

Army Medicine Quarterly Wolf Pack Award presented to MEDCoE Team

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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas –Lt. Gen. R. Scott Dingle, Surgeon General of the U.S. Army and Commander, U.S. Army Medical Command, presented the Third Quarter Fiscal Year 2020 Army Medicine Wolf Pack Award to the Medical Education and Training Campus (METC) Combat Medic Specialist Training Program (CMSTP), the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence (MEDCoE) Video Team, and the MEDCoE Learning Systems Branch. The award ceremony was held in Blesse Auditorium, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, November 9, 2020.

The Wolf Pack Award was created by the 43rd Army Surgeon General and the 4th Chief of the Army Medical Department Civilian Corps to recognize exceptional teamwork by an integrated group of Army Medicine civilian and military team members who have demonstrated excellence in support of the Army Medicine mission.

During the ceremony, Dingle spoke to the military and civilian instructors who are responsible for training the Army's combat medics. "You are the reason that many lives will be saved today, tomorrow and in the future."

The METC CMSTP, in collaboration with the MEDCoE Video Production Branch and the MEDCoE Learning Systems Branch, were recognized for rapidly developing a blended learning platform for Army combat medic training as part of the MEDCoE's COVID-19 response. Using Blackboard, an online learning resource used by many other premier military and civilian educational institutions, MEDCoE students were able to continue training in a virtual environment to better protect the population from the contraction or spread of COVID-19. Prior to the implementation of the blended platform, 68W Combat Medic training was done solely in the classroom.

Through their innovation, partnership and collaboration, the team transformed the program curriculum, consisting of lectures, group activities, demonstrations and hands-on instruction, from the classroom to the virtual learning platform. This included videotaping over 65 lectures; converting workbooks, practice questions, and exam content to the online platform; and creating over twenty videos demonstrating individual combat medic skills and skill validation exercises for students to continue learning remotely. Many hours went into videotaping, uploading, and digitizing course material.

Lt. Col. Johnny Paul, CMSTP Department Chair, accepted the award on behalf of the entire team. "Although it has not been easy," said Paul "we have all become early adopters of new teaching methods which I believe created a revolution in our educational system here at the MEDCoE and at METC."

COVID-19 forced the CMSTP Team, comprised of military personnel and civilians, to think outside the box in terms of how the program would continue when there was a need to place

newly arrived trainees or those who may have come in contact with infected personnel in Restriction of Movement (ROM) status. To implement the blended learning model, both civilian and military cadre also altered their schedules into a two-shift system of work in order to continue their training mission in a safer and more tactically dispersed manner.

Despite the pandemic, 68W modernization plans also continued with a complete rewrite of the 68W Combat Medic Program of Instruction, and a refresher pilot course for the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) exam was established. Since the refresher course was implemented, 99.7% of students have been successful in passing the NREMT, saving the U.S. Army over one million dollars. In part, thanks to lower attrition, the program produced over 1,870 combat medics since COVID mitigation measures were instituted. Lessons learned through the successful refresher course will be used to redesign current study hall sessions and will help shape best practices for the Army National Guard, Navy, and Air Force as well.

Dingle said, “In this new environment you allowed and facilitated so that the training continues.” He said that uninterrupted Soldier training, despite the added challenges of COVID-19, was critical in preserving combat readiness to ensure that the Army is able to deploy, fight, and win.

The Wolf Pack Award is sponsored by the Army Medical Department Civilian Corps. Winning teams are selected and announced quarterly. Quarterly winners automatically go on to compete for the annual Wolf Pack of the Year Award.