



Walter Reed  
National Military  
Medical Center

# ASBBF BULLETIN

## Armed Services Blood Bank Fellowship

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Walter Reed National  
Military Medical Center  
Bethesda, MD

**WRNMMC Chief, Blood  
Services:**  
LTC Steven McDaniel

**Blood Bank Fellowship:  
Program Director**  
William Turcan

**Class of 2023  
(Left to Right)**

LTJG Eldee Demegillo, USN  
Capt Kandie Ibarra, USAF  
Capt Shawnta' Matthews,  
USAF  
CPT Tae Kim, USA  
MAJ Michelle Velez-  
Landon, USA  
LT Najib Adamu, USN  
CPT Ikechuku Aguilera-  
Nwachuku, USA  
Lt Olivia Garcia, USAF



## General Information

The Armed Services Blood Bank Fellowship is an 18-month program founded in 1958 and mandated in 1972 by the Department of Defense (DOD) to accomplish the mission of maintaining an adequate military blood program. The goal of the program is, "To prepare competent entry-level Specialists in Blood Bank Technology/Transfusion Medicine (SBBT/TM) in the cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills), and affective (behavior) learning domains". This program has three objectives: (1) prepare armed services laboratory officers in their roles as military blood program officers, (2) train these officers in all aspects of technical and administrative blood banking, thus preparing them for the Specialist in Blood Banking (SBB) national certification exam, (3) provide graduate credit for this intensive course work by way of affiliation with The George Washington University. This tri-service training program is specifically designed to prepare selected career officers to become managers of large military hospital blood banks, transfusion services, blood donor centers, area and joint blood program officers, and service blood program officers.

The Armed Services Blood Bank Fellowship at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs ([www.caahep.org](http://www.caahep.org)) upon the recommendation of the Committee on Accreditation of Specialist in Blood Bank Technology and Transfusion Medicine.

[Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs](#)

9355-113<sup>th</sup> St N, #7709

Seminole, FL 33775

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The need for blood bank specialty officers is indicated by the rapidly developing accreditation and federal regulatory requirements, which impact blood collection, processing, immunohematological testing and the transfusion of blood and blood components. This fellowship offers specialty, graduate training to fulfill the unique needs of the military services. This program addresses the history of military blood banking, operational and mobilizing plans for blood support of combat casualties, and future blood planning of the Armed Services Blood Program at the DoD level.

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## History

The Armed Services Blood Bank Fellowship began at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in Washington, D.C. in 1958. The fellowship was established to train a cadre of officers to staff blood programs, hospital transfusion services, and donor centers in times of peace and war. In 1966, the fellowship was transferred to the US Army Medical Research Laboratory at Fort Knox, KY. In July 1974, the fellowship was realigned under the Blood Bank Center at Fort Knox. The fellowship was transferred to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. in July 1976 without interruption in training. In September 2011 the Fellowship transferred to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, MD. After 65 years of existence, the program has graduated 286 students (130 Army officers, 77 Air Force officers, 73 Navy officers, 4 international military officers, and 2 civilians).

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## Walter Reed National Military Medical Center

The Blood Bank Fellowship is currently located within the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) Department of Pathology. The program provides a dedicated classroom for student lectures. Over 40 weeks of the didactic and clinical training are conducted at WRNMMC. The WRNMMC medical treatment facility is a 300-bed hospital located in Bethesda, MD. There are 17,000 inpatient admissions per year and a staff of over 6,000. Officer health and safety procedures will be that of WRNMMC. Officers from all three services will be afforded an opportunity to meet with their respective Service Blood Program Officers while enrolled in the program.

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## Fort Belvoir Community Hospital

Fort Belvoir Community Hospital serves as an additional clinical site for transfusion service and administrative operations

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## National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Fellowship students will attend lectures and a Stem Cell clinical rotation at NIH.

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## Academic Affiliation

The Blood Bank Fellowship Program is affiliated with The George Washington University (GWU), Washington, D.C. In accordance with the affiliation agreement, Blood Bank Fellows receive graduate academic credit for didactic and practical training. The academic credit received while enrolled in the fellowship applies towards a Master of Science in Health Sciences in the Field of Immunohematology. Masters degree completion requires six additional months after completion of the one year Fellowship Program, as well as a research project. The total length of the assignment is 18 months. The total number of credits is 55 (34 SBB and 21 MSHS)

Fellowship students will be evaluated via written exam and practical laboratory exams using unknown specimens. If at any time a student's level of performance drops below that required by the school, the student may be removed from the program. Probation and appeal procedures will be those of WRNMMC and GWU.

