

# History of the United States Army Dental Corps

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Edited for the  
Office of the Chief of the  
U.S. Army Dental Corps

May 2011 by jeking

# Revolutionary War



## Citizen Soldiers

Returned home for support, including when sick or wounded

**Military Policy:** Dental care is the soldier's responsibility.

This policy continued through War of 1812, operations on the Western Frontier and the Civil War.



# Policy

Dental care is the Soldier's responsibility.

# Reality

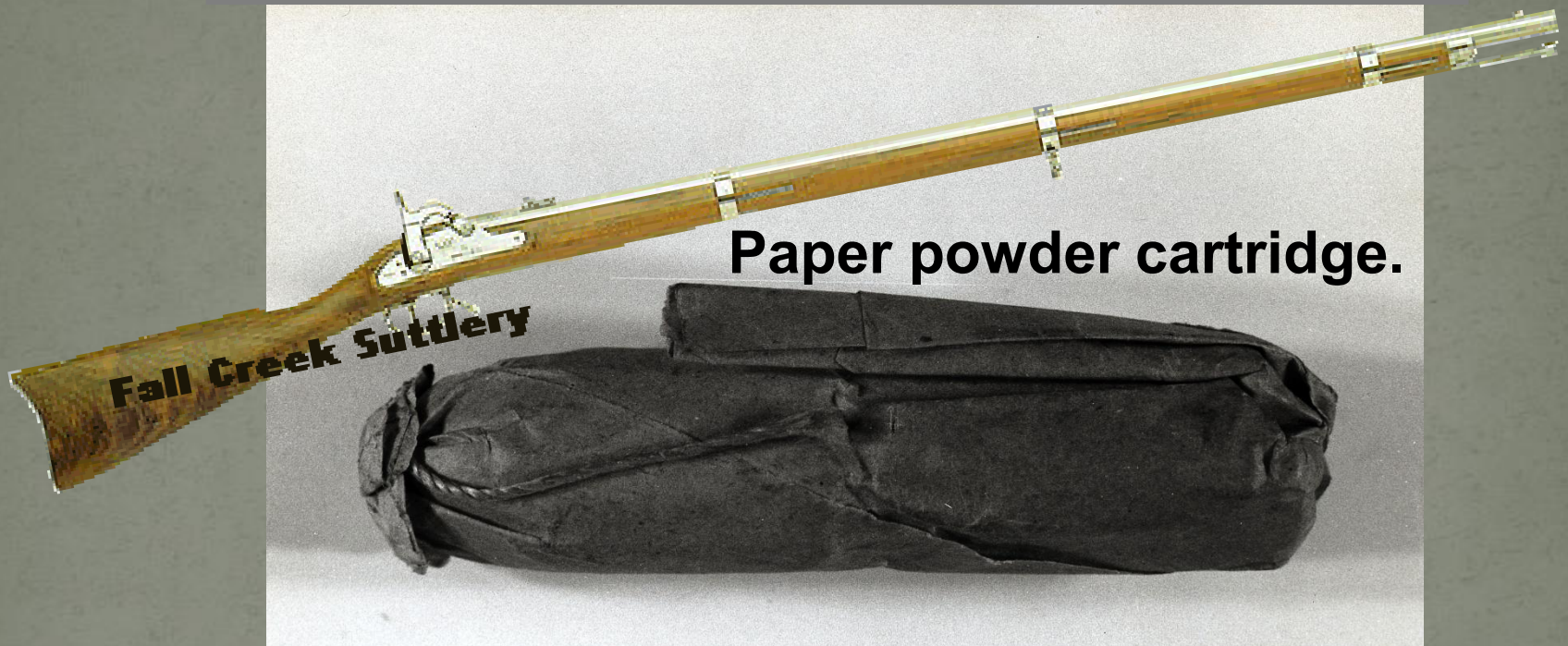
Remote from home and family support:

Treated by

- Laymen in unit
- Hospital Stewards
- Physicians
- Local "practitioners"



# Enlistment Dental Standards



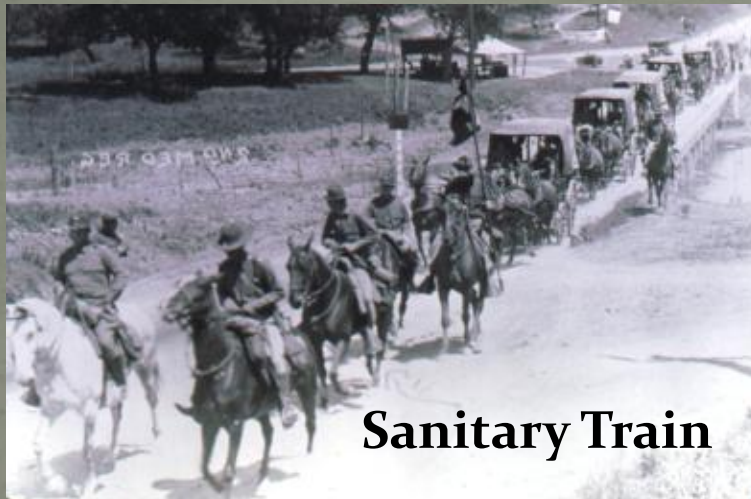
Paper powder cartridge.

