

# MEDICAL NEWS

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## Army Reserve dentist from St. Louis embraces life of service

By Col. Meritt Phillips  
and Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Scott  
Army Reserve Medical Command

A conversation with Lt. Col. Perdita Fisher leaves you wondering if her day has more hours than yours. The 66-year young Army Reserve dentist has already had an impressive career both in and out of uniform, and she shows no signs of slowing down.

Hailing from St. Louis, Fisher traditionally serves with the Army Reserve Medical Command's 7406th Troop Medical Clinic based in Columbia, Missouri. She is currently mobilized to Ft. Hood, Texas, supporting a Soldier Readiness Processing Center that medically screens Soldiers departing for and returning from mobilizations.

Fisher first joined the Army Reserve in 1983 and served for nine years.

She met her husband, Ollie, in dental school and they owned a private practice together. When Ollie, a Naval Reserve Officer, was activated during Desert Storm, Fisher decided to leave the service to avoid a situation where they may both be deployed and have to leave their young children.

In 2008, the military began actively recruiting Fisher to return to service and with her children now grown, in 2009 she joined the Army Reserve.

Soldiers traditionally only serve in the military until the age of 60, but exceptions are authorized for Soldiers with high demand skills.

"After 18 years I came back in. My son was in college, self-sufficient, and I thought it would be a good time," explained Fisher. "I was given an age and grade waiver and here I am."

This mobilization marks her sixth since joining the 7406th Troop Medical Clinic as a general dentist. Her past tours on active duty have taken her to Camp Atterbury, Indiana, Joint Base San Antonio, Ft. Hood, and Ft. Bliss, all in Texas, and a tour in Honduras.

"To me, the Reserve just has so many diverse cultures and backgrounds, people with so many different life experiences and I love learning and then sharing that and helping people if I can," said Fisher. "The amount of knowledge that I gain for being in the Reserve, meeting other people, and going to different military posts is great."

The Fishers sold their private practice after 34 years when Ollie retired from the Naval Reserve; but retirement does not find them relaxing on the

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## Mind and body; 475 EABS medics have you covered

By Staff Sgt. Matthew Wisher  
435th Air Expeditionary  
Wing Public Affairs

From an Airman Basic to a general officer, life in the military can be stressful. Fortunately, the 475th Expeditionary Air Base Squadron medical flight provides services for Airmen in need.

Combining specialties from various medical career fields, Camp Simba at Manda Bay, Kenya, echoes the objective of Airmen living up to the Air Force standard and performing at their maximum potential.

"The mission of the Mental Health team is to establish ongoing services for personnel through outreach, prevention services, as well as individual and group care," said Maj. Michell Greenidge, 475th EABS medical flight commander. "We want to allow each individual to set realistic goals and boundaries that will assist in the success of their deployment journey."

Although the mind is often our sharpest weapon, keeping your body in optimal shape is also important for Airmen to be able to complete their mission, which is where the public health Airmen come in.

Tasked with the main objective of preventing the spread of infectious diseases, public health Airmen also focus on food safety and sanitation.

"We help to protect camp personnel from a vast array of illness and disease. This is best practiced by not only identifying, but also minimizing, potential health risks within



(Courtesy photo by Tech. Sgt. Yesenia Benjamin)

**U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Yesenia Benjamin, 475th Expeditionary Air Base Squadron medical flight noncommissioned officer in charge, prepares to inspect a shipment of food delivered at Camp Simba, Manda Bay, Kenya, Feb. 19, 2020. Public health not only helps prevent infectious diseases from spreading, but also focuses on food safety and sanitation for the base population.**

our camp," said Tech. Sgt. Yesenia Benjamin, 475th EABS public health noncommissioned officer in charge.

Even while working under pandemic conditions, the medical flight remains focused on their mission of helping Airmen.

"We started by doing daily outreach, reaching each unit within days," Greenidge said. "This was very helpful in building rapport and helping members understand that we are here to help and to keep

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## • **Dentist** (Continued from front page)

front porch.

