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January 14, 2010

MILITARY HOPE FOR SYSTEM REVEALS HEALTHY FUTURE

34th Red Bull Inf. Div.



COB BASRA— In one of his first acts in office, President Barack Obama proposed a massive effort to modernize healthcare by making all healthcare records standardized and electronic.

Proponents believe widespread adoption of electronic healthcare record systems, or EHS, will lead to major savings, reduce medical errors and improve health. Critics, however, say the change would be unnecessarily expensive and burdensome to smaller practices.

The U.S. government has had such a system in place since 1997: the Medical Communications for Combat Casualty Care system, or MC4, which has allowed military medical personnel to record patient visits electronically.

The American military has often led the way in technology with innovations, such as the Internet and atomic power, and although the military's MC4 system is not a panacea to the ills of modern medicine, it does provide a glimpse into what could be the future of American healthcare.

Prior to 1997, military patient visits were recorded at the clinic or hospital where the patient first received medical attention. One caregiver would write up the patient's forms before handing it to another caregiver, who would also write notes and pass them on.

"It's an excellent system, when used properly."

Capt. Tami Luark said.

This often led to gaps in medical histories, which "were a result of incomplete or lost patient records," said Lt. Col. William E. Geesey, product manager for MC4. "Missing data often led to exploratory surgery, repeated tests

battle injury?"

To remedy the gaps, then-President Bill Clinton ordered medical database be created so that "every Soldier, Sailor, Airman and Marine will have a comprehensive, lifelong medical record of all illnesses and injuries they suffer, the care and inoculations they receive and their exposure to different hazards."

MC4 resulted.

"MC4 tracks everything from the whole patient encounter, the health provider's notes, the prescriptions, if you're on a profile [documented, restrictive medical condition]," said Stafford.

When a Soldier is treated by military medical personnel, their information can be electronically read and captured via an MC4 laptop and handheld devices, whether on

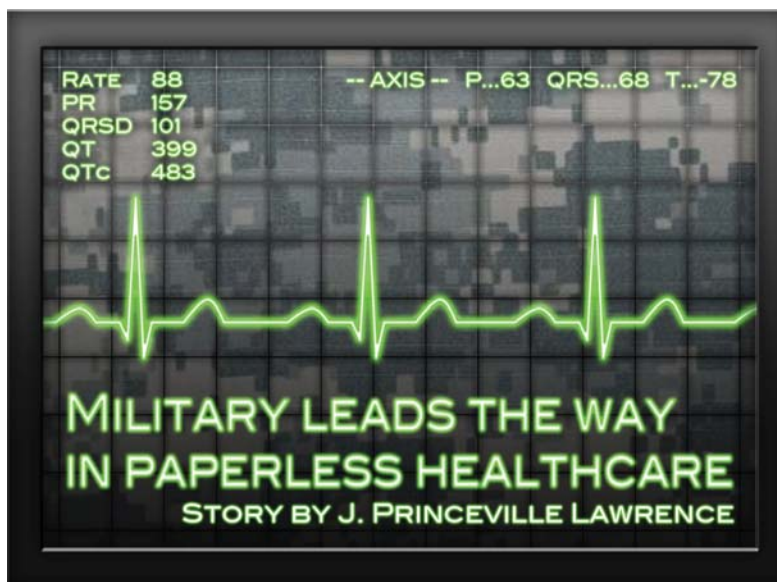
the battlefield or in a field hospital.

The moment the records are signed and closed, they are automatically sent to a Theater Medical Data Store, a server where they are accessible to clinicians worldwide. Every two hours, records in the TMDS are transferred to the U.S.-based clinical data depository,

or denial of VA benefits."

Capt. Ryan Swafford, 34th "Red Bull" Infantry Division preventative medicine officer, said the system created a lot of extra work.

"Somebody," Stafford said, "would have to sit down and go through each patient log from the week prior and say 'Ok, what disease came in this week, and what kind, and was it a battle related injury or was it a disease or a non-



What was your name again?

By Staff Sgt. Natalie Hedrick
3rd HBCT, 3rd ID



FOB ECHO – You never really know who someone is until you care enough to ask. I'll be the first to admit that there are many people in my life I would say that I know, but when I try to think of their names I draw a blank.

I know I'm not alone on this.

A wise man -- I'll call him Sgt. Maj. Richard Hairston -- once told me, "there are a lot of Soldiers with interesting stories but no one talks to them long enough to hear them."

I thought about that and you know what? It's true.

