

MEDICAL NEWS

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Army healthcare professionals share their call to serve

By Maria Christina Yager
Blanchfield Army Community Hospital

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. – This summer the U.S. Army seeks to hire 10,000 new Soldiers in 150 full-time and part time career options, including Army Medicine. With a variety of medical specialties available in the Army, healthcare professionals from Blanchfield Army Community Hospital and Fort Campbell shared their experiences serving the nation and spoke about careers in the Army.

“I love serving in the Army because I’m serving a purpose. I work in the hospital so I get to help Soldiers, their families, veterans, so it fulfills that sense of purpose for me being able to help them along their journey,” said Lewisberg, Tennessee, native Sgt. Stephanie Fontenot, a radiology specialist assigned to the hospital’s Department of Radiology who learned her specialty in the Army. Fontenot is responsible for operating X-ray and related equipment used in diagnosing and treating injuries and diseases and performs different types of radiography on patients. In addition to her medical training, Fontenot completed her associate degree while serving, using the Army’s tuition assistance program.

Practical nursing specialist and Fort Fairfield, Maine native Sgt. Brian Andrews, assigned to the Fort Campbell-based 586th Field Hospital, went to New York City in March where his unit set up a temporary hospital to help care for COVID-19 patients. Andrews helped establish the Intensive Care Unit and Intermediate Care Ward at the Javits Convention Center, where the field hospital helped support the medical mission. He provided medical care for New Yorkers sick with COVID-19. There, Andrews got to know his patients and many were surprised to learn about medical careers in the Army.

“They thought, the Army is always out in the field, but then they got to realize our medical capabilities and they were very grateful,” said Andrews. “They wanted to know what I was doing in the Army and how I became what I am doing today, so it was good interaction throughout.” Andrew’s duties include performing emergency nursing care, changing and dressing wounds, and assisting in patient care – all skills he learned during 52 weeks of paid advanced individual training in the Army.

Unlike the private sector where civilians pay out of pocket or take on debt through student loans to complete accredited medical training and licensing, the Army provides no cost job training with pay and benefits to Soldiers who enlist for

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(U.S. Army photo by Rebecca Westfall, MEDCOM/OTSG)

The U.S. Army Surgeon General and Commanding General, U.S. Army Medical Command, Lt. Gen. R. Scott Dingle, bumps elbows observing social distancing approved greetings with former U.S. Army Medical Command, Command Sgt. Maj. Michael L. Gragg, on Fort Sam Houston, Texas, on June 24, 2020.

Surgeon General assumes responsibility of Army Medical Command

By Wesley Elliott
U.S. Army Medical Command

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO, Texas – Lt. Gen. R. Scott Dingle, U.S. Army Surgeon General, assumed responsibility as the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Medical Command, June 24, 2020, on Fort Sam Houston, Texas, in a socially-distanced virtual ceremony hosted by Gen. James C. McConville, Chief of Staff of the Army.

Dingle was previously confirmed as the U.S. Army Surgeon General but due to the transition of medical facilities in the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act he was not confirmed as the Commanding General of U.S. Army Medical Command as its mission was

slated to be divested.

“My commitment is that Army Medicine from the foxhole to the fixed facility will be ready, reformed, reorganized, responsive and relevant,” said Dingle. “The most powerful Army in the world, will have in parallel, the medical force to support its mission.”

According to Dingle, there is a continuing need for Army Medicine to support Army readiness so MEDCOM is here to stay.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Army Medicine has supported to Operation Warp Speed in the whole-of-government approach to vaccine and research development and distribution; expanded the COVID-19 testing

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• Surgeon General

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The U.S. Army Surgeon General and Commanding General, U.S. Army Medical Command, Lt. Gen. R. Scott Dingle, addresses the audience during his assumption of command ceremony at the AMEDD museum on Fort Sam Houston.



Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, Gen. James C. McConville, addresses the audience during the Assumption of Command ceremony.

capacity and capability; executed installation pandemic emergency preparation and expansion plans; deployed field hospitals and hospital centers in support of our American citizens; balanced the rapid deployment of over 400 medical assigned personnel; ensured health care professionals readiness to care for the beneficiary population; brought over 160 retiree recalls into the medical force; and provided public health preventive measures, information, and education.

