team members and US Air Force Critical Care Air Transport Team members pose for a group photo at the University Hospital, in Cincinnati, Ohio.

By Dr. Steven Galvan
USAISR Public Affairs Officer

Training and mission readiness has been the cornerstone of success for members of the Army Burn Flight Team (BFT) at the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research (USAISR) Burn Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Through in-house and other formal training courses, the BFT remains ready to deploy anytime, anywhere to transport burned and injured warfighters from overseas to San Antonio. Now, select members of the BFT have completed an advanced training course designed to increase their skillset and enhance interoperability with another specialized transport team.

Four members of the BFT completed the U.S. Air Force Critical Care Air Transport Team (CCATT) advanced course in November. The 14-day course conducted at the Center for

Sustainment of Trauma and Readiness Skills (C-STARS) at University Hospital, in Cincinnati, Ohio is designed with an emphasis on clinical care of the critically ill and injured patient during flight. CCATT is the Air Force's highly specialized and uniquely skilled three-person medical team (medicine critical care physician, critical care nurse and respiratory therapist) that augments standard aeromedical evacuation crew members on an Air Force aircraft converted into a flying intensive care unit.

"Care of critically ill patients in an aircraft at 30 thousand feet for up to 12 to 18 hours is very challenging and different from what we do day to day," said Maj. (Dr.) Garrett Britton, Burn Center Intensivist at the Burn Intensive Care Unit (BICU) and BFT member. "This training enhances our ability to care for burn injured patients during aeromedical evacuation and transport and familiarizes us with the Air Force's

stand allowance for equipment used in flight for critically ill patients that are not used day to day at the Burn Center."

The BFT has conducted nearly 100 missions overseas since 2003, when Operation Iraqi Freedom was launched. Most of those missions were using the same aircraft transporting wounded Warriors under the care of the CCATT. Initially, both teams tended to patients in their charge, but within the last few years, both the BFT and CCATT have combined forces on high profile missions to Central America and Asia.

"The interoperability between the CCATT and the Burn Flight Team is crucial to mission effectiveness," said Michael Mueller, a registered nurse at the BICU and clinical nurse officer in charge of the BFT. "We use them [Air Force] almost exclusively to transport our patients and occasionally the Marine Corp will give us a ride. The advanced course gives us a better insight and understanding of the Air Force platform, system and how the CCATT is trained for their missions."

The BFT was created during the Korean War when battlefield burn casualties had to wait a month or more to be transported to the Burn Center for treatment. Soldiers assigned to the BICU were selected to serve on the BFT. Those Soldiers relied on their medical training, experience and expertise to transport specialized BICU equipment to reach the burn patients in Korea or Japan. When new members were needed for duty on the BFT, seasoned members used their expertise to train the Soldiers in-house to serve on the Team.

"We do not have a formal BFT selection process for joining the Team," added Mueller, who first served on the BFT in 1991 while on active duty as an

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Army licensed vocational nurse. “After a potential member’s lengthy BICU orientation process and some time working in the BICU, the team members and leadership have pretty good idea if the Soldier has the aptitude and skills required for duty on the BFT.”

Since November, nine BFT members have traveled to Ohio for CCATT training. Britton and Mueller were two of the four BFT members who completed the CCATT advanced course. Before attending the advanced course, they had to attend the CCATT initial course. The other five Team members completed the initial course to include Staff Sgt. Charles Garcia Jr., a BICU respiratory therapist specialist.

“This course isn’t just training us to be more skilled at our specific jobs,” said Garcia. “This course trains us to be versatile. The amount of knowledge I learned in 10 days was unimaginable.”

The BFT is a five-person team consisting of a burn surgeon, a critical care registered nurse, a licensed vocational nurse, a respiratory therapist and a

forward operations noncommissioned officer who work in the BICU. A total of four teams rotate and are always ready to deploy within hours—every single day of the year.

CCATT courses are designed for physicians, registered nurses, and respiratory specialist, so BFT licensed vocational nurses attend the Joint En Route Care Course offered at the US Army Medical Center of Excellence at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston for concise, realistic, relevant and current en route trauma transport training.

“The Burn Flight Team was established in November 1951 in collaboration with the Air Force, and was the original critical care air transport team,” said Dr. Leopoldo “Lee” Cancio, Burn Center director and member of the BFT from 1995 to 2014 when he was an active duty Army surgeon. “The Air Force established their CCATT after the Blackhawk Down battle in Mogadishu in October 1993. During Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom [2003-present], BFT transported the sickest patients and CCATT the less sick patients from Landstuhl Regional Medical Center,

Germany to ISR. So, the BFT and CCATT have deeply rooted historical connections which the new training paradigm will strengthen.”

