

THE INNOVATOR

Optimizing Combat Casualty Care



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Cancio appointed USAISR Burn Center Director



Dr. Leopoldo "Lee" Cancio, M.D., FACS, was appointed USAISR Burn Center Director Nov. 17.

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

For the first time in six decades, the Director of the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, is a federal government civilian employee. Dr. Leopoldo "Lee" Cancio, M.D., FACS, a retired Army colonel assigned to the USAISR Burn Center in 1995 until he retired in 2014, was appointed as the Director Nov. 17.

"I'm very grateful to be in this

position," said Cancio. "I've made this organization my life's work, my life's vocation. I'm very happy to do this type of work and take care of patients with people whose company I enjoy and who share the same vision that I do."

Cancio joined the Burn Center as a Major and had several titles including surgeon, Chief of Burn Study Branch, Chief of Clinical Division (renamed Burn Center Director), and Deputy for Medical Operations and Development.

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CDR's Corner



Col. (Dr.) Shawn C. Nessen
Commander, USAISR

"Optimizing Combat Casualty Care"

Team ISR,

It is hard to believe our second holiday season together is already upon us! I truly hope each of you has a wonderful season spent with family and friends, and some well-earned time away from work. Please remember to look out for each other as this time of year can be stressful for some, and please remember to be safe especially in your travels far and wide.

I announced earlier this month that Dr. Leopold Cancio will be taking over as the Burn Center Director. Colonel Booker King has done an outstanding job in his tenure as Director, and I am very grateful for the growth the Burn Center experienced under his leadership. Dr. King recently returned from a deployment and he will be changing stations next year so please take the opportunity to thank him for his service to the ISR.

Last January, I made the decision to reduce the number of beds in the Burn Center from 30 to 25 beds. My assessment at that time was the staffing shortages in the Burn Center were critical and fatigue among the staff might lead to patient safety issues. I am proud to say that through much work by many individuals the bed capacity of the Burn Center has been returned to 30 beds just in time for what is traditionally the busiest time of the year for them. We owe our gratitude to BG Johnson and the BAMC team for attaching personnel to the Burn Center which made this possible. I am also pleased to announce that the Deputy Commander for Nursing here at the ISR, Vina Rajski, was promoted last week to Colonel. Please congratulate her and thank her for all she has done

for us. Our relationship with BAMC is strong and respectful and she has been responsible for representing the ISR in BAMC matters as our DCN.

The Research Directorate is also growing. Under Dr. Anthony Pusateri's guidance, we are establishing four new tasks area which include prolonged field care, endovascular hemorrhage control, battlefield pain management, and bio-effects of directed energy. We are projected to receive 5.1 million in funds to establish these task areas this year, and we are working through the challenges of finding space to grow, and the equipment and personnel required. Ultimately, we estimate will need about 150,000 square feet of space and about 200 additional personnel to accomplish our new missions.

I am thankful every day for the fine people and leaders at the ISR. I believe this unit is in very good hands and has the talent it needs to meet the challenges ahead. I would like to thank each one of you for all you do and I wish for you all a very happy and wonderful holiday season.



Col. (Dr.) Shawn Nessen, left, and Sgt. Maj. William "Dave" Poist Jr., right, pose with recipients of the Army Achievement Medal during a command awards ceremony Nov. 3. Left to right: Spc. Jose Bernard, Spc. Lekrystal Harris, Spc. Peggy Johnson and Sgt. Ryan Kriner.

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Col. (Dr.) Shawn Nessen
Commander

Sgt. Maj. William "Dave" Poist Jr.
Sergeant Major

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Deadline for submission is five days before the first of the month. We reserve the right to edit submissions selected for publication.

SGM Says



Sgt. Maj. William "Dave" Poist Jr.
USAISR Sergeant Major

Greetings ISR Family! Well November has proven to be an eventful month. We had a great Veterans Day Holiday and Thanksgiving Holiday this month which always allows our Soldiers and Staff some additional time off to celebrate with their families, recognize our Veterans and show thanks for our blessings. Our Soldiers, once again, showed off their perseverance as eight of our own competed and were awarded the GAFB (German Armed Forces Badge for Military

Proficiency). We also had the opportunity to see our Soldiers get promoted and also the addition of two new ISR "Baby Warriors" to our Team. (Sgt. 1st Class Eric Albrecht and Sgt. Joanna Bernado). Congratulations to both families!!! We are now heading into the Holiday Season and the Christmas festivities. We wish all of you a joyous and very Merry Christmas. Take time this season and be thankful for all that is given to you. Help a friend, family or even someone in need.