Fisher has owned a health food store, a wellness center and a vegan restaurant. She has also authored books to include *A woman's guide to a healthier new you* and *From Pregnancy to Childhood: A Parent's Guide to Good Dental Habits*.

The Fishers now serve with the Gateway to Oral Health Foundation, a non-profit providing mobile dental care services and dental health education to school-aged children, group homes, detention centers, and day-cares.

Humble and unassuming, Fisher's spirit and drive are infectious.

"I enjoy life daily and strive to add value to the lives of others as I teach and model health," she shared. "I have maintained an active lifestyle most of my adult life, including participating in a ballroom dance competition at age 62. Movement is a key component of my life and I love to have fun with it."

The current mission at Ft. Hood

traditionally staffs dentists on 90 day rotations. Since COVID-19 has reduced the number of children in school in St. Louis, Fisher volunteered to fill the requirement for a year.

"I know that I am going to learn a lot and I am going to grow," remarked Fisher regarding her mobilization. "I am going to be a better me as a result of having been here and the experiences that are going to come up."

Fisher also volunteered to take on the additional role of Officer in Charge of infection control and to serve as a sponsor for dentists arriving on 90-day rotations.

"It's sort of like the welcoming committee," shared Fisher, who enjoys the opportunity to meet new people.

Fisher intends to continue to serve until the summer of 2022, earning 21 years in the Army Reserve. She's already made plans for the future.

"I told my daughter after I came back, I was going to be a typical grandmother to all my children, not the busy grandmother that's never around," shared Fisher with a laugh. "I have another book in my mind that I am going to finish writing, and in 2022 I want to travel and stay in some places longer than four days or a week. I want to spend two months and not feel like I am rushing."

For now, Lt. Col. Fisher continues to serve her nation, one patient at a time.



(Courtesy photos)

*Lt. Col. Perdita Fisher, an Army Reserve dentist from St. Louis, Missouri, performs a dental exam on a soldier at the Soldier Readiness Processing Center at Ft. Hood, Texas, February 2021. Fisher, a member of the Army Reserve Medical Command's 7406th Troop Medical Clinic, is currently mobilized to Ft. Hood to provide dental care to Soldiers deploying or returning from deployment.*



*Lt. Col. Fisher performs a dental exam on a soldier at the Soldier Readiness Processing Center at Ft. Hood, Texas in February 2021.*

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# Fact sheet: U.S. Army North COVID-19 hospital support since November 2020

By Col. Martin O'Donnell  
Defense Department Support  
to FEMA COVID-19

U.S. Army North, U.S. Northern Command's Joint Force Land Component Command, has been overseeing the Department of Defense's COVID-19 response operations in support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Department of Health and Human Services since March 2020. This fact sheet reflects a joint operation since November 2020. Approximately 590 military medical personnel from three of the six service branches are currently working, or recently worked, alongside civilian healthcare providers in civilian hospitals, helping treat COVID-19 patients in six states and the Navajo Nation as part of this whole-of-government response to the pandemic.

## Arizona

### Current Support

In Arizona, approximately 30 military medical personnel from the U.S. Air Force will begin supporting the state, March 3, 2021, at one hospital in Kingman:

### 1. Kingman Regional Medical Center in Kingman

#### Recent Support

In Arizona, approximately 40 military medical personnel from the U.S. Army Reserve recently supported the state at one hospital in Yuma from Jan. 9 to Feb. 25, 2021:

### 1. Yuma Regional Medical Center in Yuma

#### Navajo Nation (in Arizona and New Mexico)

#### Current Support

In New Mexico and Arizona, approximately 40 military medical personnel from the U.S. Army Reserve and U.S. Navy are currently supporting DHHS, the Indian Health Service and the Navajo Nation at three hospitals in three cities:

1. Chinle Comprehensive Health Care Facility in Chinle, Arizona, since Dec. 20, 2020

2. Northern Navajo Medical Center in Shiprock, New Mexico, since Dec. 20, 2020

3. Gallup Indian Medical Center in Gallup, New Mexico, since Jan. 8, 2021

#### Recent Support

In Arizona, approximately 10 military medical personnel from the U.S. Army Reserve and U.S. Navy recently supported DHHS, the Indian Health Service and the Navajo Nation at one hospital in one city from Jan. 9 to Feb. 24, 2021:

1. Tuba City Medical Center in Tuba City

## Texas

### Recent Support

In Texas, approximately 140 military medical personnel from the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force recently supported the state at six hospitals in four cities:

1. Hendrick Medical Center in Abilene from Jan. 29 to Feb. 27, 2021

2. CHI St. Luke's Health - Memorial Hospital in Lufkin from Jan. 29 to Feb. 27, 2021

3. Fort Duncan Regional Medical Center in Eagle Pass from Jan. 29 to Feb. 27, 2021

4. Hospitals of Providence Transmountain Campus in El Paso from Nov. 9 to Dec. 2, 2020

5. University Medical Center of El Paso in El Paso from Nov. 9 to Dec. 16, 2020

6. Las Palmas Del Sol Medical Center in El Paso from Nov. 9 to Dec. 16, 2020

## California

### Recent Support

In California, approximately 225 military medical personnel from the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force recently supported the state at eight hospitals in seven cities:

1. Arrowhead Regional Medical Center in Colton, from Dec. 30, 2020 to Jan. 29, 2021

2. Dameron Hospital in Stockton, from Dec. 30, 2020 to Jan. 29, 2021

3. Harbor-UCLA Medical Center in Torrance, from Jan. 9 to Feb. 10, 2021

4. Adventist Health Lodi Memorial Hospital in Lodi, from Dec. 30, 2020 to Feb. 12, 2021

5. Adventist Health White Memorial in Los Angeles, from Jan. 11 to Feb. 12, 2021

6. Community Regional Medical Center in Fresno, from Dec. 30, 2020 to Feb. 12, 2021

7. LAC+USC Medical Center in Los Angeles, from Jan. 11 to Feb. 12, 2021

8. Riverside University Health System Medical Center in Moreno Valley, from Jan. 8 to Feb. 16, 2021

## Wisconsin

### Recent Support

In Wisconsin, approximately 45 military medical personnel from the U.S. Army recently supported the state at four hospitals in four cities from Dec. 13, 2020 to Jan. 14, 2021:

1. Marshfield Medical Center in Marshfield

2. Marshfield Medical Center in Eau Claire

3. Marshfield Medical Center in Beaver Dam

4. Marshfield Medical Center in Rice Lake



(U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Garrison Waites, 5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**U.S. Army 1st Lt. Fernando Echeona, seated, assigned to 10th Field Hospital, 1st Medical Brigade, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., sits with lead nurse, Manuel De La Cruz, and charge nurse, Stephen Joe, while providing care to COVID-19 patients during his shift in the telemetry department at the Adventist Health White Memorial Hospital, Los Angeles, Calif., Jan. 22, 2021. U.S. Northern Command, through U.S. Army North, remains committed to providing flexible Department of Defense support to the whole-of-America COVID-19 response.**

## North Dakota

### Recent Support

In North Dakota, approximately 60 military medical personnel from the U.S. Air Force recently supported the state at six hospitals in four cities:

1. Trinity Hospital - St. Joseph's in Minot from Nov. 23 to Dec. 22, 2020

2. CHI St. Alexius Health Medical Center in Bismarck from Nov. 23, 2020 to Jan. 6, 2021

3. Sanford Medical Center in Bismarck from Nov. 23, 2020 to Jan. 6, 2021

4. Sanford Medical Center in Fargo from Nov. 23, 2020 to Jan. 6, 2021

5. Essentia Health-Fargo in Fargo from Nov. 23, 2020 to Jan. 6, 2021

6. Altru Hospital in Grand Forks from Nov. 23, 2020 to Jan. 6, 2021

For additional information, contact ARNORTH Public Affairs at [usarmy.jbsa.arnorth.mbx.pao@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.jbsa.arnorth.mbx.pao@mail.mil) or 210-428-9835; for photos or videos visit: [www.dvidshub.net/unit/DSFC19](http://www.dvidshub.net/unit/DSFC19).