The advanced training at C-STARS was initially designed specifically for CCATT members, but opened up for BFT last year.

“This training is paramount to Burn Flight Team mission readiness,” said Britton. “As global transport of critically ill burn injured patients has decreased over the last several years this training serves as refresher training for many already on the Burn Flight Team as well as a foundation for new members. It standardizes practice between Army and Air Force assets and promotes an interagency collaboration. It also creates a potential for the BFT to take CCATT calls and serve on non-burn CCATT missions which will enhance mission readiness.”

Cancio, who served on the BFT from 1995-2014 as an active duty Army surgeon agrees with Britton’s assessment.

“Our being able to do this reflects the support of our Air Force colleagues, as well as the willingness of our leadership to support the Team’s time away from the Burn Center,” said Cancio. “All involved recognize that doing this training is absolutely critical for Burn Flight Team readiness and maintain currency during a period of time in which there have been few real world burn missions for the Burn Flight Team to conduct.”

Britton added that training between the BFT and CCATT must be a constant endeavor and both teams are meeting quarterly to train together. He also hopes to establish an enduring partnership with the staff at C-STARS to enhance burn care and a specialty at the Burn Center—research.

Said Britton, “We have formed a relationship with C-STARS and plan to engage in research and Program Improvement with them. C-STARS is a world-class operation and we look forward to working with them.”



CCATT Advanced course students transport a patient (a high-fidelity mannequin) on a C-130 and fly around Ohio and Kentucky airspace for approximately 45 minutes engaged in management of the critically ill patients.

Safety Notes

By Stephanie L. Truss
Health, Safety
and Environmental
Manager



General Spring Cleaning Tips

1. Do Not Rush Because You Are Tired or in a Hurry.

This is really the most basic spring cleaning safety tip, and all the other ones, at least to a certain degree, stem from this one. Spring cleaning can be tiring work. Do not forget safety even if you have worked hard all day and just want to get done. The better thing to do when you are exhausted is to stop and take a break, drink a glass of water, and rest instead of making a mistake that can lead to a mishap.

2. Be Careful Moving Large Pieces of Furniture or Appliances.

- Use proper lifting technique, keeping your back straight and lifting with your legs.
- Wear shoes when moving heavy items so you don't hurt your toes.
- If you feel it is just too heavy and you can't find someone else to do it for you, just don't move it. It won't be the end of the world to just clean around it.

3. Be Safe While on Ladders and Step Stools.

- When doing a task, such as washing windows, where you need to be on a ladder use extreme caution. Do not lean too far to either side. A good rule of thumb is that your belly button should not go beyond the sides of the ladder.
- Have someone available to hold the ladder steady for you if possible, and make sure before you step on them that the rungs are not wet, and you are wearing nonskid shoes.

4. Be Careful While Walking On Wet Surfaces.

This spring cleaning safety tip is really important every time you clean. Everyone knows how easy it is to slip on a wet floor.

- Make sure you take the proper precautions to keep from falling.
- Make sure others in your family, including children, are also warned of the wet floor to keep them safe.
- You may need to block small children's access to wet floors because they just don't understand not to run and slide on them.

5. Keep Stairs, Landings and Walkways Clear Of Boxes, Bags and Other Clutter.

Spring cleaning is a great time to declutter your home, but you need to make sure all the boxes and bags of stuff you are getting rid of don't cause a safety concern.

- Make sure you place them outside walkways and especially away from steps and stairs where someone may trip on them.



6. Don't Carry Too Much Stuff at Once, Especially on Stairs.

During Spring cleaning you will also probably go up and down your stairs a lot carrying things if you live in a home with stairs.

- Make sure you keep a hand free to hold onto the stair railing.
- Whether you have stairs or not, always make sure you can see over

the load you are carrying so you do not trip.

7. Always Follow Cleaning Product Label Safety Instructions and Recommendations.

- Cleaning supplies can create nasty fumes, so make sure you get some fresh air by opening windows, turning on the exhaust fan, or placing a fan in the room.
- Do not mix ammonia and bleach together, both of which are common household cleaners, because they create toxic fumes when combined.
- When in doubt don't mix, just use one product to get the job done.
- You should also wear rubber gloves to keep your hands from getting dry and cracked from the hot water and chemicals.