Instructors and research advisors for the Blood Bank Fellowship are awarded Adjunct Faculty or Lecturer designations by GWU for their involvement with the program. [Return to top](#)

## Costs/Pay

Tuition is covered by the military service branch for each student. Cost of books for the GWU courses are paid by the fellows, but may be reimbursed by the member's service. While attending the program, each student will receive their normal active duty service pay. [Return to top](#)

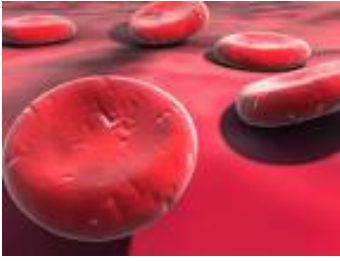
## Clinical Site Visits

Fellowship students will have to opportunity to participate in a wide variety of site visits. Each visit provides a unique opportunity which is not always offered outside the military. The Armed Services Whole Blood Processing Laboratory (ASWBPL) East, located at McGuire AFB in Trenton, NJ, site visit provides a strategic view of the military blood delivery into areas of active conflict. Participation in the West Point blood drive, an annual Army tradition, provides the students with an appreciation for large scale donor center operations. Monthly visits to the Armed Services Blood Program Office (ASBPO) located in Fall Church, VA provide insight into military blood operations in garrison and in theater. Students will rotate through the Armed Services Blood Bank Center (ASBBC) and observe the production of blood components while learning about the production of frozen blood, produced at an alternate location. Other site visits include the Johns Hopkins Hospital and the Harley-Davidson Vehicle Operations factory .

## Research Project and Presentations

Each student will be required to complete a graduate level research project while working under a Research Advisor. At the end of the research term the student will submit his/her work to a journal for publication. Additionally throughout the year, each student will give a series of oral presentations to include: reviews of journal articles, formal blood group system lectures, and the Armed Service Blood Program Office culminating with the presentation of his/her research project. [Return to top](#)

## Didactic Curriculum



Lectures are given throughout the year by the staff of the Blood Bank Fellowship Program, as well as other health professional and subject matter experts from WRNMMC and other medical facilities throughout the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. A four-week intensive introductory lecture series is given at the beginning of the program, consisting of a chapter-by-chapter review of the AABB Technical Manual. GWU courses start in the fall and will include online courses in biochemistry, immunology and research methods. After the first month of introductions, lectures are given once a week on Friday, in subjects such as:

1. Blood group systems
2. Hematology
3. Coagulation
4. Blood banking methodology
5. Blood donor qualifications
6. Collection and storage of blood for transfusion
7. Immune destruction of red cells
8. Circulation
9. Shock
10. Composition and function of blood
11. Anemias
12. Platelet disorders
13. Disorders of leukopoiesis
14. Leukocyte and platelet blood groups
15. Blood component therapy
16. Transfusion practices
17. The history of Blood Banking
18. Contingency blood management

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## Clinical Curriculum

The Blood Bank fellows spend four days a week in clinical rotations at WRNMMC, and other clinical sites. The following are areas of training that the students are exposed to:

1. Donor recruitment and records
2. Donor history and phlebotomy
3. Donor blood processing, record maintenance and donor files
4. Preparation of blood components
5. Transfusion service area
6. Dispensing and distribution of blood
7. Quality assurance
8. Blood bank administration
9. Coagulation laboratory
10. Diagnostic immunology
11. Histocompatibility and tissue typing
12. Inspection and accreditation standards and regulations
13. Transplantation support

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14.



