

Chief, Dietitian Message

*LTC Maria Worley
Chief, Dietitian Section*

It is with so much excitement and joy that I write my first message in the Medallion as your new chief dietitian. Many of us watched as COL Forman stood on the parade field and ducked her head to be decorated with a Legion of Merit Award. I thought of how much she had accomplished in her short 3-year tenure and prayed that I could be a good torchbearer for her vision. I also asked for the strength and wisdom to be the vehicle for adapting that vision to what evolves from the lessons of OIF/OEF and the Army's future force concept. Most important I hope that I can help us get it right for the Soldier.

I hope that all of you have read or memorized the Soldier's Creed. I saw this presented in a video at AUSA. It was very moving and, I was struck with a theme that I think is vital to 65C's and 91M's at this very moment. Those arresting words are "I will never accept defeat," and along with that, "I will never give up." Think about what this means. Are you frustrated by a lack of skill sets or training or because you feel there is not enough manpower and money to do your job? How about your frustrations with militant Iraqi's that keep your CSH buzzing with wounded Warriors? Maybe summer crunch has you working every other weekend and it will be fall before there is relief. Maybe, you just got to your new assignment, barely unpacked and will now be leaving the family for a "short tour" in Iraq! What do these words mean in your world?

Whatever you are being challenged to do or endure, these words do not mean that we should just walk out on the job, hibernate in our offices and read email, find another job that is less chaotic or challenging or tell the boss that part of the operation is just not worth the effort. What if our Soldiers in Baghdad took that same opinion and action? I don't think they would be living the Creed.

What can we do to keep our eye on the horizon and look for the sunrise? Well, some real smart dietitians got together at AUSA and decided that there were some things we can do to help ourselves be less frustrated and more able to deal with our challenges. We set some goals that we can achieve in the next 12-18 months that will help us as individuals and as a group. The major categories were training, resource management, Soldier care and relationships. The following will give you the preliminary chart of our aspirations in each of these areas.

- Education and training:
 - LTG Peake recently approved funding for the conversion of the internship to a Masters of Science in Nutrition. This is a start for a new direction for our clinical skills. LTC Ann Grediagan, the current internship director and educators at BAMC and WRAMC and LTC Dilly are going to help us develop the right curriculum for an "Army/DOD" specific dietetic skill set. COL Forman began this project two years ago and LTC's Sweet, Ellison and Kemmer have been very involved in the

process. Those efforts were tremendous and we are grateful for their dedication.

- MSG Kinsey and I have been looking at Training With Industry for both 65C's and 91M's. This is a big undertaking but I am confident that we can crack the code on training and that it will be a great opportunity for someone each year to work in the retail/cafeteria operations and to work within ADA. LTC Hutson is bringing so much awesome experience, knowledge and a great network to our table from her last year in the ADA Washington D.C. office. MSG Kinsey discussed the need to do something similar for the 91M and I think we would all agree that this would be an excellent idea.
- BAMC continues to work the Super Training Center template which will do much to achieve OJT proficiencies for 65C's and 91M's.
- We are exploring resourcing a middle manager course for 65C's and 91M's in a TDA and TOE environment.
- Finally, BG Fox pledged his support for a Nutrition Support/Burn/Trauma residency program at BAMC to assist us in improving Soldier survivability in combat. LTC Desmond, MAJ Joyce Gilbert and MAJ Marybeth Salguiero will be working this program. After we get this up and running, we plan to start another in Sports Nutrition. We have discussed starting this up at West Point which will put it in the NARMC region and might be able to share some resources with the Physical Therapy Sports Medicine Program.
- Resource Management:
 - LTC Ellison will continue to work the productivity model and we will move towards changing our benchmarking to Healthcare Foodservice Managers program so that we can really assess our resource issues and approach shortfalls corporately instead of everyone fighting the same battles at each site.
 - MSG Kinsey and I will be going to small sites to get a corporate plan for our smaller facilities that we will try to sell at MEDCOM. It should include staffing and budget issues.
 - Budgets across MEDCOM should be based on earnings. We will work this at MEDCOM through the MEDCOM budget office.
 - We will support COL Hoedebecke and LTC Geisler's efforts to get beta test sites for Computrition started. MAJ Moran will be a great asset to selling the MEDCOM on making this a replacement system for NMIS.
- Soldier Care:
 - Weight Management has become a major issue at Health Affairs and OTSG. COL Bathalon and LTC Hutson will spearhead our efforts to set the Army and even DOD agenda on treatment. 65C's and 91M's will assess Weigh to Stay and see if it meets the needs or if a DOD program of a different design will be best. Christine Edwards will be

working a pediatric obesity program to help us meet the needs of the Soldiers family.

- CPT Stavinoha has agreed to take on the diabetes data in NOMAD as her thesis when she begins her Masters program this fall. We will be able to report our outcomes and move on to another disease state to study. Those outcomes will become the basis for clinical practice guidelines that we will use as standard nutrition intervention for this disease state. The Navy agreed to analyze the hyperlipidemia data as part of one of their long-term schooling theses.
- Relationships:
 - All senior dietitians will be involved in this project. LTC Rowbotham will bring her enthusiasm for coaching to take the lead on this much neglected aspect of our current military and professional set of connections. Email and business will not keep us from helping each other and especially being a guiding light for a junior officer. Relationships take two, so we will expect both partners to communicate. I am especially excited about this project. The Way Ahead, states that, "We must never forget that it is the Soldier-fierce, disciplined, well-trained, and well equipped-who ultimately represents and enables the capabilities we as an Army provide....." If this isn't true, then nothing else makes sense.

So, in just a few short months, we have many irons in the fire and lots of support from the 65C leaders to make things better for our young and mid-level "spoons." Be patient, call when things aren't going right or you are frustrated and then help us find a solution that we can implement. Mostly, hold on and "never quit, never accept defeat."

Keep our Soldiers in your prayers, hearts and minds as we face off a tough time in Iraq this month. Two of our 91M's, SFC Reese and SPC Aguilar were on a supply run and their convoy took enemy fire. If you haven't sent anything to your "Adopt a Soldier" group, please make sure that you do this.

The 115th will be deploying in June/July and staff will be CPT Crombie and 91M's from the unit.

The 86th CSH will be deploying again soon. MAJ Edwards will return with the unit and CPT North will be with her.

We are asking for backfills but we all may be shifting around faster than intended so if you have been on station greater than 2 years, it might be your time (I know, I've been here longer than 2 years but MEDCOM is not moving). We are most in need of mid level CPT's and MAJ's to fill our voids. If you would like to move please call MAJ Syler and let her know so

when she is figuring out how to fill our holes, she will have something to work from.

Thanks again for many of the nice notes I received from active, retired and civilians. My sleeves are up!!!!