Eight ISR Soldiers earned the German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency during a three-day rigorous competition Nov. 3-5 at Fort Sam Houston and Camp Bullis. Left to right: Back row: Spc. Chelsea Hornback (Gold), Spc. Sergio Rubio (Gold), Staff Sgt. Cedric Martin (Silver), Staff Sgt. Aaron Keller (Silver), Capt. Andrew Holt (Silver). Front row: Capt. Marjorie Brooks (Gold), Lt. Col. (Dr.) John Decker (Gold), and Spc. Stacey Bernetskie (Bronze).

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Dustyn Rose

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Company Notes



Company Commander
Capt. Cleveland S. Bryant Jr.

One Team.
One Purpose!
Conserving the
Fighting Strength!

First Sgt. and I would like to say
congratulations to the following

Soldiers for their achievements and accomplishment during the month of November. Congratulations to Sgt. Preston Portee for graduating from the Advanced Leader Course. We also congratulate Sgt. Benjamin Joiner on his reenlistment. We had two promotions in November and we would like to congratulate Sgt. Robert Sadowski and Master Sgt. Marshall Davis Jr. on their promotions to their current rank.

We would also like to congratulate the following personnel who received awards during the November staff awards ceremony: Army Commendation Medal: Master Sgt. Marshall Davis Jr. and Sgt. Melody Sandoval. Army Achievement Medal: Spc. Jose Bernard, Spc. Lekrystal Harris, Spc. Peggy Johnson, Sgt. Ryan Kriner. Certificates of Achievement: Spc. Lekrystal Harris and Sgt. Ashley Taylor. Lastly, we

would like to congratulate the Soldier of the Month: Spc. Sean Gay.

Upcoming events in December: Breakfast with Santa, Holiday party, and Christmas/New Year's Block leave.

As we enter the month of December, we as the Company Command team wish you all a safe, joyful and memorable Christmas holiday season with family and friends. Over the past few months we as a company have worked fervently and successfully managed the expectations and requirements tasked to us. Thank you for your commitment to get the job done. Remain vigilant, be creative, be productive and stay focused on the mission you support here at the ISR. Thank you all for everything you all do every day. Continually, it is truly an honor serving as your Company Commander and First Sergeant! God Bless you all.



Soldier of the Month
Spc. Sean Gay



Around the ISR Company



Top left: Spc. Peggy Johnson is inspected by Staff Sgt. Jason Smith before she enters the Soldier of the Month board Nov. 28.

Center right: Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Peters presents Capt. Kirk Cline a going-away gift Nov. 25.

Bottom right: Sgt. Benjamin Joiner is presented with an Honorable Discharge certificate and a Certificate of Reenlistment by reenlisting officer Lt. Col. (Dr.) Ammon Brown Nov. 1.

Center left: Master Sgt. Marshall Davis Jr. gets his new rank by his wife Sherita and daughter Dominique during his promotion ceremony Nov. 8.



CANCIO Continued from Page 1

Before his assignment to the Burn Center, Cancio was the regimental surgeon during combat operations with the 82nd Airborne Division in Panama in 1989 and during Operation Desert Storm in 1990-1. Cancio also deployed to Iraq 3 times while assigned to the Burn Center and after his second deployment was selected for a fellowship in Surgical Critical Care in 2006 at Brooke Army Medical Center.

“Then I started a new task area called Combat Critical Care Engineering,” added Cancio.

During that time, Cancio also served as Acting Director—twice while on active duty and during the last few months while the Director, Col. (Dr.) Booker King was on deployment. King is scheduled to transfer in the spring or early summer 2018 to Womack Army Medical Center in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to create a surgical program where he’ll serve as the subject matter expert in trauma critical care.

“You couldn’t be in better hands,” said King. “His contributions to the ISR have been tremendous. He has the experience, wisdom and judgment to take this burn center to the next level.”

Cancio chose to come back to the Burn Center as a civilian because he wanted to continue working in a high-volume burn center such as this one.

“This burn center is somewhat unusual in the number of patients we admit annually—it’s on the high side,” Cancio said. “This work is not easy and I want to take care of the people who take care of our patients.”