8. Wear a Mask When Cleaning Dusty Areas.

This may seem like overkill to some, but if you are at all allergic to dust this tip is very important.

9. Do Not Leave Buckets Filled With Water Around Your Home.

- Even if you need to take a quick break, make sure you empty that cleaning bucket, or at least put it in an inaccessible area.
- Even small amounts of water are a drowning hazard for small children.
- They can also be areas that harbor mosquitoes.

10. Put Away All Your Cleaning Supplies When You Are Done.

When you finally finish your spring cleaning tasks for the day it is easy to say to yourself, "I'll put these away later," or "I am just going to use these again tomorrow, so I'm keeping them out."

- Cleaning supplies are an attractive nuisance for our children and pets, something inviting that they should definitely not be getting into.
- Put the cleaning products away in a childproof cabinet for your children's safety and well-being as soon as you are done with them.

Health News



By Maria G. Dominguez, R.N.
COHN-S/CM
Occupational
Health Nurse

And now: “its spring fever. That is what the name of it is. And when you’ve got it, you want - oh, you don’t quite know what it is you do want, but it just fairly makes your heart ache, you want it so!” ~Mark Twain

But COVID is still here and we have a vaccine. We can choose prevention since we have all the vaccine information at our fingertips. Plus, we can get the vaccine free at our own worksite.

And after a year of quarantines, isolations, shutdowns, fevers, unexpected illness and unexpected snow, we all welcome this spring weather!

Wait!

Did our annual flu bug forget about us? Did we get rid of it this year? Almost! That was the secondary gain of wearing our face coverings! Our new accessory helped and it did its job! We can do this every year!

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports nationwide during week 11, a 0.9 percent of patient visits for flu. This percentage is below the national baseline of 2.6 percent. Based on National Center for Health Statistics mortality surveillance data available on March 25, 2021, 12.1 percent of the deaths that occurred during the week ending March 20, 2021 (week 11), were due to pneumonia, influenza, and/or COVID-19 (PIC). This percentage is above the epidemic threshold of 7.1 percent for week 11. A total of one influenza-associated pediatric death occurring during the 2020-2021 season has been reported to the CDC. Among

the 2,368 PIC deaths reported for this week (week 11), 1,569 had COVID-19 listed as an underlying or contributing cause of death, and zero listed influenza, indicating that current PIC mortality is due primarily to COVID-19 and not influenza.

Spring brings us the outside world, sports, activities, picnics, gardens and so much more. But don’t COVID is still here. We have a COVID team and COVID corner for your information at: <https://aisrc2svr1111.amed.ds.army.mil/default.html>

Even though we have more movement, we still have some restrictions. We must adhere to federal, state and local pandemic rules, guidelines, as well as Occupational Safety and Health Association work place guidelines for our safety and health.

All of us experienced COVID at different levels. But when we come to our ISR home we are all in this together.

A year if we were exposed to a COVID-positive person, we had to quarantine, which meant isolation from the rest of the world. Today we have updates based on the vaccination. The measures are as follows:

If we focus on testing, the biggest change in this the guidance related to quarantine and associated testing requirements for vaccinated close contacts who meet CDC criteria.

“When the close contact is an individual vaccinated with a Food and Drug Administration-authorized COVID-19 vaccine under emergency use authorization, quarantine and testing for close contacts is not required if the individual is fully vaccinated and up-to-date with the latest vaccine guidance, and has remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure,” explained Army Col. (Dr.) Jennifer Kashmiri, director of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear medical countermeasures policy in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs.

When we focus on deploying and redeploying personnel, there’s an

added exception for testing prior to air travel from the US to a foreign country. The exception is based on previous full recovery from COVID-19 infection.

This measure also adds an assessment of prior COVID-19 infection and vaccination status to the Department of Defense (DOD) pre-travel screening process and clarifies that the head of an Office of the Secretary of Defense component or the secretary of the Military Department may, if host nation agreements allow, decrease restriction of movement.

There is also an added requirement for pre-travel testing prior to arrival in the United States for redeployment from a foreign country and added exceptions to pre-travel testing based on CDC allowance for travelers on military airlift and for those who have fully recovered from COVID-19.

Additionally, DOD face cover usage guidance is consistent with CDC guidelines, including wearing face coverings on DOD transportation assets and at DOD hubs.

