

Army Team Medicine,

LTG Dingle and I are pleased to announce the 4th Quarter FY20 Army Medicine Wolf Pack Award winner is SARS Team Six. The Team's exceptional contributions enabled critical in-country testing for the DoD community in Japan; maintaining the health of the community and directly impacting operations in USINDOPACOM.

SARS Team Six is an integrated team of seven members hailing from U.S. Army Public Health Command-Pacific, Camp Zama, Japan; U.S. Army Public Health Activity-Japan; Naval Health Research Center-San Diego, CA and Yokosuka, Japan; U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Yokosuka, Yokosuka, Japan; and the 1st Area Medical Laboratory, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD.

During the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Forces Japan Commanding General, LTG Kevin Schneider prioritized in-country laboratory testing capabilities. The primary laboratory on mainland Japan projected initial testing would require six months of lead team. The challenges medical leaders faced were: no single laboratory meeting all the requirements for clinical COVID-19 testing; some laboratories with experienced personnel but lacked proper accreditation; and other laboratories with certification and equipment but lacked personnel for sustained operations. Senior medical leadership envisioned a small team of laboratory experts who would become SARS Team Six to address the COVID-19 laboratory testing challenges.

The initial team of three personnel – an Army Officer Biochemist, an Army DA Civilian Microbiologist and a Navy Contractor assembled at the Naval Health Research Center Satellite Laboratory at U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka. The Army team brought critical equipment to expand molecular testing. Within three days, SARS Team Six began to receive samples. Less than a week later, SARS Team Six reported the first laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19 in U.S. Forces Japan aboard USS Ronald Reagan. Demand on the team grew exponentially after the first confirmed case and word of the struggles of USS Theodore Roosevelt made international news.

SARS Team Six became of multi-service, multi-echelon team of seven experts who quickly adapted to a complex and challenging work environment. The Team maintained an exemplary turnaround time where many labs worldwide struggled to meet the growing demand in testing. Their dedication, technical competence and distributed leadership allowed for 100% analysis of samples within 24 hours of receipt. The Team's timely results directly enabled Navy Public Health teams to effectively contain clusters on both the USS Ronald Reagan and USS Theodore Roosevelt.

During the period 17 March to 10 September 2020, the SARS Team tested over 3500 individual patients for COVID-19. Through an aggressive teamwork-focused mindset, the team successfully prevented a wide-scale outbreak on both Navy vessels and populations ashore. The rapidly fielded laboratory team enabled Carrier Strike Group 5 to remain postured to deter increased aggression in the US Indo-Pacific Command by adversaries after USS Theodore Roosevelt's COVID-19 situation made international news.

Despite the challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, SARS Team Six worked effortlessly to continue to not only complete a successful mission, but added to the future of Army Medicine and its tradition of excellence.

Please join us in congratulating SARS Team Six for their exceptional teamwork and noteworthy outcomes. These efforts and achievements illustrate selfless service and dedication reflecting great credit on each team member and epitomizing the highest standards of the Army and Army Medicine.

Congratulations Team!

v/r,  
Rich

Richard R. Beauchemin  
Chief, AMEDD Civilian Corps