Cancio is aware that he has some challenges ahead, but said that he’s going to do his best to make the burn center a rewarding place to work.

“First of all, we need to ensure that we have adequate staff, particularly, but not exclusively, in the area of nursing,” he said. “We need to promote the idea that working in the burn center requires a unique resiliency. We need to make this a fulfilling place to work

so that people feel supported in their efforts.”

As a physician and researcher, Cancio wants to ensure that the research and clinical staff are better integrated and communicate more among themselves. He believes that this is the “magic” that will advance burn care.

“When clinicians are able to take their problems to the lab, so that the lab can work out solutions to those problems and the lab can take those solutions back to the bedside to implement them, then that’s the surest way to rapid advancement in medical care,” added Cancio. “Although it may be magical, it doesn’t happen by accident. It requires effort, hard work, time and understanding for people to achieve working together.”

Cancio firmly believes that a cohesive team like the multi-disciplinary team at the Burn Center is the key to providing patients with the best care.

“We have a non-standard way of delivering health care in our burn center. You won’t find a team like this on rounds in many other places,” said Cancio. “First of all, we need to celebrate that, and we need to understand how to make it better.

“We need to understand our communication styles, we need to improve our coaching styles, we need to increase our emotional intelligence, we need to build not just competent individuals, but effective teams. If we’re going to lead the way in patient care, if we’re going to develop new technologies, then teamwork has got to be one of them.”

Cancio’s path to the Burn Center started after he earned a degree in International Relations from Amherst College in Massachusetts. He realized that it was difficult to find a job in that field, even though he grew up in Washington D.C. His father, an attorney, encouraged him to attend law school. That wasn’t the case. He applied for and got accepted to attend graduate school to earn a master’s degree in political science from the Catholic

University of America. While working on his masters, Cancio had a talk with his high school principal and asked for advice on a career.

“I really had no idea what I to do with myself, and I asked the principal for some help,” he said. “And he told me, ‘I don’t understand why you don’t go to medical school.’ And quite frankly, the thought has crossed my mind once or twice in college, but never seriously, but for some reason, when he told me that, I decided that I would take him up on that and I rearranged my life and went back to college and finished my pre-med courses.”

Attending medical school took some adjusting. Cancio had to overcome some prejudices he had. Earlier in life, he had convinced himself that he was not good in science or math—he had to change that. He also realized that medical school was a big commitment and that could interfere with other things that he wanted to do.

“I was also interested, believe it or not, in becoming an actor and to join the theater,” he said, “but others reminded me that just like political science, it is very difficult to get a job in Washington, D.C., or any other place for that matter, as an actor, especially if you look like me. So, that being the case, I went to medical school.”

Cancio attended Georgetown University of School of Medicine with a Health Professions Scholarship Program scholarship. After completing medical school in 1987, Cancio completed his internship at Brooke Army Medical Center before his tour with the 82nd Airborne Division. He then returned back to BAMC to complete his residency in general surgery, before being transferred to the USAISR Burn Center.

“I feel at home in this organization,” Cancio said. “Taking care of service members and civilians is one of the things that I care most about. I’m passionate about that and it’s what drives me to pursue excellence in what I do and in my work with others.”

USAISR Soldiers earn prestigious German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge

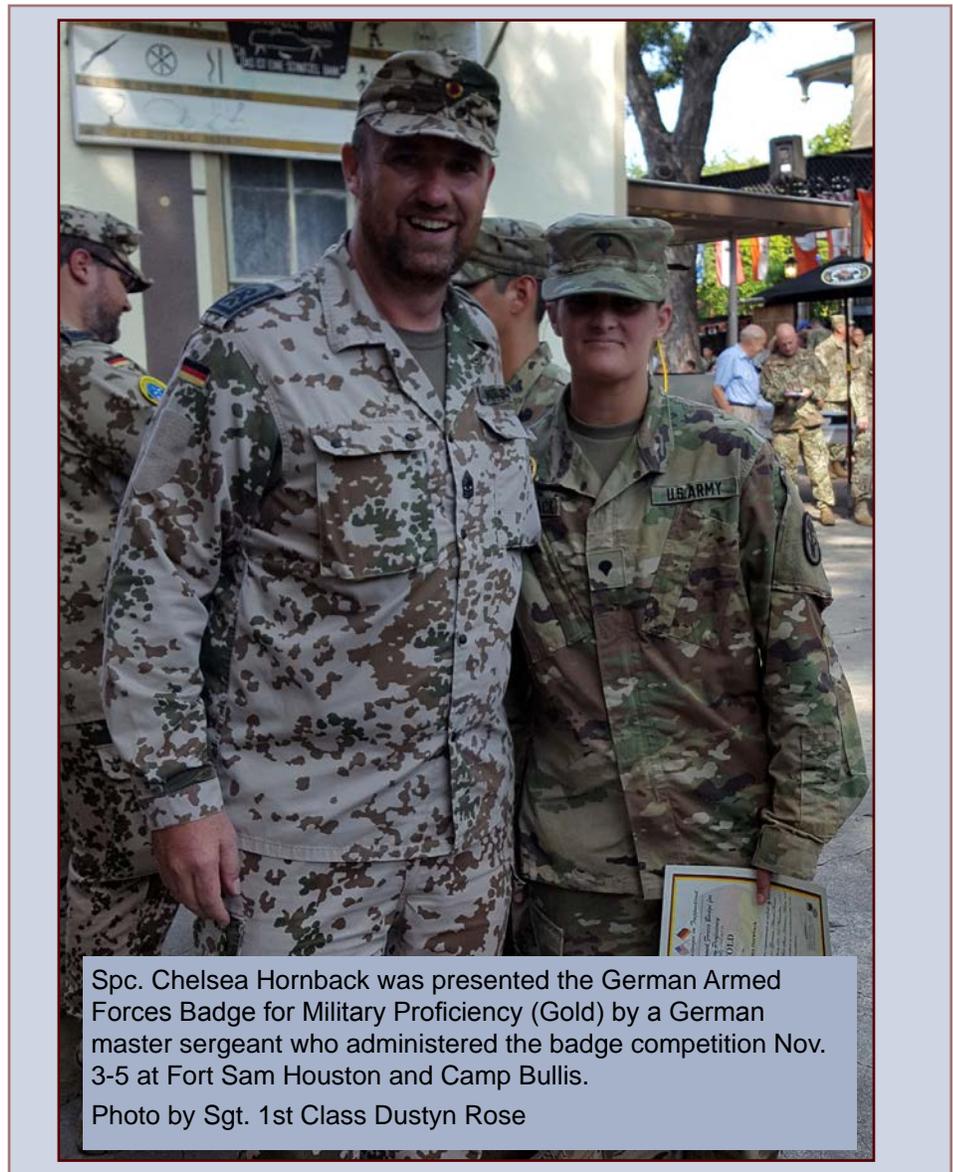
By Dr. Steven Galvan
USAISR Public Affairs Officer

Eight Soldiers from the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research at Fort Sam Houston, Texas earned the esteemed German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency after a three-day rigorous competition Nov. 3-5 in San Antonio.

The competition for the badge consisted of several activities including 100 meter swim in uniform; first aid test; nuclear, biological, and chemical protection proficiency; German physical fitness test (11X10-meter sprint; 100-meter sprint; arm flexed hang); pistol qualification; and a 12-kilometer ruck march with 33 pounds. Depending on individual performance, the Soldiers earned a gold, silver or bronze badge. Four of the USAISR Soldiers earned gold badges, three earned silver and one bronze.

“The reason I chose to compete for this badge was to challenge myself physically and experience how one of our foreign counterparts maintain and ensure their physical fitness,” said Staff Sgt. Cedric Martin, USAISR Burn Center Perioperative Nursing Service noncommissioned officer in charge. “Earning this badge definitely produced a feeling of accomplishment. The events were not terribly difficult but they definitely weren’t easy, especially the swim.”

The USAISR Soldiers were among the 250-plus service members from the local bases and the state of Texas. Only 140 earned the decoration which is awarded to and worn by German soldiers of all ranks of the Bundeswehr, the armed forces of the Federal Republic of German. In the United States military, the German badge is one of the few foreign awards approved for wear on the uniform, and is one of the



most sought-after.

The GAFBMP competition was sponsored by Army North with two soldiers (a Master Sgt. and Sgt. Maj.) from the German Army. There were also 15 American Soldiers from local units in San Antonio who served as proctors. Sgt. First Class Dustyn Rose, the noncommissioned officer in charge of Ocular Trauma at the USAISR was among the proctors at the competition. Rose earned the gold badge in April, “to test myself against the physical fitness performance standards of the German Army and to see if I could get

gold.”