Some significant changes that focus on commanders and supervisors protecting personnel in workplaces include:

- Improved guidance for providing safe workplaces and work schedules with a primary focus on maintaining safe distancing between personnel.
- Clarification of the procedures for DOD personnel with COVID-19 symptoms and for personnel exposed to COVID-19 from “close contact” with individuals who have contracted COVID-19.
- And, updates to information collection requirements for COVID-19-positive personnel in the workplace.

So, lets stay Green! Green is no longer just a color. Green signifies growth, nature, rebirth and fertility. In Ireland, it’s a lucky color. And, in every part of the world Green means go! So spring forward, with a spring in your step!

NCO/Soldier of the Month

January

February

March



Soldier of the Month
Spc. Yuliesia Tello

**Soldier
of the
Month**

Spc. Julie Hale

**Soldier
of the
Month**

Spc. Tabitha Rodriguez

Promotions/Reenlistments



Sgt. Kellie Cummings pins Sgt. Eric Ramirez with his new rank during his promotion ceremony March 1.

Reenlistments

Staff Sgt. Kelle Brown

Spc. Daisy Poole

Promotions

Staff Sgt. Inae Cho

Staff Sgt. Mellisa Valencia

Sgt. Jose Alyssa

Sgt. Eric Ramirez

Spc. Bryan Carbajal

Spc. Nikolas Henderson

Spc. Stephen McBride

Spc. Zahra Nurudeen

Spc. Isaac Oliver

Spc. Caleb Page

Spc. Colin Perry

Spc. Joshua Stahl

Spc. Keely Wentz

Around the ISR



Top: Sgt. Maj. Jennifer Francis, second from right, and Col. (Dr.) Mark Stackle, right, join Staff Sgt. Cordell and Pfc. Zahra Nurudeen during a Ruck March test for the Soldier of the Year Board on March 5.



Center: Col. (Dr.) Mark Stackle and Sgt. Maj. Jennifer Francis present Dr. Eric Snider with a command coin of excellence on December 18.

Bottom left: USAISR team members and families spent the afternoon of December 21 handing out food to nearly 200 families as part of the San Antonio Foodbank Program.



Bottom right: Capt. Loc Lam presents Sue Dodson, Executive Director of Texas Burn Survivors Society with a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the Institute Commander during a luncheon on December 18.

Cornell Earns Prestigious Award From Texas A&M

Story and photo by Dr. Steven Galvan
USAISR Public Affairs Officer

U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research staffer Lauren Cornell, Ph.D., is among twelve Texas A&M University alumni named to the 2021 cohort “12 Under 12 Young Alumni Spotlight” by the Association of Former Students. The honor recognizes 12 former students who have graduated in the past 12 years for demonstrating excellence in both business and service, while representing the university’s core values of excellence, integrity, leadership, loyalty, respect and selfless service.

“This award is a significant milestone in my career as a scientist,” said Cornell. “I feel that highlighting that our work involves all of these factors and the fact that I was chosen by my peers shows the impact of our research.”

Cornell, a research biologist, has been at the USAISR since 2013. Her research initially focused on corneal endothelial injury and now also includes battlefield pain. Outside of the Institute, Cornell is the co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of NovoTheIum, a San Antonio based biotechnology company currently developing nipple-areola complex replacements for patients who have undergone a mastectomy. She credits several factors for this accolade.

“I believe I earned it for my combined efforts in scientific research and mentorship in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), both at the USAISR and outside of it, as well as my own pursuits in business development and translational science,” she said.

Cornell is no stranger to earning prestigious awards and hard work. At the 2017 Military Health System



As a postgraduate fellow at the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research Ocular Trauma and Vision Restoration Directorate in 2018, Dr. Lauren Cornell completed a one-year Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) Science Communication Training Fellowship with a capstone project on Capitol Hill.

“I believe I earned it for my combined efforts in scientific research and mentorship in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), both at the USAISR and outside of it, as well as my own pursuits in business development and translational science.”

Dr. Lauren Cornell

Research Symposium, the premier military and civilian meeting focusing specifically on the unique medical needs of the Warfighter, Cornell was awarded the top honor in the Young Investigator competition. She has also completed two fellowships: the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) Science

Communication Training Fellowship; and a similar fellowship from the Federal Drug Administration’s Center for Drug Evaluation and Research.