## Contacts

William Turcan, Program Director  
Phone: (301) 295-8605 or DSN 295-8605

LTC Steven McDaniel, Chief, Blood Services  
Phone:

Website: [www.health.mil/militaryblood](http://www.health.mil/militaryblood)

## Selection of Trainees

Application and selection for the Tri-Service Blood Bank Fellowship is governed by each of the three services (Army, Navy, and Air Force). It is open to all clinical laboratory officers of all services. By memorandum of understanding, the Air Force and Navy are allocated two slots in each class. Blood Bank Fellowship Program officials may approve additional slots depending on allocations and requirements. This program follows the non-discrimination policies set forth by the Department of Defense Military Equal Opportunity Program and Civilian Equal Employment Opportunity Program.

Note: Do not send applications to GWU.

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## Army

Active duty MSC officers in RA, VI/CVI status with an AOC of 71E, or existing certification as an MT (ASCP) may apply. The officer must have a minimum of 24 months time on station in CONUS (computed from date of arrival on station until date of expected departure) or have completed a current overseas tour (computed from actual DEROS). The officer must meet height and weight standards and have completed the resident AMEDD Officer Captains Career Course. Those who have transferred to MSC, meet the other criteria, and have completed another branch's resident Officer Captains Career Course are also eligible. The applicant must have less than 17 years active federal service as of the start date and sufficient retainability to complete the Blood Bank Fellowship and a three-year active duty service commitment upon completion.

The application must arrive as specified in the current year's Long Term Health Education and Training (LTHET) application instructions with all documents requested. Officers in a non-select status for promotion are not eligible to apply. Officers should have taken the general GRE within 5 years from the projected date of admission.

The selected officer will receive PCS orders for assignment to the [Student Detachment, Fort Sam Houston, Texas](#), with duty at WRAMC. Reporting date is mid-June with classes beginning the first week of July. The student must be completely inprocessed and have all personal affairs taken care of by the first day of class. This assignment is for eighteen months.

More information is available on the AKO website:

<https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/protect/Active/opmsc/9lct.htm>

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## Air Force

Air Force officer applicants must meet the following qualifications:

- Completion of appropriate allied science degree and overall grade point average of at least 2.5.
- Completion of the GRE within four years of board date. Minimum combined verbal and quantitative score of 1000.
- Agree to incur an active duty service commitment (ADSC) IAW AFI 36-2107, Table 1.2.
- Physically qualified for worldwide duty assignment and not medically restricted under any assignment limitation code C (ALC – C1, C2 or C3).
- TAFCS: No restrictions; however, officer must have the required retainability to serve the active duty service commitment IAW AFI 36-2107.
- CONUS applicants should have at least four years time-on-station (TOS) as of training start date. Exceptional applicants may be considered with as little as two years TOS. For OCONUS officers, see individual program announcements for DEROS requirements.



The application package must include a letter of recommendation from the applicant's squadron commander with an endorsement from the facility Senior BSC Executive and group commander; a personal essay from the applicant stating his or her career goals; a copy of all college transcripts; a copy of GRE test results; and a statement by the squadron or group commander that the applicant is qualified for worldwide assignment.

The original application package must be submitted to HQ AFPC/DPAMW, and a copy of the complete package must also be sent to the Laboratory Associate Corps Chief for indorsement.

An Education Selection Board will select the most qualified applicant(s). In addition to the qualifications previously addressed, final selection is based on the following:

1. Needs of the Air Force (utilization positions are limited)
2. Officers OPR history
3. Perceived applicant motivation

Questions concerning this program should be addressed to Chief Consultant, DSN 240-2003. Questions on application procedures and criteria should be addressed to, HQ AFPC/DPAMW, DSN 665-2775 or commercial (210) 565-2775. [Return to top](#)

## Navy

The Blood Bank Fellowship Program is open to Navy Medical Service Corps officers who meet the following requirements:

1. Must be a Navy Medical Technologist with NOBC.
2. Must be on active duty; both regular and service officers are eligible.
3. Must be of the rank of Lieutenant Junior Grade or Lieutenant (O-2 or O-3).

A formal request should be submitted in accordance with NAVMEDCOM Instruction 1520.2 after consultation with the specialty advisor for medical technology. Successful candidates are selected by the annual Medical Service Corps Full time Training Selection Board in November for the Fellowship starting the following July.

Graduates of the Fellowship are expected to sit for the Specialist in Blood Banking (SBB) exam, which is administered by ASCP-AABB. Interested officers should consult with the Medical Technology Specialty Advisor. [Return to top](#)