“Competing for the badge was pretty fun. Every competitor out there had a very positive attitude which in return created a positive atmosphere throughout the competition,” added Martin. “All in all the experience was very rewarding and since I earned the silver badge I definitely plan on going back next year to challenge the gold badge. It’s not very often that we get to compete for a foreign award so I challenge every service member to go out and compete for the badge, especially when it’s conveniently offered in the area.”

Safety Notes

By Stephanie L. Truss
Health, Safety and Environmental Specialist



The following holiday safety tips were compiled from various sources and have been some of the common tips that are posted annually. We are entering a festive time of the year that involves traveling, get-togethers, shopping and many other festivities at home, work and within the community. The holiday season is always a special time of year. It is also a time when busy people become careless and vulnerable to theft and other holiday crime. We can never be too careful, too prepared or too aware. Please share this information with family, friends and neighbors. The USAISR Safety Manager wishes you a safe, happy and peaceful holiday season.

Driving

- Avoid driving alone or at night.
- Keep all car doors locked and windows closed while in or out of your car.
- If you must shop at night, park in a well-lighted area.
- Avoid parking next to vans, trucks with camper shells, or cars with tinted windows.
- Never leave your car unoccupied with the motor running or with children inside.
- Do not leave packages on the seat of your car. This creates a temptation for thieves.
- When approaching and leaving your vehicle be aware of your surroundings.
- Do not approach your car alone if there are suspicious people in the area.
- Ask mall or store security for an escort before leaving your shopping location.

In the Spotlight

Spc. Ray Cristo

Job title: Bioscience Specialist

How long have you worked at the ISR? 5 months

What or who has been an inspiration to you in your work? My wife.

What is your favorite part of your work? All the protocols and working in the lab.

What is your proudest achievement? Buying a house at 21.

Short- and long-term goals: Getting promoted to sergeant and completing my degree in forensic science.

Hobbies: Basketball

Favorite book: *The Giver*

Favorite movie/TV show: *Pearl Harbor/The Good Doctor*

Favorite quote: "You can't be afraid of people willing to hurt you, cause if you fear life, then you will never live." – Chester Bennington



Automated Teller Machine (ATM)

- If you must use an ATM, choose one that is located inside a police station, mall, or well-lighted location. Withdraw only the amount of cash you need.
- Protect your PIN by shielding the ATM keypad from anyone who is standing near you.
- Do not throw your ATM receipt away at the ATM location.

Shopping

- Dress casually and comfortably.
- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- Do not carry a purse or wallet, if possible.
- Always carry your License or Identification Card along with necessary cash, checks and/or a credit card you expect to use.
- Even though you are rushed and thinking about a thousand things, stay alert of your surroundings.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.
- Pay for purchases with a check or credit card when possible.

- Keep cash in your front pocket.
- Notify the credit card issuer immediately if your credit card is lost, stolen or misused.
- Keep a record of all of your credit card numbers in a safe place at home.
- Be extra careful if you do carry a wallet or purse. They are the prime targets of criminals in crowded shopping areas, transportation terminals, bus stops, on buses and other rapid transit.
- Avoid overloading yourself with packages. It is important to have clear visibility and freedom of motion to avoid mishaps.

Children

- If possible, leave small children at home with a trusted babysitter.
- Teach your child to go to a store clerk and ask for help in case your child is separated from you.
- Teach children to stay close to you at all times while shopping.

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Health News

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



It's officially the holidays! What? A holiday is a day set aside by custom or by law on which normal activities, especially business or work including school, are suspended or reduced. By Cambridge Dictionary definition : What is holiday: a time when someone does not go to work or school but is free to do what they want, such as travel or relax. Holidays; US the time at the end of December and beginning of January each year that includes Christmas, Hanukkah, and New Year.

It's that wonderful time of the year! Celebration, festival, anniversary. Festival of lights, celebrations with families, celebrations of faith. Food, music, gifts, travel.

And for some its sadness, memories of years past. The stress of preparations and or lack of finances to have all those wonderful things. The holidays present a dizzying array of demands — parties, shopping, baking, cleaning and entertaining, to name just a few. Instead, take steps to prevent the stress and depression that can descend during the holidays. Learn to recognize your holiday triggers, such as financial pressures or personal demands, so you can combat them before they lead to a meltdown. If you think about harming yourself, seek professional help. If you're feeling down, talk to your healthcare provider. Ask for help.