“I am extremely proud of Lauren,” said Dr. David Zamora, a microbiologist and Cornell’s mentor and supervisor. “In one sense, I am not surprised she was selected for this prestigious award since she embodies and excels in all criteria for the award. However, given the high caliber of individuals who were nominated, it appears it was a highly competitive selection process and we definitely take great pride in her selection. She is a highly dedicated scientist and entrepreneur with a work ethic second to none. Dr. Cornell definitely deserves this accolade and I have no doubt there will be more to come in the future.”

Former Patient Donates Artwork to Burn Center



Michelle Delgado, also known as “Shelly VibesArt,” presents her artwork to Col. (Dr.) Mark Stackle and Burn Center Director, Dr. Leopoldo “Lee” Cancio.

Story and photo by Dr. Steven Galvan
USAISR Public Affairs Officer

A burn patient and local artist showed her appreciation for the care she received at the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas, by donating an art piece she created. Michelle Delgado, also known as “Shelly VibesArt,” is a 24-year-old local artist whose 23 by 28-inch loose canvas creation – which features a combination of acrylic-painted flames and a collage of resinated compression gloves – gloves she wore during her recovery to reduce swelling and compress scarring. Delgado framed the art and hung it on a piece of scavenged wood.

“I wanted to give this painting to the Burn Center staff as a token of my gratitude,” said Delgado. “I am very thankful for the help I received from the staff. Without them, I wouldn’t know how to properly care for my

burns, something I will have to do for the rest of my life.”

Delgado burned her hands early one morning in August 2020 while working in her studio. She received second-degree burns from a mishap that took place while she was pouring scented oil into a candle.

“I was unaware the candle oil had alcohol in it,” she said. “The extremely hot liquid splashed on the top of my hands and gave me second-degree burns.”

After a long evaluation at a local hospital, Delgado was referred to the USAISR Burn Center for definitive care.

“Make a long story short, the traumatizing experience of injuring my hands, these beautiful tools I’ve been given that impacts my everyday life and my career as an artist, compelled me so much to create a painting-interactive piece that plays an homage to the experience I went through.”

Michelle Delgado

“Make a long story short, the traumatizing experience of injuring my hands, these beautiful tools I’ve been given that impacts my everyday life and my career as an artist, compelled me so much to create a painting-interactive piece that plays an homage to the experience I went through,” added Delgado.

Col. (Dr.) Mark Stackle, USAISR Commander, and Dr. Leopoldo “Lee” Cancio, Burn Center Director, accepted the gift during a small ceremony at the Burn Center.

“It is a tremendous privilege for us to have you, an artist of your caliber, to think of us and to come back and give back,” said Stackle. “It’s good for the entire Burn Center staff to see how far you’ve come and this opportunity means a lot to our entire organization.”

Cancio also expressed gratitude for the artwork and pointed out that it was, in many ways, symbolic of Delgado’s transformation.

“What it means to me is that as clinicians, we’re involved in transformation. When we see patients, oftentimes they come to us at a low point, a difficult point after a significant injury, potentially a life-altering injury and our job is to get them better,” Cancio said. “But we’re only part of the equation. The other part is the patient, family and friends, and what the patient, family and friends bring to this is transformation. To me, the art symbolizes transformation: it means something about taking an injury and overcoming it. To me this means getting beyond your injury to something new, and in this case something beautiful.”

“I am forever grateful for the care that I received by the staff at the Burn Center,” Delgado said. “My hands are a gift, they are my tools. Thanks to the staff, I can properly care for my hands and thankfully, my burns are healing nicely and I have been back in the studio working every day.”

Burn Center Observes National Burn Awareness Week in February

Story and photo by Dr. Steven Galvan
USAISR Public Affairs Officer

The first full week of February is designated as National Burn Awareness Week by the American Burn Association (ABA). The week is an opportunity for organizations like the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research (USAISR) Burn Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas, to mobilize burn, fire, and safety educators to unite in sharing common burn awareness and prevention messages in their communities.

“The ABA sets the standards for burn center verification. We are one of five verified burn centers in the state of Texas and the only one in San Antonio,” said Brent Sabatino, a registered nurse at the Burn Center’s Intensive Care Unit. “This [National Burn Awareness Week] gives a specific time for organizations, institutions and municipalities to participate on a national level on educating the public on burn injury and prevention each year.”

Notably, Sabatino is the creator and coordinator of the “Burn Strong” program, which is a partnership between the USAISR and the San Antonio Fire Department designed to train emergency medical technicians and paramedics on the basics of advanced burn and trauma life support care.

