

Institute hosts 15th successful conference

The U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense hosted the 15th Biennial Medical Chemical Defense Bioscience Conference June 5-9 at the Marriott Hunt Valley Inn, Hunt Valley, Md. This year the conference was sponsored by the Joint Science and Technology Office for Chemical and Biological Defense and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

"The Bioscience Review is the premier North American meeting for chemical warfare medical countermeasures and provides an unparalleled opportunity for like-minded scientists to network and collaborate research," said attendee Thomas Sawyer from Canada's Defence Research and Development Center.

Three hundred ninety attendees from 14 countries and representing 17 federal organizations, 30 academic institutions and 28 private corporations attended. The theme of the conference was "Putting the Pieces Together," and the program was organized around the DTRA capability areas—pretreatments, therapeutics and diagnostics—for the chemical defense program. Three special workshops were held: a case study of a sarin exposure casualty in Iraq, galanthamine as a neuroprotective therapy for nerve agent exposures

and choosing the right oxime. All three sessions were well attended by participants, who contributed to the workshop discussions. The conference's final session highlighted partnership initiatives.

Dr. Bruno Papirmeister, a former MRICD scientist renowned for his research on the blister agent sulfur mustard, gave the Clarence A. Broomfield Lecture. The title of Papirmeister's lecture was "From Phage to PARP: My Life in Sulfur Mustard Research and Beyond."

Retired Col. James S. Ketchum, MD, who was the resident psychiatrist for the Army and was once stationed at Edgewood Arsenal, gave a talk during the conference's banquet on "Secrets Almost Forgotten." His talk featured videos clips of experiments on incapacitating agents carried out at the Biomedical Research Laboratory during the 1960s.

During the banquet the Joint Science and Technology Office for Chemical and Biological Defense and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency 2006 Annual Medical Awards were presented. The senior research scientist of the year was Dr. John Petrali of MRICD's Comparative Pathology Branch, while another individual in

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of improvement occurs during the first week of treatments.

One result of the study will be the creation of altitude preparation guidelines. Muza said USARIEM's research will develop predictive models to determine rates of decline in physical and cognitive abilities in correlation to how fast Soldiers need to ascend.

In addition to the hypoxia

room treatments, recently completed studies by Muza's team have determined that a high-carbohydrate diet in high-altitude conditions improves Soldier stamina and appears to reduce AMS. However, taking anti-oxidants or creatine did not lessen the effects of high-altitude exposure. Muza says that future studies will examine several other ways to

lessen the effects of exposure to high-altitude conditions.

The study should be complete by the end of the year.

—By Jane Benson,
Soldier Systems Center
Public Affairs Office



People in the News

Detrick officers share family, careers, rank

They share a home, a son and a marriage, and now Kate and Victor Suarez share the same date for their promotions to major.

The captains traded in their silver bars for gold oak leaves during a promotion ceremony at Fort Detrick Aug. 4.

“We’re promoting two exceptional officers, and the Army is now and will be all the better for this event,” said Col. George Korch, commander of the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases, where Maj. Kate Suarez is company commander.

The couple hail from different coasts—he the West, she the East—but met at the Army Medical Department Officer Basic Course. They married in 2001.

“When I talk about Vic ... I realize that one of his greatest accomplishments is he clearly has married well,” said Col. William Fry, commander of the U.S. Army Medical Materiel Agency, where Maj. Victor Suarez works as a logistician. The colonel added that Victor’s deployments to Kosovo and to Iraq as a company commander show that “Vic is one of those who has been there, done that, and not only got the one t-shirt but he’s done a rematch and got the second t-shirt.”

Kate’s commander is equally impressed with her skills. “She is one of those rare officers that has it all: someone who is highly skilled in her professional duties and has the humanity and intelligence to know how to deal with people and has wisdom beyond her years in creating possibility and effecting change,” Korch said.



Alex Suarez, center, helped both his mother, Maj. Kate Suarez, and his father, Victor Suarez, pin on majors’ rank Aug. 4.

The actual pinning-on portion of the ceremony saw a mass of family take center stage to change the ranks on the new majors’ berets, shirts and coats. The Suarezes’s son, four-year-old Alex, pinned new rank on his mother and father before the majors put the finishing touches on each others’ uniforms.

Pennsylvania native Kate credited her success to her life philosophy, which she includes

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the branch, Tracey A. Hamilton, was named most promising young researcher. The 2006 outstanding research team award went to MRICD scientists Drs. James F. Dillman III and Robert J. Werrlein for their concerted efforts in identifying therapeutic targets for medical countermeasures against sulfur mustard to enhance the warfighter’s chances of survival on the battlefield.

MRICD’s Dr. David E. Lenz was honored as the outstanding joint research coordinator of the year, and Dr. Chunyang Luo of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research received the research science contractor of the year award.

Brig. Gen. Patrick Masson of France was recognized with the chemical and biological defense international award for his contribution to furthering cooperative research between the U.S., the University of Nebraska Medical Center, and France.

Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Garrison Rapmund, a former commander of the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command, complimented MRICD’s staff and commander, Col. Brian Lukey, on an outstanding job.

“I found everything about the meeting first class,” Rapmund said.

—By Dr. Margaret Filbert, USAMRICD