Here are some things you can do that can help you improve your mood. Help others: Work at a soup kitchen, organize a gift drive. Reaching out

to others makes us feel good about ourselves and reminds us that we aren't alone in facing challenges.

Move: Movement is great depression. Exercise, walk the dog, dance or clean to your favorite music.

Have fun: Take an evening drive to look at holiday lights, watch your favorite comedy. Take time to do things you find relaxing or fun. Maybe even read Charles Dickens ! Let go of expectations. Don't feel you need to live up to the unrealistic expectations depicted in the media. With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find peace and joy during the holidays.

And the overeating! Planning gives you a sense of control and can help you keep your focus and lessen stress through the holiday season. Let's plan. Here's how:

- Plate it: Use a smaller plate to control portions and calories. •Include fruits and veggies — day to day and at parties
- Lighten up: Mix and match recipes to put together healthy and festive meals. Try substitutions to reduce sugar and fat. Cut the fat and salt and add more nutrition to dishes.
- Drinks: Mix wine or champagne with soda water, use diet soda in punch, or try low-fat milk instead of whole milk or cream in hot cocoa and eggnog.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, practice moderation. Alcoholic beverages vary in serving sizes, based on the alcohol content of the drink and the amount of carbohydrates (typically in the form of

sugar) it contains. Examples of one serving are 12 ounces (355 milliliters) of beer, 5 ounces (148 milliliters) of wine and 1.5 ounces (44 milliliters) of distilled spirits. A serving of alcohol is 100 to 150 calories, but that doesn't include sugary or high-caloric ingredients that usually come with cocktails or festive drinks. For instance, a cup of eggnog can include 250 calories or more for just a single serving. Sip smarter during the holidays.

- Drink water between alcoholic drinks. Not only will this help keep you hydrated, but also it will help slow down your drinking and keep you comfortable in a social setting. (No one has to know it's not alcohol.)
- Healthy gift ideas for the holidays. Good taste and good health can come together in these holiday gifts: a baking stone, a recipe calendar, traditional board games with a food twist, and herb seeds and pots. A seasonal treat with the benefits of being good: Figs and dates, vinegars. There are so many beyond white and apple cider. Try other fruits or champagne vinegar. A favorite is an aged balsamic.
- Appreciate family, friends, food and memories: Keep the focus on family and friends and remember the reason for the gatherings: a time to celebrate with those you love. •Socialize away from the serving table. •Take a walk, play a game, or share pleasant family stories and traditions.
- Amid the hustle and bustle of the holidays, take time to focus on your wellness. Plan to eat well and find time for stress relief — in the form of exercise, meditation, laughter and a good night's sleep. There are many creative ways to bring holiday fun to your dinner table.

How will you do it?

"It is a fine seasoning for joy to think of those we love." -Moliere

Happy Holidays!



Around the ISR

Top right: Col. (Dr.) Booker King describes the Burn Center mission to members of the San Antonio North Side Chamber of Commerce Nov. 8 prior to a tour of the Burn Center.

Bottom right: Maj. Troy Dilmar explains the equipment used by the Burn Flight Team during missions to Maj. Gen. Yasunori Matsuki, the Director of the Medical Department (Surgeon General), Japan Self Defense Forces Nov. 27.

Center left: Dr. Lee Cancio informs Mr. Michael Powers (SES), the Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army for Financial Management and Comptroller, of the function and design of the Burn Intensive Care Unit rooms during a tour Nov. 14.



Around the ISR cont.

Top right: Lt. Col. Carla Maria Clausi, Brazilian Army, presents Dr. Lee Cancio with a gift to show appreciation for a tour of the Burn Center to a Brazilian delegation Nov. 28.

Bottom left: Staff Sgt. Wendy Abel welcomes a group of students from LaVernia High School for a tour Nov. 9.



SAFETY Continued from Page 8

- Never allow children to make unaccompanied trips to the restroom.
- Children should never be allowed to go to the car alone and they should never be left alone in the car.
- Teach children their full name, address and telephone number to give to police officers or mall security. Teach children to immediately inform you if a stranger is bothering them.

