

Growing up under an Army veteran father, I sought opportunities early in life to learn selfless service and leadership. I completed undergraduate Army ROTC program and later medical school to become a disciplined and loyal physician leader who can go beyond to make a difference in people's lives. Becoming a physician has been a lifelong, yet rewarding journey.

I was initially exposed to the field of physiatry as a military transitional year resident at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) in Bethesda, MD. I still remember this Wounded Warrior whom I had a privilege to serve in the Amputee Clinic. He was a combat veteran with successful tours in Iraq and Afghanistan who was unfortunately struck by a drunk driver in his neighborhood after returning home, losing both of his legs. Watching such Warriors fight fearlessly to regain their functions and overcome pain inspired me to be a competent specialist for those in need. Under the direction of many military and civilian physiatrists, I was able to learn the importance of maximizing functional gains to improve the overall quality of life.

During my next career as a General Medical Officer (GMO) in the US Army, I was fortunate to have served as a field surgeon with the 82nd Airborne Division at Ft. Bragg, NC. I managed over 4000 soldiers as a brigade surgeon to help them recover with bedside procedures and OMM so that they could perform their duty better as paratroopers. As their brigade surgeon and also paratrooper, I jumped out of military aircrafts with my soldiers in airborne operations to ensure that I am available for them at all times. When forward-deployed in Republic of Korea as a flight surgeon with the 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade, I collaborated with the Center of Excellence from WRNMMC to help establish the regional standards in pain management while starting the only OMM clinic on Korean peninsula for the US military as an osteopathic physician to offer non-invasive treatment modalities.

I was fortunate to have matched PM&R residency and subsequently Pain Medicine fellowship at Larkin Community Hospital in South Miami, FL after completing my active-duty Army service. I pursued PM&R to build a strong foundation in MSK medicine, and Pain Medicine to advance my procedural competency. Completing my GME at a community hospital program afforded me with more hands-on training across various educational settings including non-profit, private and federal institutions. I continued my military service throughout residency and fellowship by volunteering to join the Army Reserve. As difficult as it was to complete my medical training in scrubs and to serve our nation in uniform, it helped me become a more disciplined leader.

10 days after my fellowship graduation, the Army Reserve deployed me on active orders to the Middle East where I served as a brigade surgeon to the 420th Engineer Brigade across the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula. As the only US military physiatrist in the Middle East throughout my deployment, I utilized my clinical skillset as a physiatrist, though in the limited environment, such as ultrasound-guided MSK injections with a portable ultrasound in Kuwait, and OMM and field medicine across the combat theater in Syria and Iraq. I continued my administrative duty as the chief medical advisor on the command team to advance combat health readiness for our soldiers in the brigade. Since my redeployment back to the US, I have been fortunate to work as an interventional pain physician at West Palm Beach VA Medical Center to take care of our nation's veteran heroes.

Becoming a physician has indeed been a lifelong journey. Maturing as a leader has also been a rewarding challenge. From my experiences in medical education and clinical practice to be a competent physiatrist, and in military service on domestic, overseas and combat missions to be a confident leader, I believe that I can be a great advocate for the field of osteopathic PM&R. I will be a great asset to the AOCPMR, and it would be a great honor to be the AOCPMR's next trustee.