## • Medics

(Continued from front page)

everyone here until redeployment."

While serving Airmen under conditions that affect the whole world, the medical flight still finds the positive in what they do.

"My favorite part of the job is being able to assist patients in reaching their goals," said Staff Sgt. Allison Cope, 475th EABS mental health noncommissioned officer in charge. "We all are passionate about empowering people to be their best selves and live their best lives."

With the idea of betterment of their fellow Airmen, the medical flight rises to the occasion to complete its mission so that the Airmen of Manda Bay can complete theirs.

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# Something to sing about: Army nurse uses his hobby to provide for patients at GLWACH

By Chad Ashe

General Leonard Wood  
Army Community Hospital

Maj. Douglas Westbrook, a nurse anesthetist at General Leonard Wood Army Community Hospital, finishes his shift in the operating room. It's been a busy day and a reset is desperately needed. Taking the elevator ride to the lobby is the final act in a scene he's been playing since 2006 when he started performing for patients in El Paso, Texas. He surveys the room, finds the best spot to get the acoustics just right, and picks out a song in his head — something he hopes the audience needs to hear. After a readjust of the mask he's ready to play.

This is his song.

He said when he was younger in his hometown of Pinetop-Lakeside, Arizona, his mom never had to wonder where he was as a kid because he was always singing. Then, at age 12, he taught himself to play his mother's guitar.

"My mom had a guitar and told me if I learned to play it, I could have it," he said.

He sings now for a different audience: the patients and visitors of GLWACH.

He said he sings for people who need calm while in a stressful place in their lives.

"A hospital exists to take care of physical needs (by and large); mental and emotional needs cannot be forgotten," he said. "A hospital environment is a stressful place because we can see people at their worst and when they are often worried about themselves or loved ones."

Westbrook sings on his break, when and where he can.

"I try to play most days that we are not overly busy in the operating room," he said. "I play for the recovery area sometimes."

Sitting front row to his performance is Kye Rucker, a familiar face to GLWACH employees. As a contractor charged with operating the lobby kiosk where many stop in for coffee and sandwiches, she also witnesses hundreds of customers entering GLWACH daily for care.

She said she never forgets a name or face, or the sound of Westbrook's guitar playing.

"It's uplifting when I hear him play," she said, adding she cheered and clapped for him the first time she heard him perform.

Westbrook has more than 18 years of service — he commissioned as a staff sergeant in 2009 — and plans to settle down permanently in this area with his family who love the military community here. All of the artists Westbrook covers have songs he feels speak to the heart of service members.

"Most of us (Soldiers) have lost someone, often in combat-related incidents," he said. "I love to be able to play requests. I'm not always able but it is a fun experience for me when I can play something that has specific meaning and brings a specific memory or joy to someone in particular."

Westbrook said he loves playing Garth Brooks' songs, but newer songs enter his repertoire as well.

"'Memories' by Maroon 5 is one of my current favorites and speaks to the heart," he said.

"I enjoy many types of music but especially love the story telling and powerful emotion that can be felt when music is played," he said. "I think we need room in our lives for things a little out of the ordinary. I'm glad to be able to provide that. I love to make people smile and laugh and feel that boosts my health as well as theirs."

Rucker said she feels Westbrook's hobby helps the patients of GLWACH.

"He tries to make it special for them in times like these" she said. "Music makes everybody happy."



(Photo by Chad Ashe)

Maj. Douglas Westbrook, a nurse anesthetist at General Leonard Wood Army Community Hospital, plays his guitar in the hospital lobby for customers while off duty. Westbrook said his singing is for people who need calm while in a stressful place in their lives.