At Home

- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave the house, even for a few minutes.
- When leaving home for an extended time, have a neighbor or family member watch your house and pick up your newspapers and mail.
- Indoor and outdoor lights should be on an automatic timer.
- Leave a radio or television on so the house looks and sounds occupied.

- Large displays of holiday gifts should not be visible through the windows and doors of your home.
- When setting up a Christmas tree or other holiday display, make sure doors and passageways are clear inside your home.
- Be sure your Christmas tree is mounted on a sturdy base so children, elderly persons or family pets cannot pull it over on themselves.
- If you use lights on your Christmas tree ensure the wiring is not damaged or frayed. Frayed or damaged wiring can cause a fire.
- Place your Christmas tree in water or wet sand to keep it green.
- Never place wrapping paper in your fireplace.

Strangers at Your Door

- Be aware that criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts.
- It is not uncommon for criminals to take advantage of the generosity of people during the holiday season by soliciting donations door-to-door for charitable causes

- although no charity is involved.
- Ask for their identification, and find out how the donated funds will be used.
- If you are not satisfied, do not donate.
- Donate to a recognized charitable organization.

Hosting a Party

- Have non-alcoholic beverages available for party guests.
- Find alternative transportation for intoxicated guests.
- Arrange for an official designated driver for your party who will not drink at all.

Attending a Party

- Have something to eat before consuming alcoholic beverages.
- Eat high protein foods that will stay in your stomach longer and slow the absorption of alcohol into your system.
- Remember only time will eliminate the alcohol from your body.
- Know your safe limit.
- Never drink and drive.

Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps visits Burn Center to thank staff



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

Sgt. Maj. Ronald L. Green, the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, visited the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center Nov. 17 to thank the staff for their hard work and dedication. As the only Department of Defense burn center, the staff has cared for almost 2,200 Service members with combat and non-combat burns and injuries since 2003.

“I had to come here to personally thank you for what you do every day,” said Green. “You take care of some of the most critically ill and injured patients and you do it with determination and resiliency.”

Green walked through the Burn Center stopping along the way to shake hands with staff members, thank them and present them with one of his military coins.

“I appreciated that the Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps took the time to recognize the Burn Center staff that provide world-class care day in and day out, who consistently go above and beyond to care for injured service members,” said Maj. (Dr.) Julie Rizzo, a burn center critical care surgeon.

“It was an honor to receive his thanks and appreciation,” said Staff Sgt. Jason Smith, noncommissioned officer in charge of the Progressive Care Unit. “This job is physically and emotionally draining and his visit just reinforced to me and our staff why we come to work every day.”



Sgt. Maj. Ronald L. Green, the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, visited the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center Nov. 17 to thank the staff for their hard work and dedication.

Top: Sgt. Maj. Ronald L. Green takes a group photo with staff members from the Progressive Care Unit.

Bottom: Sgt. Maj. Ronald L. Green and Maj. (Dr.) Julie Rizzo during the Sergeant Major's visit to the USAISR Burn Center Nov. 17.

Rediscovering STEM through the eyes of my GEMS students

By Jordan Edmond

Every summer, students in fifth through 11th grade come from varying regions, with varying levels of experience and unique interests to spend an entire week on a military base. For this week, they are all scientists and engineers, experiencing firsthand what a military-grade laboratory has to offer. Gains in the Education of Mathematics and Science (GEMS) is an Army-sponsored, summer STEM enrichment program for middle and high school students that sparks and develops interest in STEM among young people who otherwise might not give serious thought to these careers. With access to the latest technology and professional STEM practices, the GEMS student experience is completely different from what most students see in an average classroom setting.

I know this from experience, because I was once one of those excited students. When I was in fifth grade, I participated in GEMS at the U.S. Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory in Fort Rucker, Ala. Now, all these years later, I'm experiencing that excitement again through the eyes of my students. As a GEMS Near Peer Mentor (NPM) at the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, I can relive the wonder of a student witnessing amazing science in practice.

Back when I was a fifth-grade student at Fort Rucker's military air base, the curriculum was geared toward engineering and robotics. I remember how I would lose track of time while coding programs for our robots, running to watch the code in action as the robots moved and climbed. Our mentors, who were all college students or recent graduates, would give talks during lunch, giving us all a glimpse into college life. Hearing from peers

who were a little wiser but still our contemporaries made those college prep talks exciting. They helped us consider our options, showing us what we could look forward to in classes, introducing us to the different majors we could consider, from dentistry to mechanical engineering to biology.