Historically soldiers were required enough teeth to bite off the end of the cartridge so that the gun powder and bullet (ball) could be loaded into a muzzle loader rifle. This first dental standard lasted until WWII



# Spanish-American War

Deployment to Philippines and Cuba placed American soldiers on foreign soil, completely remote from sources of dental care. The situation forced the Medical Department to recognize the need for dental specialty.



**Sanitary Train**



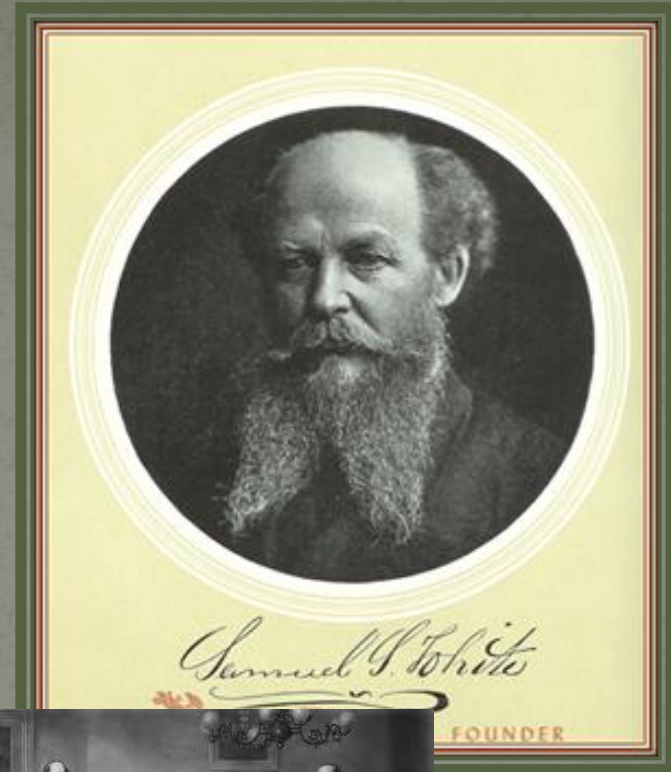
A number of **hospital stewards** were “specialized” into providing dental services. Many of these were actually Trained dentists. These men demonstrated the military value of deployed dental support.

# Civil War

Dr. S.S. White led an ADA delegation to speak with President Lincoln about need for dental support to the military.

Dental Cosmos, Sep 1864

Result. The Union Army had no program for dental care.

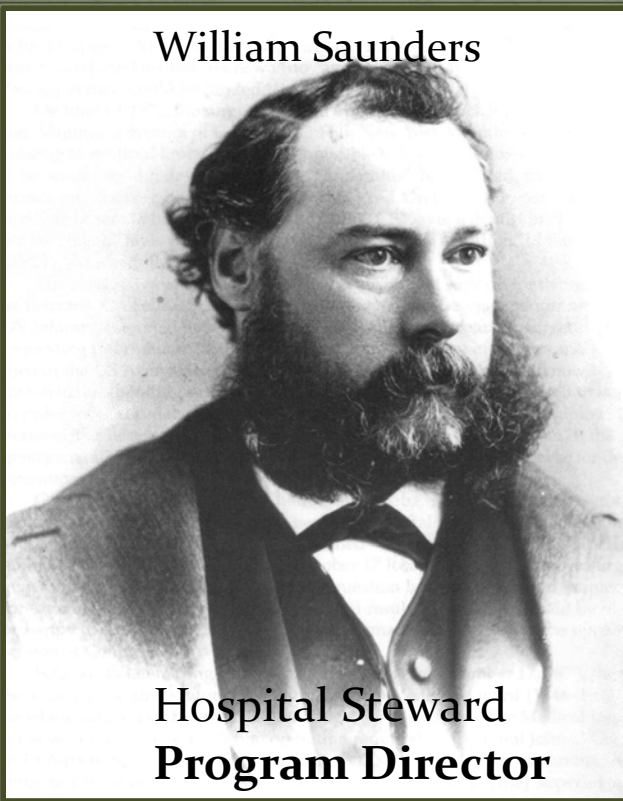


Confederate Army: Conscripted dentists at same rank and pay as physicians.



