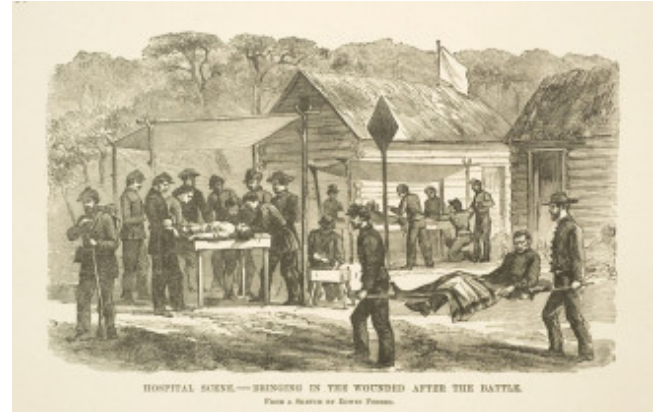


Q2 2024 – Surgeon’s Report

Jason Kruger
Post Surgeon
VFW Snell Post 7186

Did You Know? One of the major health lessons learned in the aftermath of the Civil War was the ability of disinfectants to limit disease before we understood the relationship between microbes and infections. The practices used during the war helped pave the road for the use of antiseptics in surgery and public health measures to prevent disease from spreading.



Surgeon’s Corner

Last month the James A. Lovell FHCC started using the new Veterans Affairs Electronic Health Record System. They are the first VA hospital to implement the system after there was a nationwide halt to all new sites after problems arose in April 2023. Their system combines with the Department of Defense’s MHS Genesis software to make a seamless transition of records between the DoD and VA. Your appointments, vaccination, and many other health related information is now available online or by using the VA health app.

Safety Brief

Though the persistent cold may make it feel like otherwise, Spring is here! It’s important to remember a few points of caution this season.

1. Inclement weather – Severe thunderstorms can bring high winds, hail, and flood level water. Be sure to close the shades or blinds over all windows and stay a good distance away to reduce injury. Pay close attention to National Weather Service updates and local sirens for the potential of tornados. Make sure you and your family have a plan in case a tornado is reported in your area. Seek shelter in a small room on the lowest level of your home that is enclosed by four walls and away from windows. If you’re in an apartment or hotel, seek out a secure hallway towards the center of the complex.



2. During your Spring cleaning, make sure you are using the proper protective equipment cleaning out the attic, and make sure to check your smoke or carbon monoxide detectors batteries. Read the warning labels on household chemicals before storing to ensure you don't accidentally have a toxic combination should they accidentally mix.



Health Happenings

A recent study on the VA showed a substantial increase in outpatient visits amount veterans with COVID-19 30 days after infection and remained at a high level for up to a year afterwards. 5.12 more visits per person 30 days after the infection to be exact. To read more details about the study, [visit https://www.medpagetoday.com/infectiousdisease/covid19/108664](https://www.medpagetoday.com/infectiousdisease/covid19/108664)

Suicide Prevention

We may have moved from 22 to 17 veteran suicides per day, but the number is still too high. The suicide rate for Veterans is 1.5 times higher than that of the general population, and it's our duty to look out for our Battle Buddies and our **OWN** mental health. There isn't one of us in the group that isn't willing to talk to one another if you need help. Please do not hesitate to reach out. Likewise, below are other resources that you may prefer or can help recommend to others in need:

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is now: **988**

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The previous Lifeline phone number (**1-800-273-8255**) will always remain available to people in emotional distress or suicidal crisis. You may also chat online 24/7 at <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help-now/chat/>

The Lifeline's network of over 200 crisis centers has been in operation since 2005 and has been proven to be effective. It's the counselors at these local crisis centers who answer the contacts the Lifeline receives every day. Numerous studies have shown that callers feel less suicidal, less depressed, less overwhelmed, and more hopeful after speaking with a Lifeline counselor.

**Veterans
Crisis Line**



**DIAL 988 then
PRESS 1**

Q1 2024 – Surgeon’s Report

Jason Kruger
Post Surgeon
VFW Snell Post 7186

Did You Know? The term *triage*, which is French for “to pick” or “to sort” earned its current meaning in WWI. It was the system for prioritizing multiple casualties, and has become standard use in all emergency medicine at present.



Surgeon’s Corner

The Red Cross has said that their blood supplies are at dangerously low levels. They have about 300,000 less donors than they did before the pandemic in 2019, and they need people to donate. If you’re healthy enough to donate, get out and find a blood drive to help restock the supply. The Armed Services Blood Program is a great place to donate as well as it supports DoD personnel worldwide.