## Percy Bonefish

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# 563rd Medical Logistics Company commander a finalist for prestigious MacArthur award

By C.J. Lovelace  
U.S. Army Medical  
Logistics Command

CAMP CARROLL, South Korea – As the commander of the 563rd Medical Logistics Company, U.S. Army Capt. Kirk Proctor makes his Soldiers his priority.

“My leadership style is that of a servant leader in that my focus is the welfare of the Soldiers and leader development,” Proctor said. “I share the idea that the best form of welfare for the troops is high-quality training.”

Proctor’s leadership style has gained recognition from key leaders on the Korean Peninsula, where he has been nominated as one of the Eighth Army’s two candidates for the prestigious General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award.

Lt. Col. Marcus D. Perkins, commander of the U.S. Army Medical Materiel Center-Korea, where the 563rd MLC is a tenant unit, said Proctor took over a medical company with discipline, supply and training challenges. “In a short time, he turned his formation around to the best company of the 65th Medical Brigade,” Perkins said.

USAMMC-K is a direct reporting unit to Army Medical Logistics Command, the Army’s medical logistics and life-cycle management command headquartered at Fort Detrick, Maryland.

Calling Proctor “a superior trainer” with a great understanding of mission command principles, Perkins attributed much of the captain’s success to the development of a first-class training program that covered all needed skills, including maintenance, supply and operations.

“Capt. Proctor used a crawl-walk-run methodology to increase the tactical proficiency of his Soldiers to enhance their ability to provide medical sustainment support to the COVID-19 response and win on the battlefield,” Perkins said.

The MacArthur award is presented annually to outstanding company grade officers who demonstrate the ideals for which MacArthur stood -- duty, honor and country.

Proctor is joined by Chief Warrant Officer 2 Andrew Welch as the Eighth Army’s nominees and finalists for the award, following the U.S. Army Pacific

competition results in February. The two Soldiers now await the results of the Army-wide competition later this year.

Proctor, a native of Houston, Texas, said he was “very humbled” to make it this far.

“The competition thus far has hosted some incredible officers who come from an array of different functions and backgrounds who all have unique experiences that contribute to their commitment to public service,” he said.

“Soldiers under my command remind me of my commitment to the profession and my purpose for wearing the uniform,” Proctor added. “... It’s the stories and commitment of fellow officers and leaders, and Soldiers who look at me as their commander, leader and mentor that inspire me to do more each day and continue to live to General Douglas MacArthur’s ideals of duty, honor, and country.”

Operating out of USAMMC-K, the 563rd MLC plays an important role in managing medical materiel and equipment to sustain the readiness of U.S. Forces Korea.

Over the past year, the unit has received, stored and shipped over \$40 million worth of medical materiel globally, including over \$1 million worth of medical equipment to 134 customers in armistice and during the COVID-19 response, Perkins said.

Additionally, the 563rd MLC has completed over 3,000 medical maintenance services and fabricated more than 5,000 pairs of eyeglasses over that span.

Proctor’s leadership “directly improved readiness for all units in Korea,” said Perkins, who also has nominated Proctor for the NAACP’s Roy Wilkins Renown Service Award.

While his accomplishments are notable, Proctor is not one to take credit for himself, preferring to share it with the Soldiers who have worked alongside him toward a common goal.

Proctor also thanked Perkins and 65th Medical Brigade Commander Col. Charles Zimmerman for seeing his potential and nominating him for the award, as well as Lt. Col. Sara Torres who has been a valuable mentor.

“The many engagements, the problems we resolved and the shared success is what has shaped me as a leader today,” he said.