# First recognized Army dental program

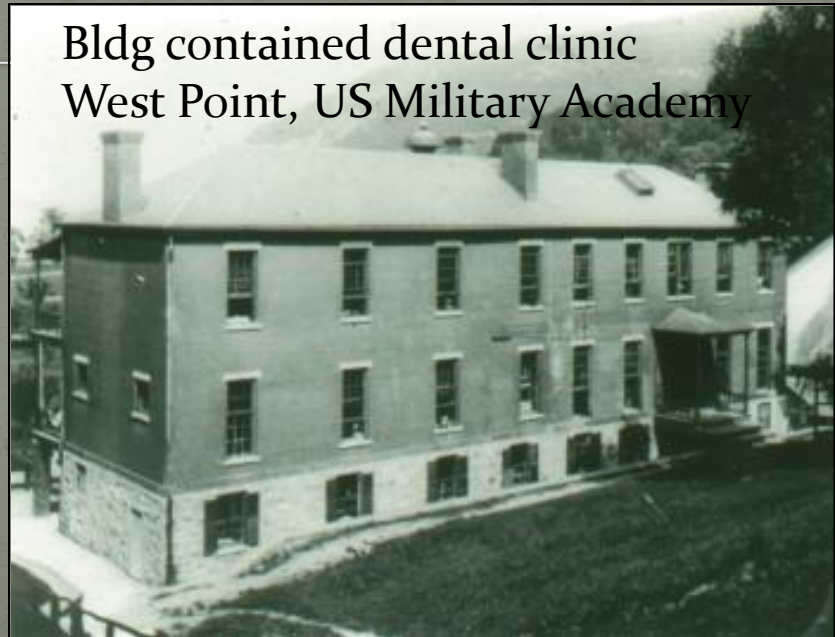
William Saunders



Hospital Steward  
Program Director

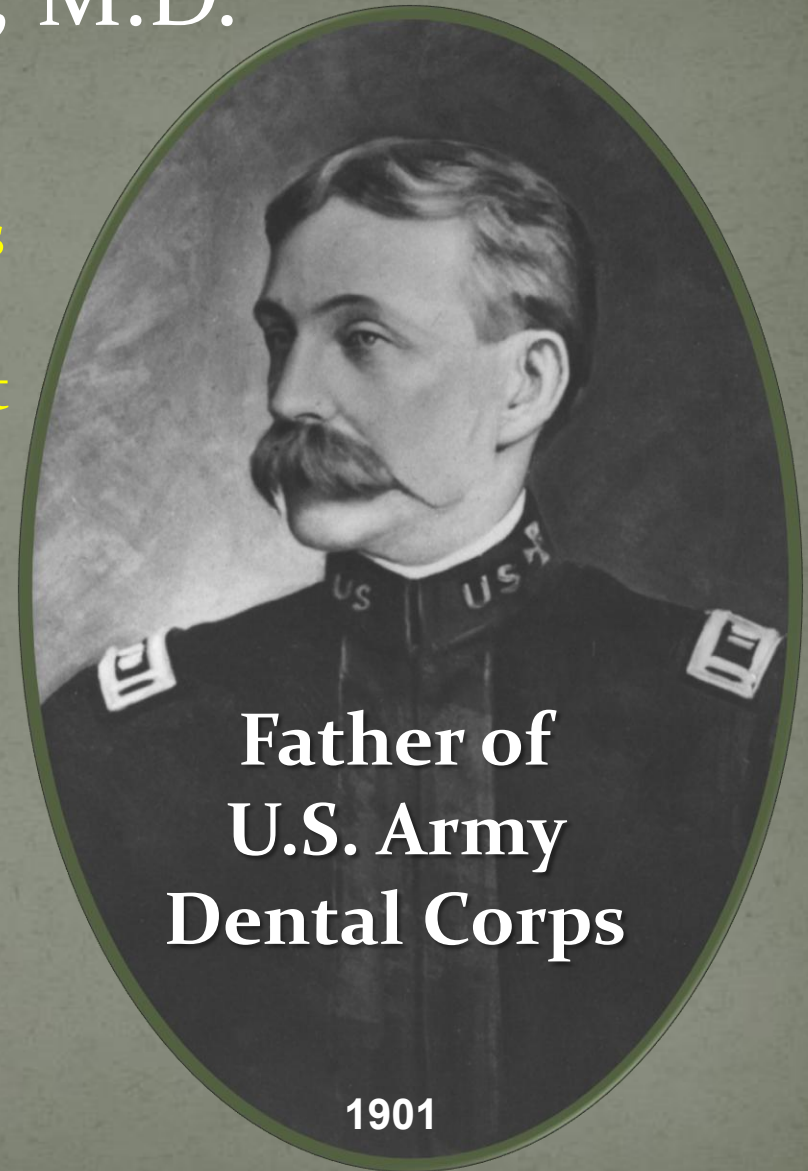
April 4, 1872, a hospital steward was given written orders to provide dental services as part of his regular Duties.

Bldg contained dental clinic  
West Point, US Military Academy



# John Sayre Marshall, M.D.

- Lobbied AMA, War Dept. and Congress military dentists
- **1901** –First Contract dentist (Dental Surgeon)
- Senior Examining and Supervising dentist
- **1911** –First Commissioned Dental Corps Officer
- Promoted to Captain at Army retirement.