That Soldier at the dining facility who watches you swipe your card. You know, that guy. He may have just had a baby. Maybe his dog died. Who knows?

What about the guy at the laundry facility? The one to whom you give your underwear. Do you know him? Do you even know his name?

I used to make fun of my dad, Joe Rostek. He could start at one end of a room and by the time he reached the other side he would have interacted with everyone there.

"Hi. Good morning. How are you today? Nice seeing you. Take it easy." Or he would just shake their hand.

I noticed myself doing it when I went away to college. On my way to class I

found that I could not pass someone without making eye contact, smiling, and saying something. Anything to let that person know, "I acknowledge your presence."

I do it now too. "Good morning. How are you? Looks like you're having a good day. So where do you work?"

I just find it awkward if I don't.

I am my father's daughter which may be why I went into public affairs. I love talking to people. There are so many people out there with stories, really, really good stories. Sometimes when I'm conducting an interview, we get off topic. Then the person tells me something and I'm blown away.

Did you know there are Soldiers out there who play in rock bands back home? Did you know there are Soldiers who are on their fifth deployment? Did you know there are privates and specialists who were restaurant managers, teachers, and lawyers but left their jobs to join the Army?

The funny thing is, I not only know,

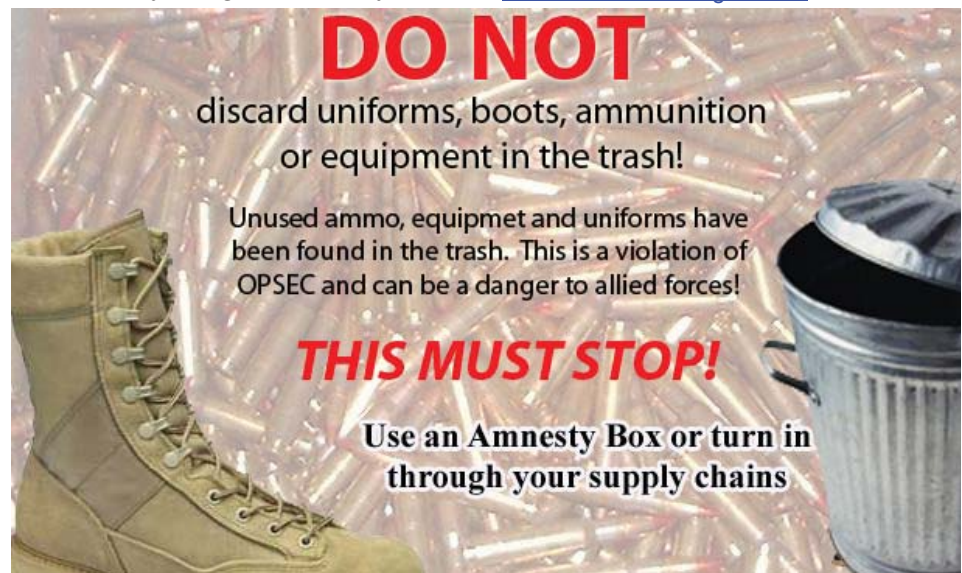
but I can remember the names of these Soldiers: Jorge, Scott, Ryan, Jonathan, and James (but he goes by his middle name, Brad.)

I know their names because they left footprints in my life. They weren't just passing faces, they were voices. I feel confident saying I know these people. I don't just know "of" them but I know them. If I saw them out on the street I could approach them and they would remember me too. It's all because I took the time to talk to them.

Now, you don't have to be public affairs like me to talk to people. I just got lucky. My dad is a contractor in Baltimore city but I bet if I asked, he could tell me the names and family members of his work crew, his customers, their neighbors, the homeless guys on the corner, the vendors at Camden Yards, and the waitresses of every diner in the city.

And I'm sure they know him too.

For more of SSG Hedrick's stories, visit:
www.TheRedBulls.org/Hedrick



THE RED BULL REPORT

34th Red Bull Infantry Division
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The Red Bull Report is an authorized publication for members of USD-S.

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- 4th BCT, 1st Armored Division
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From Page 1 REVEALS

where they contribute to the Soldier's lifelong medical record.

If a remote base has unreliable connection to the database, the patient encounters are saved and sent later.

The flexibility and instant access of medical records benefits Soldiers at remote bases and Soldiers who travel often. These Soldiers often have multiple medical providers, especially as they travel between Forward Operating Bases and other frontline installations.