Safety Brief

Big snow storms are on their way to Chicago, and even though we drive in the city we still need to be prepared to get stranded due to extreme winter weather. Below are a few items recommended to keep in your car in case you become stranded:

- Ice Scraper/Small Broom for snow removal
- Kitty Litter for traction in the snow
- Blankets & extra cold weather clothing
- A flashlight w/ extra batteries
- Water
- Non-perishable snacks
- Cell-Phone & Charger
- Jumper Cables
- First Aid Kit





Health Happenings

An article from Stanford Medicine recently came out about some interesting results on a new study. A plant-based psychoactive compound called Ibogaine has successfully been able to treat veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) related symptoms. When Ibogaine is combined with magnesium to protect the patient's heart, there were drops in the 80% range for PTSD, anxiety, and depression related symptoms. Ibogaine is found in the root of an African shrub, and has historically been used in spiritual and healing ceremonies. For more info, [CLICK HERE](#)

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November 2023 – Surgeon’s Report

Jason Kruger
Post Surgeon
VFW Snell Post 7186

Did You Know? QuikClot– The physician William Mayo said, “Medicine is the only victor in war.” Most wars do bring medical breakthroughs, and QuikClot is considered the marvel of the War on Terror. It was developed by a mechanical engineer in Connecticut named Frank Hursey in 1989. Frank used the mineral zeolite in machines to produce oxygen, and after studying it a bit, he noticed that the mineral acted as a natural sieve that caught things like water in its crystalline structure. Not knowing much about blood other than it being 50% water, he thought it might be able to help clotting. The military didn’t take notice until after the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks when they started researching new antihemorrhagic technologies and Franks zeolite proved to be the most effective. Severe bleeding can be stopped in about 30 seconds with the mineral. You will now find a “combat gauze” in every aid pouch on the battlefield.



Surgeon’s Corner

The flu vaccine has arrived for the 2023-2024 flu season. CDC recommends an annual flu vaccination for everyone 6 months and older. If you are 60+, CDC now recommends a single dose of RSV vaccine to help protect against RSV, based on discussions with your healthcare provider around your risk, such as your pharmacist. Jewel is offering 10% off your grocery store purchases when you get a vaccine.

Safety Brief

We had our first below freezing day at the end of October, and there are sure to be more in the future. Be aware that your pipes have the potential of freezing below 32° Fahrenheit (F) if they are uninsulated. Insulated pipes can freeze in as little as 12 hours between 32° and 20°F, and 6 hours below 20°F. To help prevent your pipes from freezing/bursting follow these tips:

- Install insulation for exterior pipes and pipes close to walls, windows, and attics.
- Insulate/winterize outdoor faucets.
- Keep your heat above 55 degrees.
- Leave your cabinets and doors open for airflow.
- Drip your faucets.
- Disconnect hoses from your outdoor pipes.





Health Happenings

For anyone who counts their daily steps, the long standing daily goal for many was 10,000. New research has come out showing that the earliest signs of health benefit can come at 2,500 steps per day. The risk of all-cause death was reduced by 8%. At 2,700 steps a day, you can reduce cardiovascular events by 11%. At 7,000 steps per day you reduce the chances of cardiovascular diseases by 51%, and At 9,000 steps a day, the chance of dying early is reduced by 60%. To read more about the study, [CLICK HERE.](#)

Suicide Prevention

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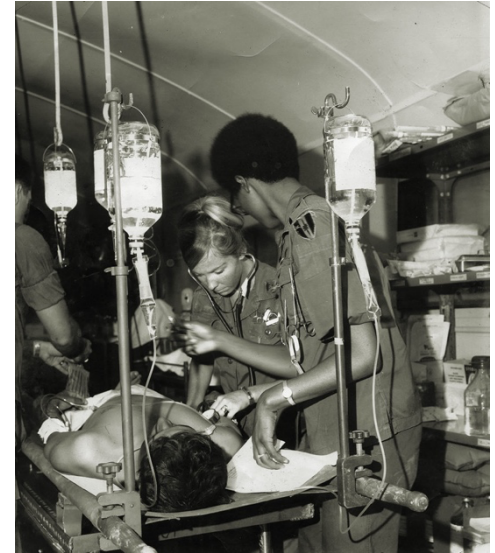