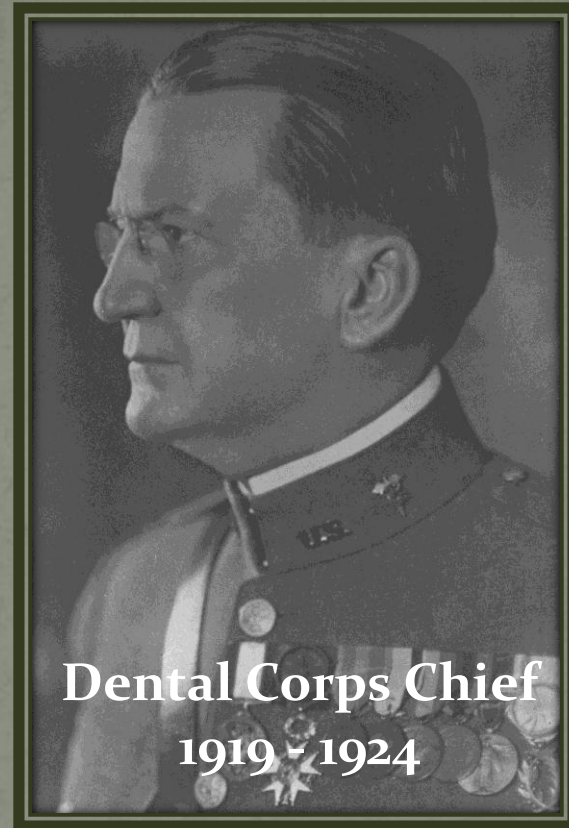
**Father of  
U.S. Army  
Dental Corps**

1901



# Robert Todd Oliver, D.D.S.

- Advocate for Army dentistry as civilian dentist.
- **1901** – One of the first three contract dentists (Dental Surgeons)
- One of the first three Senior Examining and Supervising dentists
- **1911** – Second Commissioned Dental Corps Officer



- Credited with establishing the practices and infrastructure for field dental support.

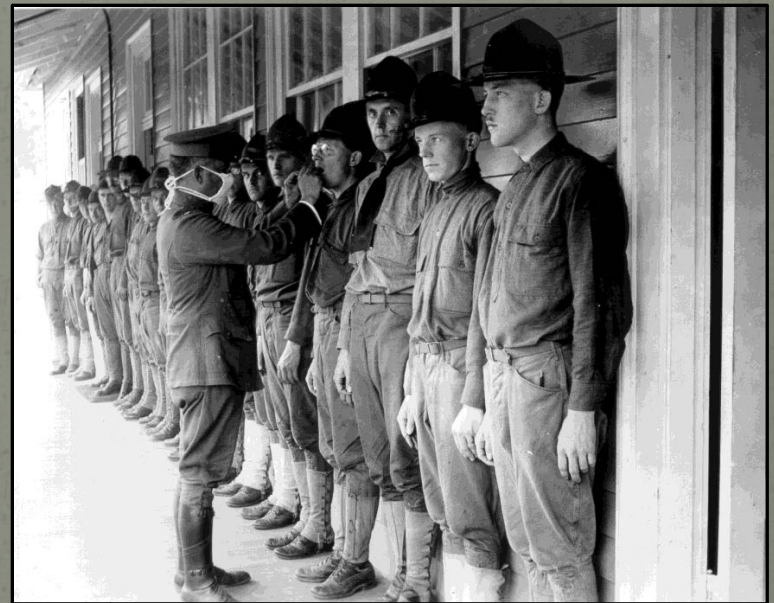
# World War I: Mobilizing the Force

6 April 1917 – War declared on Germany

## Dental Officers on Active Duty

- April 1917 – 86 Officers
- November – 4,620 Officers

Sep 1917 – 891 **Enlisted** dentists in Medical Enlisted Reserve Component were activated as privates.



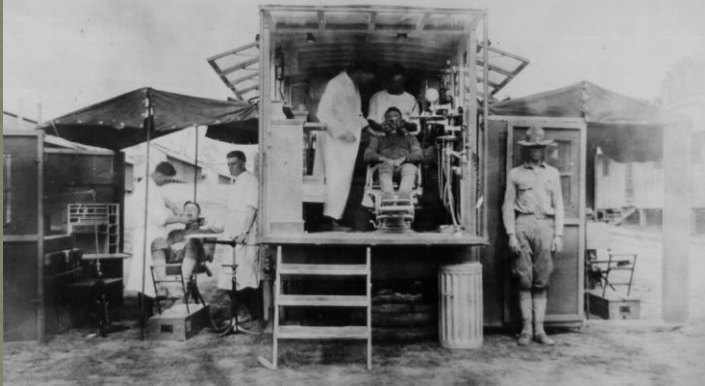
Oral exams at Walter Reed Army Hospital circa 1918.