"Let's say, you're part of a mobile team," Stafford offered as an example. "You go from FOB to FOB to FOB to FOB. One of the FOBs, you say, 'I gotta go to the clinic, I'm not feeling okay.' So you go in, the doc says, 'take some of this.' A day goes by, you're up in Baghdad now, and you go to the clinic again, saying, 'I was down at (COS) Garryowen, I went in, and the doc said I had this.' They punch in your record, and they can find that information. In the paper world, they'd have to mail it up to Baghdad, or they'd have the Soldiers carry it."

The MC4 system has been developed to not only record and display data, but to analyze it too.

Since 2007, MC4 has transmitted data to the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Researchers and statisticians can scour the data and provide safety-related recommendations faster than ever before.

"A lot of data was captured from the Vietnam War on paper forms, but it took 10 years to analyze the information to help service members," Geesey said. "With the assistance of MC4 systems, researchers were able to look at wound patterns and identify the places on the body that needed greater coverage of body armor."

"The electronic data was rapidly



Photo by Pfc. J. Princeville Lawrence
Maj. Catherine Anderson, a Spokane, Wash., native and chief nurse for the 915th Forward Surgical Team, uses the MC4 system at the Medical Treatment Facility at Contingency Operating Base Basra. MC4 is an electronic healthcare record system developed by the military

communicated to material developers, who were able to enhance the equipment and get the improved armor to the Soldiers," he said, "thus improving survivability."

On a smaller level, this type of instant analysis could prove invaluable for deployed units, said Stafford, who said he uses MC4 to track and analyze non-combat illness, historically the leading cause of crippled units.

"The goal is to spot the trend before it has a significant impact on effectiveness," he said.

Stafford said he uses MC4 to identify problem areas.

"We find any type of thing that shouldn't be there: injuries related to work, sports, motor vehicle accidents, head trauma," he said.

Once an identified problem rises to a level of statistical significance, Stafford said he takes the data to his peers.

Capt. Tami Luark, officer in charge of patient administration, described the steps they take.

"If he sees that there is a significant trend, then he would talk with the division surgeon and the rest of us to see what action needs to be taken from there," said the St. Cloud, Minn. native. "Is there training that needs to take place with the troops? Is there additional education? What do we need to do to stop this risk?"

Luark and Stafford agree that MC4 is a powerful tool, but are quick to point out that the system is not perfect.

"It's like any system," said Luark. "It's only as good as the information that gets put into it. So really, it's critical that people are trained to input the data properly in order for us to extract the information that we need and make it relevant."

Even when the system is used properly, Luark said, it is subject to human judgment. One doctor may interpret symptoms as flu, while another interprets them as a gastrointestinal illness.

"Unfortunately, it's not a black and white rulebook," said Stafford, who flies from base to base within Iraq to fix errors in data entry. "It's not something like, 'If this, then that.' There is some subjectivity in the diagnosis."

Subjectivity is a major pitfall of electronic healthcare records.

The analytical power of such a database is dimmed if data is not entered consistently; and even if data is entered consistently, there is always a certain danger fitting amorphous, ever-changing blocks into square holes. However, this is the world both civilian and military doctors must face.

"It's an excellent system," Luark said, "when used properly."

For more of Spc Lawrence's stories, visit:
www.TheRedBulls.org/Lawrence



The First and Only . . .

Red Bull Flea Market & Charity Collection



Sunday, January 17, 2010

at the Red Bull LSA Volleyball courts from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

This is an opportunity to sell your items privately, from service member to service member or to donate items to charity! Provide your own display, and set your own prices. Pick up bags to store donations* prior to Jan. 17 at the Red Bull MWR tent.

*SUGGESTED ITEMS - clean towels and bed linens, useable running shoes, civilian clothes, etc.

*PROHIBITED ITEMS - uniform clothing items, undergarments, any military equipment, any item with an NSN, and weapons.



Photo by Spc. Samantha Johnson

Col. David McCauley, effects coordinator, United States Division-South and former commander of 17th Fires Brigade, places a cover stitched with first-lieutenants rank onto his son, just-promoted 1st Lt. Michael McCauley, 17th FB, during a promotion ceremony Jan. 6 at Contingency Operating Base Basra.



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THE YELLOW RIBBON NETWORK AND CITY OF HUGO "WELCOME HOME" PHEASANT HUNT

STILL A FEW OPENINGS REMAIN

MAR 14, 2010

MORNING HUNT 0800
LUNCH 1200
AFTERNOON HUNT 1400

DUE TO INCREASED INTEREST THERE WILL BE TWO SEPARATE HUNTS.