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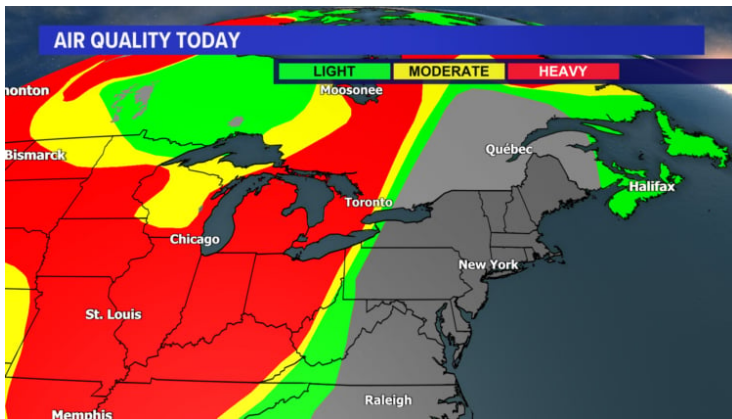
July 2023 – Surgeon’s Report

Jason Kruger
Post Surgeon
VFW Snell Post 7186

Did You Know? Vascular Surgery – MAJ Norman Rich, MC, chief of surgery from 1966 to 1967 at the 2nd Surgical Hospital in Lai Khe, South Vietnam, pioneered venous repair for military trauma that helped salvage badly wounded limbs. He established the Vietnam Vascular Registry, a database that contains more than 7,500 records of surgical cases, which is still used by battlefield surgeons. Innovative techniques in vascular reconstruction led to an amputation rate in Vietnam that was 25 percent lower than the amputation rate in World War II. Venous repair techniques established in Vietnam became the standard of practice employed by civilian vascular surgeons.



Surgeon’s Corner

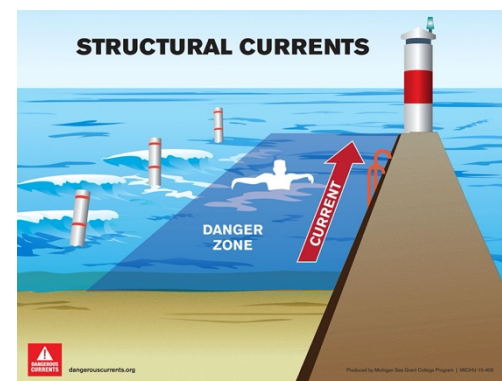


You may have noticed our summer days haven’t been as clear as in years past. The cause of this is due to wildfires that have been raging in the Canadian forest. Exposure to air pollutants in wildfire smoke can irritate the lungs, cause inflammation, alter immune function and increase susceptibility to respiratory infections, including COVID-19. Exposure can also impact chronic conditions like asthma, COPD and heart disease. Ways to mitigate the effects of these air pollutants is to limit your activity outside, stay indoors with the use of an air-conditioner if you have one, inspect & change your air filters in your home, and you could wear an N95 mask outdoors to filter

the air you breathe. It’s important to check with the national weather service about the daily conditions before heading outside.

Safety Brief

If you’re out at the beach on Lake Michigan or a beach on the ocean, beware of dangerous rip currents while swimming. Rip currents usually develop when there is high wave action hitting the coast at an angle near a low spot in the sand or a jetty/other pier like object that extends into the water. These powerful currents can pull even the strongest swimmers out into deeper water far from the coast. Keep an eye out on the shore for these currents before taking a dip or ask your on duty lifeguard if there are any rip current prone areas to stay away from.



Health Happenings

In the largest study of its kind to date, over 2.5 million male Vietnam Veterans treated in the VA Health System from January 2001 through December 2019 were found to have a 4% higher risk of developing bladder cancer if they were exposed to Agent Orange. The results of the study are helping to further support bladder cancer to be designated as an Agent Orange-associated disease. For a more in depth review of the article, click the picture to link to the article.



Suicide Prevention

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**Veterans
Crisis Line**



**DIAL 988 then
PRESS 1**

June 2023 – Surgeon’s Report

Jason Kruger
Post Surgeon
VFW Snell Post 7186

Did You Know? Though the X-ray was first invented in 1895, Madame Marie Curie created the first mobile X-Ray machine during WWI for the French Army. The devices were fitted inside the back of a car to be able to drive up to the battlefield. The vehicles were called “Little Curies”, and helped aid doctors on the front line with conducting surgery. A few workers wound up with burns from over exposure to the X-rays for prolonged periods of time, but the device greatly assisted doctors during the war.



Surgeon’s Corner

GOOD NEWS! In accordance with VHAVA and Department of Defense guidelines, the Capt. James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center has relaxed their mask requirement for patients, staff and visitors in their facilities except for certain specific situations and locations, including:

- Dialysis
- Chemotherapy units
- ER and Urgent Care
- Open bay medical ICU spaces
- Community Living Center (CLC) staff and visitors only

Masks also are required for those with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infections, or other viral respiratory infections and for VA staff during clinical encounters when requested by a Veteran or family member. They are in the process of updating the signs, website, and other external messaging, and will always respect the wishes of

anyone entering their facilities to wear a mask if they choose.