(U.S. Army photos by Cpl. Ko, Bae-young)  
**Capt. Kirk Proctor (left) receives a certificate of achievement from Lt. Gen. Bill Bureson, Eighth Army commanding general, during a ceremony held at Eighth Army headquarters on Camp Humphreys, South Korea, Nov. 23. Proctor was selected as one of the Eighth Army nominees for the General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award.**



**Chief Warrant Officer 2 Andrew Welch (left) and Capt. Kirk Proctor were selected as the Eighth Army nominees for the General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award, Nov. 23, 2020.**

# COVID-19 vaccines: Changing the course of the pandemic

## Courtesy Story

*Air Force Materiel Command*

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio – A coronavirus is a type of common virus that can cause illnesses such as the common cold, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). In early 2020, after a December 2019 outbreak in China, the World Health Organization (WHO) identified SARS-CoV-2 as new type of coronavirus. The disease it causes is called coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).

In March 2020, the WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. COVID-19 is a disease that can trigger a respiratory tract infection. It can affect your upper respiratory tract (sinuses, nose, and throat) or lower respiratory tract (windpipe and lungs). The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads easily among people by respiratory droplets released when someone with the virus coughs, sneezes, breathes, sings or talks. Some people who have the virus don't have symptoms, but they can still spread the virus.

Although most people with COVID-19 have mild to moderate symptoms, the disease can cause severe medical

complications and lead to death in some people. Older adults or people with existing chronic medical conditions are at greater risk of becoming seriously ill with COVID-19.

There is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you.

In December 2020, Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna both reported that after late-stage trials, their vaccines showed approximately 95% efficacy at preventing severe symptoms of COVID-19. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration granted an emergency use authorization for the two vaccines. The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines both contain a genetic material called messenger RNA (mRNA) that does not change or interact with your DNA in any way.

The coronavirus that causes COVID-19 has spikes of protein on each viral particle. These spikes help the viruses attach to cells in your body and cause disease.

COVID-19 mRNA vaccines give some of your cells instructions for how to make the virus' distinct spike protein, which does not cause the disease. Once a person receives (and completes a 2-dose series) with either of these vaccines, those cells will replicate the spike protein and display the proteins on their surfaces. Your

immune system will recognize that the protein doesn't belong there and begin building an immune response and making antibodies. If you are exposed to COVID-19 in the future, your immune system will recognize the spike protein and will have the antibodies readily available to rapidly destroy the virus.

Wearing masks and physical distancing will help reduce the chance of being exposed to COVID-19 or spreading the virus to others, but that alone is not enough. COVID-19 vaccines, along with non-pharmaceutical interventions are the best hope for ending the pandemic. Published data shows the COVID-19 vaccine reduces the risk for serious illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19 disease.

If the COVID-19 vaccine behaves like other vaccines then it may help:

- Protect you by creating an antibody (immune system) response without having to experience sickness
- Prevent you from spreading the COVID-19 virus to others
- Add to the number of people in the community who are protected from getting COVID-19, making it harder for the disease to spread and contributing to herd immunity

• Prevent the COVID-19 virus from spreading and replicating, which allows it to mutate and possibly become more resistant to vaccines

As more people get the vaccine and data gathering continues, more will be known about these benefits and the COVID-19 vaccine.

The Department of Defense has an independent but collaborative program with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to provide COVID-19 vaccines to DoD uniformed service members. This includes active duty, Guard/Reserve, retirees, family members, civilian employees and selected DoD contract personnel. Getting the vaccine is voluntary, but all DoD personnel are encouraged to get it to protect their health, their families and their community.

Military hospitals and clinics around the nation may be in different phases of vaccine administration so contacting your local military hospital or clinic, or TriCare, is the best way to know when they are ready for you to get the vaccine. If you have questions on what phase you're in, please contact your chain of command.

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Dentistry



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# Naval Medical Research Center continues research

By Sgt. Jesus Sepulveda Torres  
II Marine Expeditionary Force

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. – Naval Medical Research Center (NMRC) is continuing their ongoing study to determine the long-term effects of the COVID-19 disease to support Marines in the COVID-19 Health Action Response for Marines (CHARM 2.0) at Camp Johnson, North Carolina.