# World War I

1,684 Dental Corps Officers stationed in Europe

mobility improvised



shelters of convenience



Rapid deployment of many reserves

Non traditional clinic environments

Mobile field and fixed equipment



Woman Red Cross volunteer  
dentist side by side with Active Duty



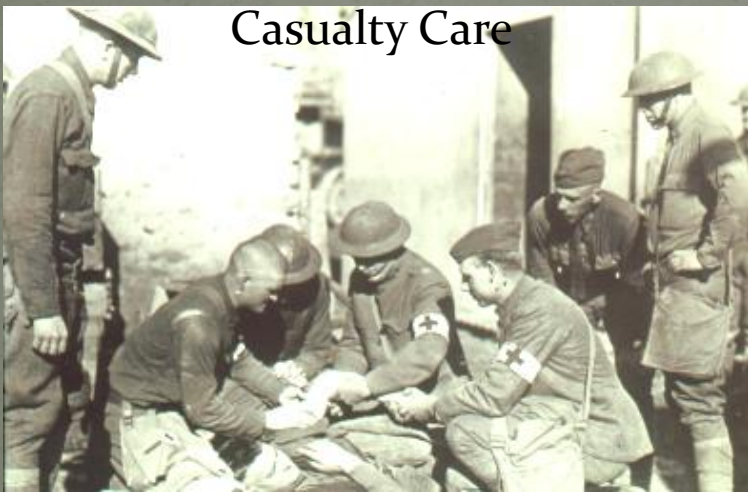
# World War I: Dental Training

Rapid mobilization and deployment required dental training in France

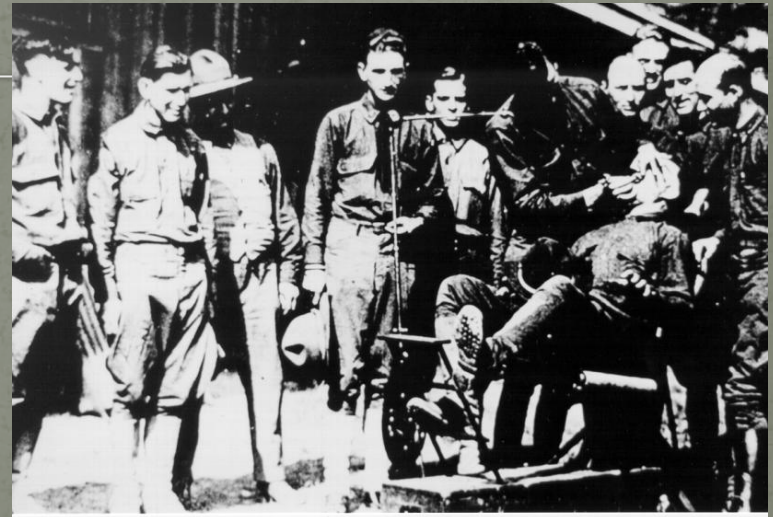
Lessons Captain Oliver brought from Philippines and Mexican Border War experience

Army Sanitary School  
Langres, France

Casualty Care



Dental Section, Nov 1917



March 1918 Dental Officer Basic Course and Enlisted Dental Assistant Course, Fort Oglethorpe Georgia



# Between World Wars :

## Significant improvements

- 1921 Medical Field Services School (Carlisle Brks)
- 1922 Army Dental School

Army Dental School  
Walter Reed Army Hospital  
March 1923



- 1927 Central Dental Laboratories  
Walter Reed  
Letterman  
Fort Sam Houston

# Significant improvements

## Leadership Rank

### **BG Leigh C. Fairbank**

First Dental Corps officer to hold a general officer rank.

Corps Chief 1938 to 1942



### **MG Robert H. Mills**

First Dental Corps officer to hold rank of Major General

Corps Chief 1942 to 1946





# World War II



U.S. enters World War II in 1941 with:

- 2,905 dental officers (RA and RC)
- **15,292 dental officers at peak (1944)**
- No dental command and control
- Most dental personnel assigned to tactical units (Unit Support Concept)



# World War II

Field dental sets don't differ much from World War I versions



Note innovation of electric motor added to replace foot treadle.





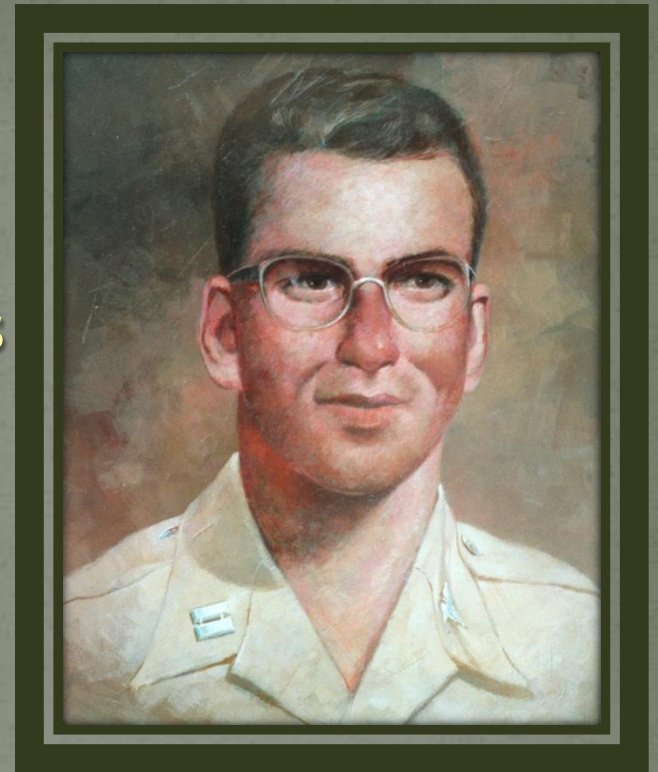
# World War II

Medal of Honor Recipient

Benjamin Lewis Salomon

Captain US Army Dental Corps

- June 22 1944, Captain Salomon volunteered to take duty as Battalion Surgeon on Pacific island of Saipan. KIA 7 July 1944.
- Directed safe evacuation of ambulatory wounded and stayed behind to cover their retreat against a banzai attack which he had no hope of personal survival.
- Captain Salomon received the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously, 58 year later in 2002