“The USAISR Burn Center is built on readiness which is supported by three tenants: research; clinical care; and education,” said Dr. Leopoldo “Lee” Cancio, Burn Center Director. “Our primary mission is Research and Development. We drive advances in burn care as we provide multidisciplinary, specialized therapy to the sickest patients in the Department of Defense.”

The USAISR Burn Center was established in 1949 as the first and only DOD burn center and is the only



Brent Sabatino and Rueben Salinas, Burn Strong instructors, hold up a banner signed by Burn Strong attendees during the inaugural year in 2019.

military treatment facility collocated with a research laboratory which optimizes translational research. The Burn Center also serves as a regional burn center for South Texas and treats both military and civilian burn patients; efforts which help maintain clinical currency and further provide a readiness training platform opportunity.

“As a subordinate command of US-AMRDC (U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command), we benefit from the mature science, technology and acquisition policies and procedures of MRDC in addressing vetted capability gaps,” added Cancio. “Our burn-centered research has led to fundamental advances in the multidisciplinary care of burn casualties which have become the standard for burn care throughout the world.”

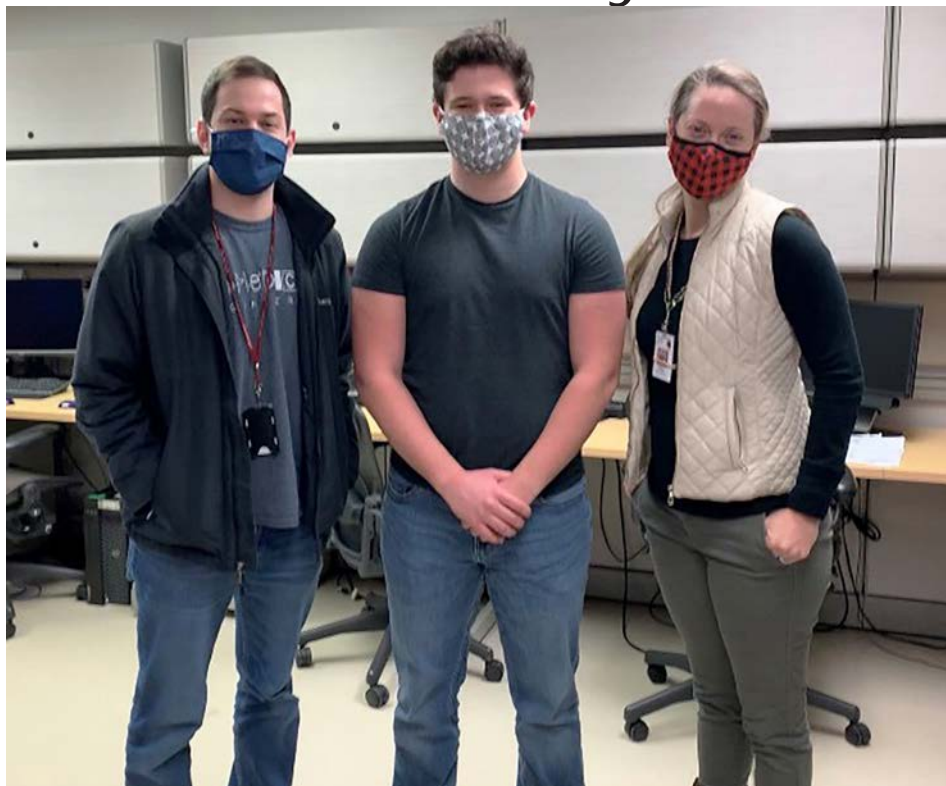
Since World War II, the Burn Center has cared for major burns from all military conflicts, including one thousand patients from Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom to date. ISR Burn Center is also home

of the Army Burn Flight Team comprised of qualified, specially trained personnel. The team has conducted nearly 100 overseas missions since 2003 and stands ready to deploy globally within 12 hours for both military and civilian patients in order for the patient to receive specialty burn care while in-flight. When not on mission, members of the Burn Flight Team care for patients and teach them and their families burn care.

“Community outreach and support is an important mission for the Burn Center in order to prevent burns and train personnel outside of the Burn Center how to care for burn casualties who present in other facilities or in the event of mass casualty,” said Cancio.

Said Sabatino, “Burn awareness should be something that is thought about every day. Please help others, if you see something done wrong, teach someone what you know. If you are unsure of what you are dealing with or handling, don’t take risks. Safety first, you can save a life, your own and others.”

