



Media Release

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Robertson Blood Center recognizes donors

FORT HOOD, Texas – Robertson Blood Center honored the past year’s top individual and unit blood donors at its annual Donor Recognition Ceremony Jan. 26, at Club Hood.

January is National Blood Donor Recognition Month, a time set aside to specifically thank donors and raise community awareness about the ongoing blood donation mission.

“Today’s about saying thanks to those who have willingly given of themselves so that others may have a precious opportunity for life,” said guest speaker Maj. Gen. Kendall Cox, III Corps and Fort Hood deputy commander. “It is an absolute honor to participate in something that recognizes a unique piece of heroism that is making a difference in our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines, plus the family members and civilians, who support our nation.”

While the nation is grateful for all that everyone has given, Cox said it is important to remember that there is still a great need for blood and he challenged everyone to take the time to donate. “If you have the opportunity, willingness and are able to, make a difference in someone else’s life,” he said.

The first group recognized at the ceremony was the top whole blood donors who provided six or more whole blood donations in fiscal year 2014.

Donators can only give a pint of whole blood every 56 days, per FDA regulations, so dedicated donors can usually make six whole blood donations a year.

But by carefully planning his donations at the very start and end of the fiscal year, Larry Secrest managed seven donations which earned him the center’s top whole blood donor award, according to 1st Lt. Sarah Matthews, director, Robertson Blood Center.

Other top whole blood donors with six donations each were Sgt. Jeremy Armstrong, Robert Boswell, Sgt. Charles Demler, James Evans, Master Sgt. Daniel Griego, William Harper, Kristina Hunter, Pfc. Mark Jorges, Maj. Robert Mayers, Carlos Torres-Collazo and Erika Withers.

The next category of donors recognized was the top platelet donors who have donated nine or more units of platelets. It can take up to two hours per visit to donate platelets and may be donated every two weeks.

“Donating platelets is a big time commitment and we truly appreciate the extra effort. Many burn and cancer patients now have the chance to heal and survive thanks to donors such as Monte Culbertson, who spent more than 42 hours at Robertson Blood Center donating the most platelets, 21 units,” Matthews said.

Other top platelet donors were: Jarod Simmons, 12 donations; Cpl. Jeffrey Santana, 11; Spc. Gladis Felix-Urrea, 10; Pfc. Brandon Spaulding and Pfc. Zachary Clark-Garcia, 9.

The center also recognized the units on Fort Hood that made the most total donations in the fiscal year. III Corps Reception Detachment earned top honors with 623 followed by 1st Squadron, 7th Cav. Reg. with 445 units; 2nd Battalion, 12th Cav. Reg, 369; 1st Squadron, 9th Cav. Reg, 235 and Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center, 214.

The unit blood coordinators who have done the most to help the center organize and advertise blood drives within their unit were Donna Smith from Horse Detachment and Staff Sgt. Joseph Farrand, NCO Academy.

The center also recognized the top donors in the history of Robertson Blood Center—those who gave 20 or more donations since the naming of Robertson Blood Center in 2000 to 2014.

Col. (Ret.) Joan Vanderlaan led the pack with 53 units. Vanderlaan retired as the deputy commander for nursing at CRDAMC in 2011, but continues to donate blood as much as her schedule allows. She saw firsthand how vital the need for blood is throughout her career, serving as a neo-natal nurse and as a Soldier during her deployments.

“When you need blood, you need blood and nothing else will do. Blood isn’t something we can manufacture. People have to donate it,” she said. “I always think of it that in just about an hour and a half of my time, I can save a life. Nothing is more important than that.”

The other top donors since 2000 were Monte Culbertson, 45 donations; Robert Lyon, 44; Robert Boswell and Timothy Stroud, 43; Col. (Ret.) Elaine Perry, 41; Prosper Walker and Christina Hunter

40; William Harper, 32; James Vineyard, 31; Chief Warrant Officer 5 Timothy Connor, 33; David Leach, 28; Larry Secrest, 26; John Lauck, 25 and Sgt. Aldo Camminati, 20.

Community members wanting more information about donating blood, please contact the Robertson Blood Center at (254) 285-5808.