CHARM 2.0 is a continuation of an initial study that NMRC began at Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) Parris Island in May 2020. The study is a volunteer progression-based assessment to monitor possible health related issues as a result of COVID-19 recovery, and the team has resumed evaluating the initial volunteers from across multiple Camp Lejeune tenant commands.

U.S. Navy Cmdr. Andrew Letizia, the principle investigator for the CHARM study said the research provides a critical approach to understanding the long term effects of the disease.

"This study helps understand the long term effects of COVID-19 amongst Marines," he said. "It will also assist in understanding how a Marine's immune system would be able to fight off new and emerging variants of the various SARS-CoV-2 strains, the virus that causes COVID-19, that are coming from around the world."

Letizia said the CHARM studies began in 2020, with revisits this year to assess the original group of recruits, now Marines. With the most recent update to the testing, the team is tasked with scouring across the country to continue research on Marines from the original study.

"The study was conducted from May to November 2020, and it followed Marine recruits entering boot camp," he said. "We wanted to better understand all the Marines that had COVID-19 after infection, regardless of symptoms. Then we evaluated them for six weeks to see how their immune system has made progression."

The research team is currently reassessing the Marine volunteers, across military installations as part of the CHARM 2.0 study. This week the team reached out to leaders on Camp Lejeune to allow time for any original study participants to continue with their follow-ups.

"All participants from the first study were eligible to continue the research," said Letizia. "We're hoping following up with these Marines will allow us to better understand the long term effects of COVID-19 on an individual's health, in particular their heart, lungs, their mental health as well as their immune system."

One of the original participants, U.S. Marine Corps Pfc. Jada May, a supply chain and material management specialist student

at Ground Supply School, volunteered for the follow-up study.

"I volunteered because as a twin I wanted to see if COVID would affect me differently as well as others," she said. "I started in the program last August as a recruit and during the assessment learned that other Marines had an immunity built up which greatly helped with the study."

May said that she's hopeful the research will benefit the effort to understand and fight COVID-19. Researchers are hoping the clinical results over time will benefit the understanding of healthy individuals during the pandemic.

"This was a unique opportunity not just for the Marine Corps, but also for the whole Department of Defense to better understand the effects on our active duty population," said Letizia.

The CHARM projects have only improved the understanding of how Naval Medicine can impact COVID-19 relief efforts as well as support the health and readiness of the Marine Corps as an organization.

"CHARM 1.0 as well as 2.0 show the power of Navy Medicine to deploy and support the Marine Corps especially during this pandemic," said Letizia. "We really need to understand our foe as well as the ability of the individual Marine to fight off that infection, and we at the Navy Medical Research Center are proud to help with that."

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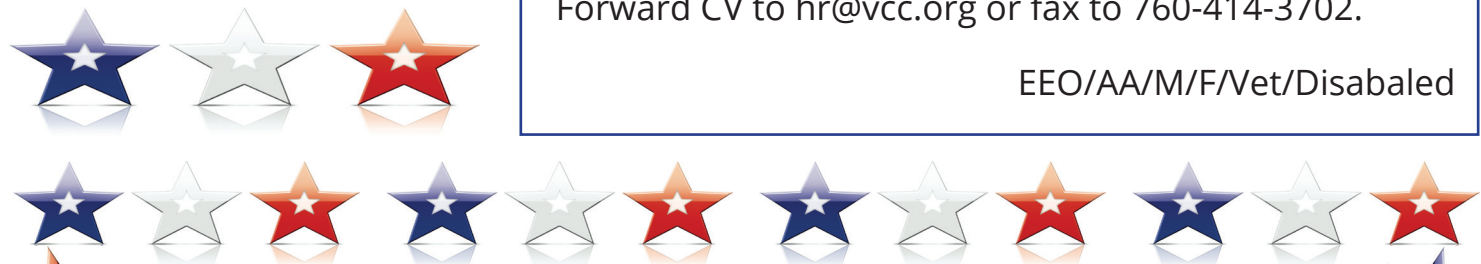
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