Safety Brief

The warm weather is here! That means it’s important to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water. Everyone’s daily water intake will be different. How much you need can depend on your size, the how hot the location you are is, your level of exertion/exercise, and a variety of other factors. It’s best to consult with your Doc as to what amount is best for you, but below are some broad guidelines.

Men: 13 cups (about 3 liters) **Women: 9 cups** (about 2 liters)



Health Happenings

The U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other national health organizations are recommending several health screenings for Men depending on your age and medical history.

Physical Exams: Starting at age 18 and periodically until age 65 and older, at which time you should schedule one annually.

Colon Cancer Screening: Starting at age 45 if you or your family have a history of colon polyps or cancer. Otherwise ages 50 to 75.

Lung Cancer Screening: Annually for ages 50 to 80 if you smoke or stopped smoking within the past 15 years, plus have a 20 pack year smoking history.

Blood Pressure Screening: From age 18 and older, every year if you are at higher risk, and every 3-5 years if you are not.

Skin Cancer Screening: Periodically throughout your life, and those 18-24 should receive skin cancer behavioral counseling.

For a more in depth look at the recommendations, read the entire article posted by U.S. News [CLICK HERE](#)



Suicide Prevention

On average, 17 Veterans die from suicide every day, and the suicide rate for Veterans is 1.5 times higher than that of the general population. It's our duty to look out for our Battle Buddies and our **OWN** mental health. There isn't one of us in the group that isn't willing to talk to one another if you need help. Please do not hesitate to reach out. Likewise, below are other resources that you may prefer or can help recommend to others in need:

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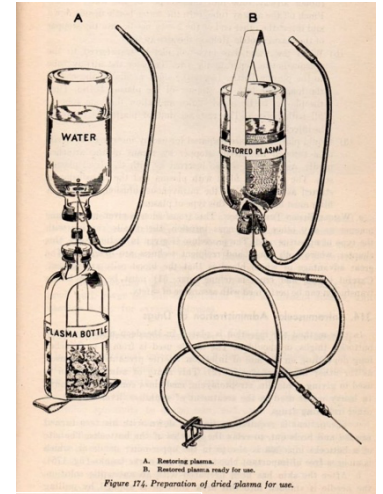
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May 2023 – Surgeon’s Report

Jason Kruger
Post Surgeon
VFW Snell Post 7186

Did You Know? At the beginning of WWII, only plasma was available as a substitute for the loss of blood. By 1945, *serum albumin* had been developed, which is whole blood that is rich in the red blood cells that carry oxygen and is considerably more effective than plasma alone.



Surgeon’s Corner



In case you haven’t heard or received a letter in the mail if you are receiving VA disability, Congress and The President signed the PACT Act last year. The PACT Act is intended to expand VA health care and benefits for Veterans that were exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and a variety of other toxic substances while they were serving in the military. The PACT Act also adds to the current list of health conditions that the government assumes (or “presumes”) are caused by exposure to these substances. The intent for the law is to provide generations of Veterans, and their survivors, with the care and benefits they’ve earned and deserve. As of 26 April 2023, over 500,000

Veterans and survivors have filed claims of toxic exposure under the PACT Act. Veterans can file claims for toxic exposure if it is their first time filing, and even if you were denied in the past by filing a Supplemental Claim. To make a claim, you must first enroll in the VA Health Care System and then take a screening. For more information on how to file a claim and schedule a screen, [CLICK HERE](#). The VA has also set up an easy way to file your claim online with the same link, or by calling **800-698-2411 (TTY: 711)**.

Health Happenings

If you're one of the millions of high speed, low drag, steely eyed, freedom fighting Veterans that loves your daily cup of coffee, this recent article I read might be of interest to you. A recent study in the journal BMJ concluded that those diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and drank more coffee, unsweetened tea, or regular water had a 25% lower chance of dying prematurely from any cause. Whereas those who drank sugar sweetened drinks had a 20% higher chance of dying prematurely. [CLICK HERE](#) to read the article in depth.



Safety Brief



While you're doing your spring cleaning this month, ask yourself, "When is the last time I checked my smoke alarms?" Three out of every five home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Test your smoke alarms every month and replace the battery at least once a year. If the alarm makes a "chirping" sound, replace the battery immediately. Smoke alarms should be in every bedroom and in the common areas on each floor of a home. Mount them at least 10 feet from the stove to reduce false alarms, less than 12 inches from the ceiling and away from windows, doors and ducts.

Suicide Prevention

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