# Korean War (1950-1953)

- Early-on concept of dental support same as WW II, **Unit Support**



- Later, concept of **Area Dental Support** evolved but not completely implemented
- Very little improvement in field equipment



# MG Joseph L. Bernier

Chief of U.S. Army Dental Corps

1960 - 1967

- The Army's first oral pathologist.
- Promoted from Colonel to Major General in 1960 and served as Chief of Dental Corps until 1967.
- Credited as one of the founders of the American Academy of Oral Pathology and for establishing oral pathology as a specialty of dentistry.



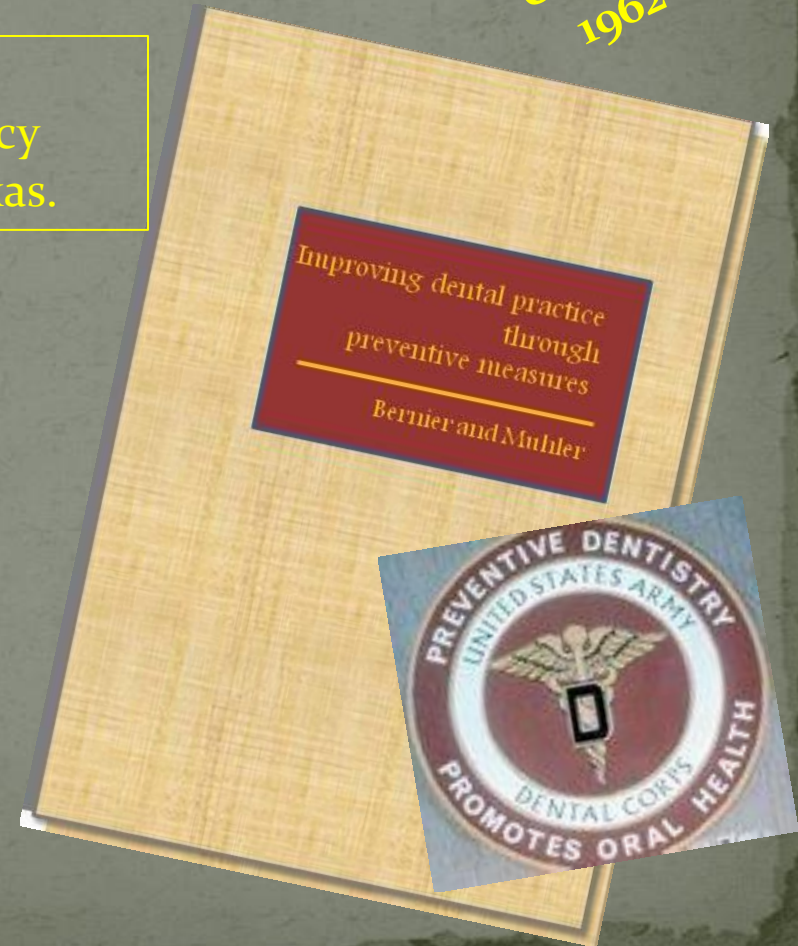
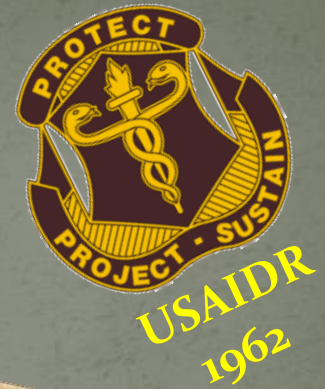
# MG Joseph L. Bernier

Advanced Graduate dental education and military dental research

For example 1961.

Two-year Army General Dentistry Residency Program was established at Fort Hood, Texas.

- Known for changing Army dentistry paradigm from reparative to preventive dentistry
- Leading the “preventive dentistry movement” in civilian practice.





# Vietnam War 1962-1973

- Concept of support: combination of unit, hospital and area support



- Clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of dental command and control over dental operations

# MG Robert B. Shira

## Chief of U.S. Army Dental Corps

1967 -1971

- Assistance visit to Vietnam in 1968 resulted in improvement to combat service support:
- Dental Combat Effectiveness Program (DCEP)
  - Pre-deployment Interception
  - Enhanced deployed dental capability
  - Prevention: Fluoride “Brush-in”s, Oral Health Instruction.





# Vietnam War: DCEP

## Dental Combat Effectiveness Program



Periodic oral exams and triage of urgent needs for care.