Boston University Student Completes Combat Casualty Care Internship



John “Jack” Dougherty, center, a Boston University student with mentors, Drs. Michael Whitely and Stefanie Shiels.

By Dr. Steven Galvan
USAISR Public Affairs Officer

The U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research (USAISR) at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas, offers an internship program for college students who are currently pursuing a bachelor’s degree in a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) related discipline. The internship program is available through the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education, which administers a variety of STEM internship programs for undergraduate students at national laboratories and other federal research facilities – like the USAISR – throughout the U.S. It’s an internship that Boston University student John “Jack” Dougherty took advantage of in the Fall semester of 2020.

“The school I am attending has an

optional program in which I would have a gap semester my first year of college, then have a semester in London the next summer,” said Dougherty, a Biomedical Engineering major. “After hearing about this internship, regardless of if I got accepted to it or not, I decided that it would be a good option to take the semester to explore something new and get some experience in some type of a lab-oriented research program.”

Dougherty spent about four months working on two research projects with Stefanie M. Shiels, Ph.D., a USAISR Research Scientist and Michael E. Whitely, Ph.D., a postdoctoral fellow.

“Jack was investigating a couple of different therapeutics that we hope may be able to help treat infections that develop after severe orthopedic injuries,” Whitely said. “Specifically, we were testing the ability of these thera-

peutics to limit the activity of pathogens commonly responsible for these infections, as well as investigating if these therapeutics could improve the efficacy of commonly available antibiotics.”

Dougherty described Shiels and Whitely as very intelligent, helpful, patient, and extremely kind, adding that everyone in his working group was understanding, positive, and consistently uplifting – key traits for running a well-structured program.

“I’m very lucky to have had an opportunity to participate in these projects with such a great group of people,” added Dougherty. “This internship will be a big help for me as I move forward in college, as I am planning on participating in as many labs as I can.”

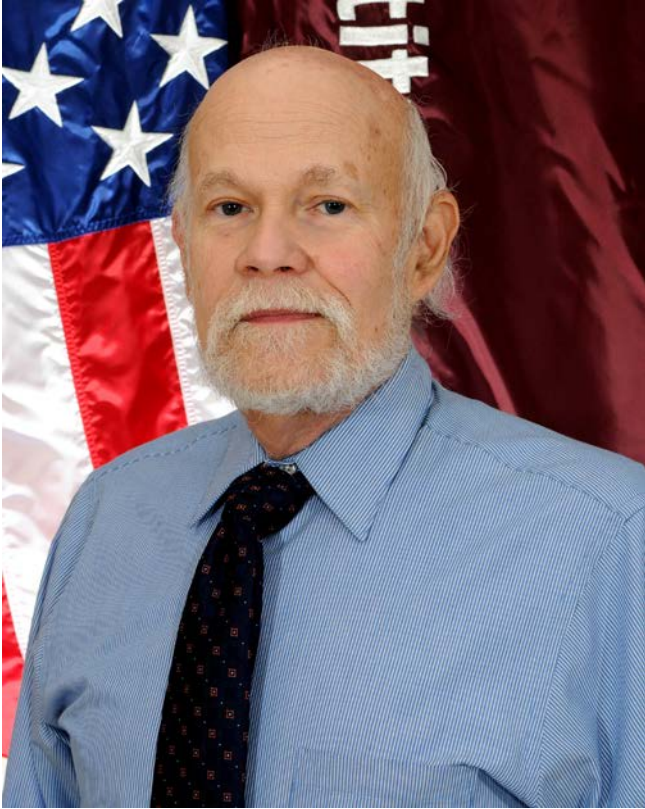
Shiels said Dougherty was a motivated, bright and pleasant person to work with who got along with everyone.

“He was eager to learn which is very inspiring,” she said. “He was not only inquisitive about the main projects he contributed to but also wanted to help in other areas where he could learn and grow.”

Dougherty described his time as the USAISR as an amazing experience and well worth his time. He recommends anyone in his shoes to take advantage this or similar programs.

“You get very unique hands-on experience in a lab, helping with projects aimed at optimizing medical treatment for injured Warfighters, all while working alongside some amazing scientists,” he said. “It’s truly a once in a lifetime opportunity and experience. If you are on the fence about whether or not you should participate in this program, I would say to go for it, it’s 100 percent worth it. I wouldn’t take back this time for anything, and I’m so thankful for this opportunity.”