“We are developing medical countermeasures; strengthening medical logistics and sustainment; creating Urban Augmentation Medical Task Forces in support of our nation; and providing medical personnel to support Health and Human Services, FEMA, Warp Speed, and the Department of Defense. All the while not losing sight, that there are forces deployed fighting and calling out “medic” on the battlefield. They are counting on

us to conserve the fighting strength,” said Dingle.

McConville said, “It’s not uncommon to associate Soldiers with the word Heroes, but normally we picture Soldiers jumping from the sky or storming the beaches of Normandy. But for the better part of 2020, we have been in a war against COVID-19 and in this war, our heroes are our doctors, nurses, scientists, and our medical professionals. Our heroes are the soldiers in this command.”

McConville stated that Dingle’s leadership throughout the COVID-19 crisis, had been absolutely phenomenal, and he didn’t believe anyone could do it better.

“You are the right person at the right time in the right place,” said McConville.

Before closing, Dingle reassured McConville, “Chief, my iPhone is fully charged, my number is hot, ‘MEDCOM 6’ is back on the net, and Army Medicine is Army strong!”



(U.S. Army photos by Rebecca Westfall, MEDCOM/OTSG)

Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, Gen. James C. McConville, hosts the Assumption of Command ceremony for the U.S. Army Surgeon General and Commanding General, U.S. Army Medical Command, Lt. Gen. R. Scott Dingle, who assumes duties over the U.S. Army Medical Command at the AMEDD museum on Fort Sam Houston, Texas, on June 24, 2020.



Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, Gen. James C. McConville, passes the flag to the U.S. Army Surgeon General and Commanding General, U.S. Army Medical Command, Lt. Gen. R. Scott Dingle, in an assumption of command ceremony on Fort Sam Houston.

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Brooke Army Medical Center welcomes new commanding general

By Daniel J. Calderón

Brooke Army Medical Center Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – In the midst of a brief downpour, Army Brig. Gen. Wendy Harter, the first female commander in Brooke Army Medical Center's history, turned over command to Army Brig. Gen. Shan Bagby, the first African American commander in BAMC's history during a June 26 change of command ceremony.

Brig. Gen. George Appenzeller, Regional Health Command-Central commanding general and former BAMC commanding general, officiated the ceremony.

"I'm glad to be here at the flagship of military medicine in Military City USA," Appenzeller said. "We've had to make changes to our ceremonies this year in response to the global pandemic. However, honoring these two leaders – a commander who has served with distinction, and the officer who is assuming the mantle of command – is still a necessary part of our Army culture, especially during these extraordinary times."

Appenzeller praised Harter for her accomplishments during her tenure, noting the enrolled patient population of nearly 80,000 at BAMC. He noted that, during a normal day at BAMC, the staff sees nearly a dozen trauma cases, more than 60 admissions, 70 surgeries, and more than 4,200 outpatient visits.

"Now in this era of the coronavirus pandemic, BAMC's response to this crisis has been nothing short of amazing," he continued. "The BAMC team stood up a curbside pharmacy service, filling nearly 95,000 prescriptions from 49,868 vehicles. They have also tested many thousands of patients and sent 105 personnel to New York City, Seattle, and Guam to support COVID-19 missions in overwhelmed cities."

Appenzeller also highlighted many of Harter's accomplishments in maintaining and enhancing the overall relationship with Joint Base San Antonio and the City of San Antonio's leadership and communities. He said she would be missed at BAMC, but will be welcomed as the new commanding general at Regional Health Command-Central.

"This has been a fast-paced and challenging year," Harter said when discussing her tenure as BAMC's commanding general. "Team BAMC and the San Antonio Military Health System over the last few months have agilely adapted to continue the mission in this enduring COVID-19 environment while simultaneously sustaining our Level I trauma mission and other critical services for our 250,000 beneficiaries and

the residents of Military City USA."