First to use Intermediate Restorative Material (IRM) to avoid extraction

Semi-annual brush-in with 9% Stannous Fluoride

# MG Edwin H. Smith, Jr.

Chief of U.S. Army Dental Corps

1971 - 1975

Under his leadership:

- Management improvements'
  - Updated dental workload reporting and analysis
  - Implemented use of Dental Therapy Assistant (DTA)

Continued preventive emphasis

- Army Oral Health Maintenance Program
- Community Health Hygienist





# MG Surindar N Bhaskar

Chief of U.S. Army Dental Corps

1975 - 1978

Under his leadership:  
Installation Dental Service  
Management Program (IDSMP)  
demonstration that more autonomy  
in dental management improved  
dental service (1976-1978)

IDSMP made Public Law 95-485 in 1978

Chief of DC/Assist SG for Dental  
Services two star rank by law.

Dental Activities commanded by DC  
officer

Dental Activity Commander responsible  
to installation commander



# MG George Kuttas

## Chief of U.S. Army Dental Corps 1978 - 1982

Guided smooth transition to Public Law 95-485 and the recently Established Health Services Command.

Renewed emphasis on neglected TOE equipment sets and organization.

Refined the use of workload reporting and using it for resource management.



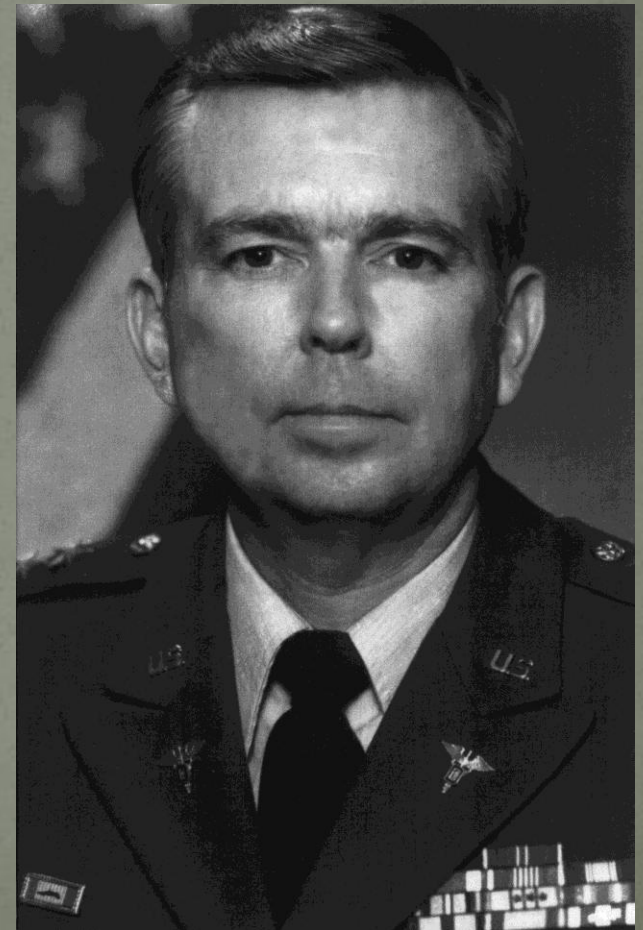


# MG H. Thomas Chandler

Chief of U.S. Army Dental Corps

1982 - 1986

Direct experience with Installation Dental Service Management Program (IDSMP) during his days as Senior Dental Corps Staff Officer prepared MG Chandler to refine evidence based management practices including improving automation in clinics.



# MG Bill B. Lefler

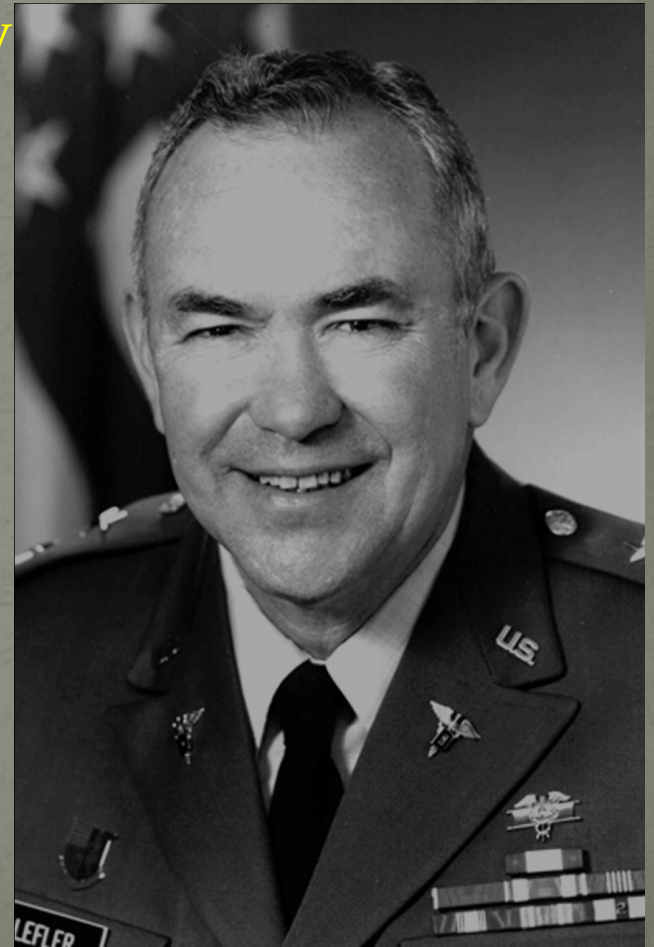
Chief of U.S. Army Dental Corps

1986 - 1990

Focused the Army Oral Health Maintenance Program more directly on troop readiness (Oral Health Fitness Program)