ASSIGNMENTS TO MORNING OR AFTERNOON HUNT WILL BE POSTED ON THE CITY OF HUGO WEBSITE (WWW.CI.HUGO.MN.US) EARLY FEBRUARY.

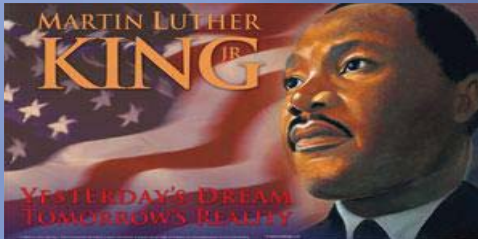
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**UNITED STATES DIVISION -SOUTH
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Rev Dr. Martin Luther King's Observance



***Remember! Celebrate! Act!
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From 19:00 to 20:30
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***Guest Speaker
LTC Trancey B. Williams***



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&**



The bAsra Beat

DFAC
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DFAC 2
05:30 - 08:30
11:30 - 14:00
17:00 - 20:00
DFAC 3
05:30 - 08:30
11:30 - 14:00
17:00 - 20:00
0:00 - 01:30

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JAN. 18 1130-1230 DFAC 2
1230-1330 DFAC 3

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Around the world in 34 seconds



SEOUL - North Korea appears ready to welcome visitors from the United States year-round, increasing the trickle of tourists from its sworn enemy who provide the reclusive state with hard cash. North Korea, which had restricted U.S. tourists to visits that coincided with its mass games that usually run from August to October, will institute the change this year, Koryo Tours, a major group based in China that organizes visits to the isolated country said on Wednesday. Destitute North Korea has lost out on tens of millions of dollars a year it used to earn through tourism with South Korea due to political wrangling with its rival over the North's military threats to the region and nuclear weapons program. North Korean leader Kim Jong-il has appealed to the South's Hyundai Group to resume the tours it once ran to a mountain resort and a border city in the North, but Seoul has not given its approval to restart the visits. Americans would be allowed to stay in North Korea for up to four nights for highly managed tours where minders keep a close eye on the visitors as they see monuments to the North's leaders and stay at hotels designated for foreigners.



RALEIGH, North Carolina - The U.S. East Coast port of Morehead City, North Carolina, which handles rubber imports and chemical cargoes, was closed and evacuated Tuesday after several drums containing a powerful explosive were accidentally punctured, authorities said. The state Ports Authority said there were no reported injuries or damage to the environment. The police spokeswoman said that as a precaution the port was shut down and evacuated. An evacuation recommendation was also issued for downtown Morehead City. Morehead City Mayor Jerry Jones told CNN that emergency services had sealed off the port area where the explosive substance had spilled from drums onto the port property, but he said the accident was contained. "I can confirm it is PETN (Pentaerythritol Tetranitrate) and it is explosive," he added.



TORONTO - Toronto Maple Leafs' goalie Curtis Joseph, one of the most successful netminders in the history of the National Hockey League, ended his 19-year career by retiring on Tuesday. The 42-year-old stopper finished with 454 career victories, trailing only Martin Brodeur, Patrick Roy and Ed Belfour in the all-time regular season goalie wins category. "It's a good day and it's been a great career," Joseph said during a press conference in Toronto. "I'm a lucky guy to do what I love to do for a living for 19 years, almost two decades. I'm extremely happy and certainly felt I didn't leave anything on the table." Joseph, who represented Canada at the 1998 and 2002 Winter Olympics, broke into the NHL in the 1989-90 season with the St. Louis Blues.



ZAGREB - Croatia's newly elected president has run into a problem -- how to accept thousands of new friends on Facebook. The issue seems to underscore Ivo Josipovic's image of a new statesman for a new era, who should oversee the final stage of Zagreb's accession talks with the European Union this year, and lead the former Yugoslav republic into the bloc in 2012. "I have 5,000 friends, which is the maximum allowed on Facebook. I also have another 7,000 waiting so I don't know how we'll work that out," the silver-haired, bespectacled law expert and classical music composer told state radio on Tuesday. Josipovic, relatively inexperienced in high politics but with a career untainted by scandal, won 60 percent of the votes on Sunday, beating Zagreb mayor Milan Bandic, who was supported by the church and the conservatives. He will be Croatia's third president since its 1991 independence from Yugoslavia.