Harter thanked the nearly 9,000 staff members at BAMC, the command team, and military partners and commands across JBSA. She also expressed gratitude for community support from a number of organizations and individuals, to include San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg and retired Maj. Gen. Juan Ayala, San Antonio's Office of Veterans and Military Affairs director.

"It is the passion, dedication, expertise, and talent that each and every one of you bring to Team BAMC that makes us great," she said. "In my 31 years of military service, as part of a multitude of teams stationed across the globe, I have never served with a team like this one. You continuously lead the way. Keep doing so!"

Before welcoming Bagby and his family, Harter thanked her husband and her family for their unwavering support throughout her command tenure and throughout her career.

Bagby, an oral and maxillofacial surgeon, most recently served as deputy commanding general (support), U.S. Army Medical Command. He will continue to serve as Chief of the Army Dental Corps.

In his remarks, Bagby shared his enthusiasm and appreciation for the warm welcome and for the BAMC staff's hard work and contributions.

"Members of Team BAMC, thank you for all you do," Bagby said. "You are the reason this storied organization is the pinnacle of military healthcare. I especially would like to thank everyone who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to put this ceremony together. Everyone is extremely busy, and I truly appreciate your hard work and dedication in support of this ceremony, preserving its dignity and splendor, while ensuring our collective safety during the COVID crisis. Command Sergeant Major Oates – you and the team have done an outstanding job. I look forward to being your battle buddy."

Bagby also thanked his wife Melanie and daughter Sydney for their incredible support. "We are truly excited to join Team BAMC, an organization with a reputation for providing quality care and leading innovation, research and education."

Bagby concluded by expressing his appreciation for "Military City USA" and its ongoing support of BAMC. "I look forward to building on the relationships BG Harter has built," he said.

With the passing of the colors from Harter to Bagby, BAMC's leadership passed from one to the other. Harter left the field for her next command tour, and Bagby went to work for his first full day as BAMC's commanding general.



(U.S. Army photo by Robert A. Whetstone)

Brig. Gen. George "Ned" Appenzeller, Regional Health Command-Central Commanding General, presents outgoing Brooke Army Medical Center Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Wendy L. Harter the Legion of Merit prior to her change of command ceremony, June 26, 2020.

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• **Share** (Continued from front page)

healthcare specialties. The U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence, located in San Antonio, Texas, is the largest medical education and training campus in the world and includes 315 programs of instruction related to medical, dental, and veterinary sciences.

"Medical laboratory specialists, dental specialists, preventive medicine specialists, operating room specialists, pharmacy specialists and combat medic specialists are among the most needed enlisted medical career fields in the Army currently," said Puerto Rico native Staff Sgt. Jorge Ortiz, an Army Recruiter based out of San Antonio, Texas, who connects with more than 7,500 followers daily through his Instagram, [ssg_ortiz_jorge](https://www.instagram.com/ssg_ortiz_jorge). "Not all jobs are combat," said Ortiz.

BACH pharmacy specialist Sgt. DeMarcus Heath from Monroe, North Carolina, agrees. While Heath enjoys participating in Soldiering skills like marksmanship and field training, he gets a lot of satisfaction from his job supporting Soldiers, retirees and family members at BACH's pharmacy.

"People are really surprised that I am a pharmacy specialist in the

military. They assume all Soldiers are kicking in doors and deploying every other year. What I like the most is the opportunity to help people who are in need. We serve Soldiers and civilians with all types of illnesses. To provide them with medications that will help make their lives more manageable is very satisfying to me," said Heath, adding that his eight years of service has also enabled him to achieve a number of personal goals.

"I am currently a home owner and working on my bachelor's degree with the help of the Army's tuition assistance program. The Army has also provided me an opportunity to pursue my goal of doing something different. With my career field, I can be working in a hospital serving Soldiers, retirees and family members or in an Airborne unit responsible for the pharmaceuticals in a deployed unit," added Heath.

Army National Hiring Days is an Army-wide virtual campaign showcasing the U.S. Army's training, benefits and education to inspire individuals to consider military service. The goal is to hire 10,000 new Soldiers between June 30 and July 2, but, the Army accepts new applicants year round.

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