Under pressures to reduce the size of the dental force, successfully defended manpower requirements

As the Gulf War (1990) escalated he guided Army dentistry through the high tempo mobilization and deployment





# MG Thomas R. Tempel

Chief of U.S. Army Dental Corps

1990-1994

Guided the Army Dental Care System through one of the most tumultuous periods of Army restructuring in history. TOE and TDA re-organization occurred while Desert Storm, Hurricane Andrew, Restore Home (Somalia peacekeeping) stretched dental capabilities.

Focused care for other than active duty (OTAD) on developing insurance programs.

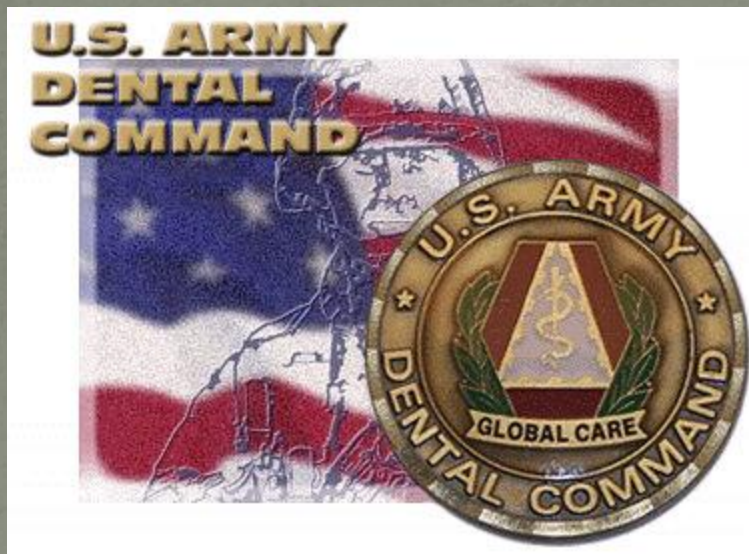
Acquired additional responsibility of being the Deputy Surgeon General.



1 November 1993 (provisional)

2 October 1994(permanent)

# A major event in the history of Army Dentistry is the establishment of U.S. Army Dental Command.



DENCOM was established with persistent advocacy of its first Commander, Colonel Patrick Sculley.

A level of management autonomy that maximizes efficiency and effectiveness to serve soldier and their Commanders.



# MG John J. Cuddy

Chief of U.S. Army Dental Corps

1994- 1998

MG Cuddy was assigned to primary duties as Commander of the Army Medical Department Center and School in Fort Sam Houston, TX. His simultaneous position of Dental Corps Chief required him to split his dental staff between Falls Church, VA and San Antonio. In 1996 he became Deputy Surgeon General and moved his office back to Falls Church

He tackled a very severe manpower short fall with a variety of creative measures (Special Pays, Health Professions Scholarship Program, contracting civilian manpower)



# MG Patrick D Sculley

Chief of U.S. Army Dental Corps

1999 - 2002

**1 June 1999 MG Sculley**

became the Chief, U.S. Army Dental Corps, the Army Deputy Surgeon General, and the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Medical Command.

He relied heavily on the OTSG dental Staff and DENCOM while his responsibilities as DCS and at MEDCOM demanded attention, especially on and after Sept 11, 2001.

Army dentistry continued to improve business practices to compensate for the stresses of heavy dental deployments





# MG Joseph G. Webb, Jr.

Chief of U.S. Army Dental Corps

2002 - 2006

1 August 2002 MG. Webb became the Chief, US Army Dental Corps. He also assumed the duties of Commanding General, Pacific Regional Medical Command, and Tripler Army Medical Center, TRICARE Pacific Lead Agent, and Commander (PROFIS) of the 18th MEDCOM. In June 2004 MG Webb became the US Army Deputy Surgeon General and was reassigned to the Surgeon General's Office in Falls Church, VA.



# MG Russell J. Czerw

Chief of U.S. Army Dental Corps

2006 - 2010

Chief of the US Army Dental Corps.

Commander, US Army Medical  
Department Center and School

Post Commander  
Fort Sam Houston, Texas.





# MG Ted Wong

Chief of U.S. Army Dental Corps

2010 - present

Chief of the US Army Dental Corps.

Commanding General  
Brooke Army Medical Center  
Fort Sam Houston, TX.

Commanding General  
Southern Regional Medical Command





# Field Dentistry in 2010