Years later, here I am at the Alabama School of Math and Science, preparing to go into the field of computer programming, taking classes like Advanced Placement Computer Science, Data Analysis and Python. I was excited when I arrived at Fort Sam Houston this summer and saw the types of robots the students would get to work with. As an NPM, I'm able to teach those students and further my learning at the same time. I remember watching one of my first groups of middle schoolers as they nervously gathered for their first tour of the facility, their classrooms suddenly transformed from rows of desks and chairs to massive machines. There's a constant motion of scientists flocking back and forth. It's not what they're used to seeing in their typical classroom setting, but that is the beauty of a GEMS experience.

I see myself in the students that I mentor. I can see the gleam in their eyes as they learn about what the scientists are creating. Different GEMS campuses offer unique curriculum bases, and at this building students were focused primarily on the human body, its functions and how we work to repair it. Whether we're studying animal cells in hopes of finding a cure for diseases or sitting in the den-

tist's chair working on molars, students are naturally curious about how things are applied in "real life." GEMS harnesses this curiosity and turns it into a passion and focus for students who are eager to learn, while connecting them to professionals.

Beyond the reward of inspiring students, NPMs have so much to gain. School teachers work with one class each year, but while I'm here, I get to bond with four groups in a month's time, which allows for plenty of experience with a variety of kids at an accelerated pace. Like a teaching assistant in college, NPMs can work with students and develop curricula for courses.

The best way to learn is through experience, and that is what the GEMS program creates. Whether it's studying cures to diseases or working on molars, there is constant motion and growth. In small groups, students get to perform and seek answers to everyday tasks. In larger groups, teachers and NPMs alike work with professionals in their fields, connecting with individuals who are accomplishing incredible things in careers they are passionate about. At the end of the week, on graduation day, I can guarantee the students are already planning to apply again for next year. I know I was.



Jordan Edmond, right, GEMS Near Peer Mentor

Back When...



Can you guess who this ISR staff member is? This photo was taken in 2007 when he was a Sgt. deployed to Iskandariyah, Iraq.

Last Month's Answer:



Staff Sgt. Heather Adkins
Operations NCO

Submit your photo to PAO for publication in upcoming issues.

documents then right-clicking on the documents shows a pop-up menu that has a menu item for “Combine files in Acrobat...” (Not to be confused with the “Convert to Adobe PDF” option.) Selecting “Combine files in Acrobat...” opens a Combine Files pop-up window. Use the “Options” button in the upper right to select File Type: Portfolio. Then Select the “Ok” button to close the “Options” window. Select the “Combine Files” button in the lower right of the window to create a PDF Portfolio file.

The question has been asked: Can someone be misled into thinking a document is unchanged when it has been? We know of several methods. The important feature to detect falsified documents to look for the blue bar at the top of the document. The blue bar should remain visible when scrolling down the document. A bar that scrolls off the screen when scrolling down the document indicates the document is not digitally signed.

A digitally signed document will have the blue bar and the button right side of the blue bar reads “Signature Panel.”

The button at the right side of the blue bar may read “Enable Editing.” This is a PDF/A document that may or may not be digitally signed. If after clicking the “Enable Editing” button the blue bar disappears the document is not digitally signed. If the blue bar remains and the “Enable Editing” button is replaced with a “Signature Panel” button then the document is a PDF/A that was digitally signed. For anything related to PDFs, GEARS or managing your records please contact me for assistance.

For the Record

By Glen Gueller
Records/
Knowledge
Manager



The practice of scanning documents to PDF is being replaced with making the document PDF which avoids the paper. Carrying the paper can then be replaced by using GEARS to route the document. When using digital processes there are lessons to be learned about digital signatures and PDF Portfolios.

Our Common Access Cards or CAC allows each of us to digitally sign documents using the CAC certificates. A certificate-based signature, like a conventional handwritten signature, identifies the person signing a docu-

ment. Unlike a handwritten signature, a CAC signed document is difficult to forge because it contains encrypted information that is unique to the signer. It can be easily verified and informs recipients whether the document was modified after the signer initially signed the document.

What about PDF Portfolios? Digitally signed documents cannot be edited after a final signature is applied. So combining digitally signed PDFs will remove digital signatures. The correct way to bring digitally signed documents together is by using a PDF Portfolio. Selecting several PDF



Before GEARS



With GEARS