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## A V.M.D. Serving in the Army Veterinary Corps

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# A V.M.D. Serving in the Army Veterinary Corps by Second Lieutenant Scott Goldman, V03

**W**hen most people think of veterinary medicine, the phrase “world travel” usually does not immediately jump into mind. With the ever-growing importance of veterinarians in public health as well as wildlife and livestock management, however, their worldwide role has become increasingly well defined. Many jobs may offer veterinarians the chance to travel abroad, but one University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine graduate in particular seems to have a talent for finding ways to practice veterinary medicine in a truly global fashion.

When Dr. Kathleen M. Kral graduated from Penn in 1985, she initially pursued a career as a small animal clinician at hospitals in Cherry Hill, NJ, and Washington, DC. When small animal practice began to lose its luster for her, she started to look at other career possibilities. After writing to a number of veterinary societies abroad, Dr. Kral accepted a position in a busy small animal clinic in Singapore. There she found a unique combination of Eastern and Western veterinary medicine in practice and gained invaluable experience working with a variety of diseases that are rarely if ever seen by most veterinarians stateside.

With her interest in foreign service piqued by her experiences in Singapore, Dr. Kral continued to look for new opportunities in veterinary medicine outside of the U.S. While perusing the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association (JAVMA) one day, she came across a job listing that ultimately led to her position as the Animal Health Coordinator for Cambodia with the American Friends Service Committee. Over her two and a half years in this position, she provided invaluable service in animal welfare to the people of Cambodia, including the daunting task of managing a laboratory that produced 600,000 doses of vaccine against hemorrhagic septicemia. During her stay in Cambodia, Dr. Kral managed to perform her duties despite incredible hardships and cultural obstacles including rampant crime, muggings, car thefts, a considerable language barrier, poverty, and the very real threat of mine fields throughout most of the country.

Upon her return to the United States, Dr. Kral again sought out ways in which she could practice a type of veterinary medicine considerably broader than that found in the typical clinic. Once again something in JAVMA caught her eye; this time it was a recruitment adver-

tisement for the United States Army Veterinary Corps. Inspired by her experiences overseas, and with a new, more intense appreciation for the rights and privileges of American citizenship, she decided to join and was commissioned as a Captain in the U.S. Army.

Her first overseas tour with the Army took her to Guam, where she was responsible for the general care of Military Working Dogs (MWDs) and service-members’ pets, as well as for public health services including sanitary inspections of military food providers in the Pacific. During this period, Captain Kral also conducted quarterly clinics for service pets in Singapore and visits to the military island of Diego Garcia to treat the MWDs employed there.

One of the many benefits of being a military veterinarian is the opportunity to engage and even direct a variety of unique and exciting programs both domestically and abroad. Two examples of this are Captain Kral’s spearheading of a small animal vaccination mission for stray and pet animals in the island nation of Palau and her work providing public health guidance and direction in Mongolia.

The Republic of Palau, found approximately two hours south of Guam by air, consists of 343 islands in the Pacific. Only nine of the islands are inhabited; most of the people live in the capital of Koror, where Captain Kral was sent on a joint Army-Navy mission to provide basic vaccinations for hundreds of stray animals. After overcoming initial political and communications barriers, Captain Kral and her team were ultimately able to vaccinate and deworm 750 animals in five days (far more than even the government of Palau expected)

and lay the groundwork for future missions and animal health initiatives for the country.

In Mongolia, Captain Kral was an integral member of a military team that provided education to the local population on food safety issues and inspections of food processing and storage facilities. The Mongolians have had little exposure to many of the food safety tech-

niques that we take for granted here in the United States, and Captain Kral’s team taught a variety of subjects, ranging from the types of food inspections available and the equipment used during those inspections to the proper implementation of food codes and the attainment of the considerably strict standards prescribed by the United States military.

Following her return to the States, Captain Kral chose to continue her career as an Army Officer and was therefore granted the opportunity to

pursue an advanced degree in a specialty area. Currently, she is finishing the Master of Public Health & Tropical Medicine program at Tulane University in New Orleans. As of February 2001, she has been promoted to Major, and following her completion of the program at Tulane, she will once again be sent abroad by the Army to provide her knowledge and expertise wherever it is needed most.

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Second Lieutenant Scott Goldman, V’03, is attending Penn through the United States Army Health Professionals Scholarship Program. After graduation, he will enter the United States Army Veterinary Corps, which is responsible for research and development, animal welfare, and food safety for the armed forces. He hopes to pursue a board-certification in pathology at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. For more information on the Veterinary Corps program, visit [www.goarmy.com/job/amedd/avch.htm](http://www.goarmy.com/job/amedd/avch.htm).