In Memoriam: Dr. Michael Dubick and Staff Sgt. David Watson



Dr. Michael Dubick, Ph.D.

April 5, 1950
November 13, 2020

Dr. Dubick joined the USAISR in 1993 where he led combat casualty care research programs until 2020.



Staff Sgt. David Watson

January 7, 1983
November 4, 2020

Staff Sgt. Watson reported to the USAISR in 2014 where he served as a medical laboratory specialist (68K).

Celebrating Science

In this section we endeavor to celebrate the dissemination of generalizable knowledge in the form of manuscripts, posters, presentations and abstracts. One of our core missions is translation of knowledge gained through pre-clinical and clinical experiments in an effort to optimize combat casualty care. It is important to acknowledge and recognize the collective work of our investigators during this process. Hence, we plan on “celebrating science” on a regular basis.

Manuscripts submitted for publication: 23

Submitted to:

Annals of Surgery
Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery
Journal of Trauma
NAMRU Journal
Scientific Reports Journal
Society of Photo-optical Instrumentation Engineers Journal
Wound Repair and Regeneration Journal
Journal of Trauma, Military Supplement
American Journal of Burns & Trauma
Journal of Burn Care and Research
Military Medicine Journal
Orthotics and Prosthetics International' Journal
Annals of Surgery Journal
Journal of Burn Care and Research
Antimicrobial Agents & Chemotherapy Journal
Journal of Prehospital Emergency Care
Scholar One Journal
Transfusion Journal

Posters: 5

To be presented at:

2021 Experimental Biology Conference
2021 Wound Healing Society Conference
2021 American Burn Association Conference
2021 Orthopaedic Research Society Conference

Case Reports: 1

Submitted to:

BMJ Case Reports

Book Chapters: 1

Submitted to:

Richardson's Emergency Nursing, 1st Edition
Textbook

Abstracts: 93

To be presented at:

2021 Military Health System Research Symposium
2021 San Antonio Military Health System and Universities Research Forum
2021 George E. Omer, Jr. Research Symposium & Alumni Lectureship
2021 Texas Pain Research Highlights Conference
The Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery
2021 Texas Pain Research Highlights
2021 International Society Cell & Gene Therapy Conference
2021 International Symposium on Biomedical Imaging

Presentations: 19

To be presented at:

2021 St. Mary's University Undergraduate Seminar Series
2021 Orthopaedic Research Society Conference
2021 RegenMed SA Conference
2021 American Burn Association
2021 American College of Veterinary Emergency Critical Care Veterinary Trauma Conference
4th Annual Human Center of Gravity Workshop
2021 Wound Healing Society Annual Meeting
2021 Texas Pain Research Highlights Conference

Lectures: 1

Submitted to:

Nazareth Hospital, Philadelphia, Penn. - Emergency medicine grand rounds

In the Spotlight

Emily Boice, Ph.D.

Job title: Staff Scientist

How long have you worked at the ISR? Almost 2 years

What or who has been an inspiration to you in your work? Walking from the parking garage in the mornings and seeing all the military members and their families going into BAMC, reminds me of the direct impact that our research has. It also reminds me of my dad and uncles who served and how their service changed their lives. The work we do is important..

What is your favorite part of your work? Collaborating with my team. We have assembled a smart, enthusiastic group to work on assessing therapeutics for ocular injuries. This fun group makes it a pleasure to come to work every day.

What is your proudest achievement? Becoming an adjunct instructor for Park University and sharing my love of science to inspire others to learn more.

Short- and long-term goals: Develop more skills on the engineering side and collaboration opportunities within the different CRTs.

Hobbies: Gardening, playing with my dogs, playing on a recreational kickball team, and when we weren't in COVID times – hosting murder mystery parties.

Favorite book: *Murder on the Orient Express* by Agatha Christie.

Favorite movie/TV show: Most of the Christopher Nolan movies but especially *Inception*.

Favorite quote: “The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing” – Walt Disney



Burn Intensive Care Unit Nurses of the Year
The BICU named the 2020 Nurses and Rookies of the Year voted by the Unit Practice Council, a group of peers who vote to select the awardees.



Left: Congratulations to the Burn Center’s Intensive Care Unit Nurses of the Year, registered nurses Stephanie Smith, Mark Castillo and Carlos Perez (not in photo).

Top: Kimberly Hilton (not in photo) and Ben Stull, both registered nurses, were selected as Burn Intensive Care Unit Rookies of the Year