
“Patient Safety and Quality of Care in the Military Health System”

Testimony of Dez Del Barba

Before the House Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Military Personnel

March 30, 2022

Good afternoon Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Gallagher, and Members of the Subcommittee,

My name is Dez Del Barba. Before I begin, I would first like to thank Chairwoman Jackie Speier and everyone on the subcommittee for allowing me to speak before you all today and tell my story. I would also like to thank my parents Kamni and Mark Del Barba, my girlfriend Julia Ruiz for being here with me today and from the very beginning, my sister Drisa Del Barba who is unable to attend today, and lastly my legal team (Daniel Maharaj and Elizabeth Zwibel) for supporting me through this journey.

I grew up around a military family my whole life. Both my mother and my aunt are first generation immigrants from India, and both are combat veterans. My mom retired after serving over twenty years and my aunt is currently on her twenty-ninth year of Military Service with the US Army. My first cousin (also like my brother) is serving in the US Air Force. My Great Grandfather spent three Years in the US Army of those he spent 117 days in Germany fighting against the Nazis. My Grandfather, who was a second-Generation Italian, joined the US Marine and served four years.

Many people have dreams and aspirations of having a career in tech, medicine, engineering or law. I had dreams and aspirations of having a career in the United States Military and it was something I knew I always wanted to do from a very young age. I wanted to join the military right out of high school, however I was guided to pursue a bachelor's degree first before getting commissioned as an Officer.

I was an extremely healthy and athletic 21-year-old man before I enlisted in the US Army. I never had any health issues and never had any major injuries besides an ACL tear on my right knee. I was very excited to start my military career in the United States Army.

The Army is the only branch that makes it a requirement for their officers to complete BCT before they can attend OCS. I was accepted into the OCS program as I had a few semesters of college left to finish before obtaining my degree. I decided to take a leave from absence from college to complete BCT, return to school, then upon graduation from college attend OCS.

I shipped out to Fort Benning GA on January 7, 2019, and like many young men and women I was excited, energetic, enthusiastic and even anxious for this new adventure. I was assigned to Bravo company 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry Regiment.

However, my aspiring military career was taken away from after thirty-five days in the military. Thirty-Five (35) days is all it took for the United States Army to destroy my life. I was left grossly neglected by the United States Military health care system and by my Basic Training leadership at Fort Benning, GA.

In my statement I have provided a thorough timeline of events on what happened to me during my time with the Army that I will discuss briefly now.

On Feb 3, 2019, I started to feel mild pain in both of my lower extremities. My legs felt extremely sore, and it was starting to get difficult to do something as simple as squat onto my bed or get down on one knee to tie my boots. I decided to go see the MTAC (Athletic Trainer) the following day to make sure I didn't strain anything in my legs.

The following day, on Feb 4, 2019, I put in my pass to the Drill Sergeants to go get treated at Maneuver Tactical Athlete Care (MTAC) Monday morning. Apparently, there was some logistical issues happening with the Drill Sergeants and as a result I was about 30 min late to my appointment. As we showed up for the appointment, the athletic trainer came out and said "You guys are late. Go the f*** away." We didn't even have a chance to explain to him that it wasn't even our fault that we were late, and I did not understand why someone would say something like this when we were coming to receive treatment. I proceeded to continue training that day and fight through the aches in my body.

On February 5, 2019, my request for sick call was granted again, as I was still experiencing the same symptoms and this time, I was actually able to be seen by the same athletic trainer that yelled at us the day before. The athletic trainer evaluated my legs and I explained to him they were very sore. He gave me some stretches to do and just told me my legs were sore from all the running in our combat boots that we were doing. I unknowingly trusted his professional opinion. I got a "No running/lower body exercises" profile and continued to do the same training as my battle buddies.

On February 6, 2019, my request to go to MTAC was granted again, and I was seen by the same athletic trainer. I was examined for knee, quad and hamstring pain. No vitals were taken on me. My exams were taken with all my clothes on even with the complaints being about my leg pain. I was yet again told to return to the barracks and given stretching guidelines. I was told to return if pain still exists with my same "No running/lower body exercises" profile.

On Feb 7, 2019, I woke up to go sick call as my symptoms has worsened. It felt as though I had sandbags strapped to my ankles and every step, I took was more painful than the last. That's how my legs were feeling. I was also experiencing severe throat pain at this time as well.

I waited about an hour in 40-degree Georgia weather to be seen by a medical professional. After finally getting my number called, I was seen by a Physician Assistant (PA). I told the PA of my leg pain and how my throat had been hurting. I informed her how it was becoming difficult for me to swallow and eat my food/drink. She proceeded to swab my throat for a Strep A culture.

With Strep A there are 2 strains, one can come back in 5-10 minutes with results and the other strain takes about 24-48 hours to come back with results. The rapid test came back negative, and the PA just gave me throat lozenges to sooth my throat. As I reminded her again of my severe leg pain, she proceeded to tell me it was because of the training we were doing; which didn't make sense to me as I had a lower body profile and hadn't trained legs for the past few days. I asked her if I could be put on bed rest (no training at all) but she said the lower body profile was enough. She then told me if the other culture came back positive that I would be notified.

On Feb 8, 2019, I went back to MTAC for physical therapy for knee pain. With no vitals being taken, my lower extremities were examined while I was fully clothed, and it was determined that they were fully functional for "squats and lunges". The staff told me to continue stretching and I was returned to my company to continue training.

That same day at 12:26 pm; my throat culture from the prior day came back positive. A handwritten note stated the last 4 of my SSN, my name and date of birth. It had my company and platoon number as well. The note also stated, "Positive for Strep A, notify Monday February 11, 2019 in the AM". This note was also entered into my medical records on the database. However, despite the positive test results, no one contacted me or my command to notify us of the positive result that could have save me, my body and my military career.

Instead, on Feb 9, 2019, I went back to MTAC again for severe leg pain. I informed the same athletic trainer that my legs were seriously hurting. He informed to keep me on lower body profile and gave me more stretches to do. Despite my conditions, I was still able to complete a PT test (being exempt from 2-mile run) scoring 42 Push ups (60 points out); 69 Sit-ups (86 points); and Eagle Tower that afternoon. I skipped the rope event because my body just couldn't take the pain.

That evening I put in a request to go to sick call the following morning. That same evening at about 6:00pm SSG Ken Del Valle (a prior USAF airman transitioning over to the US Army) tried to get the help I needed (without my knowledge). SSG Del Valle could clearly see something was wrong with me. He reached out to DS Muravy who was two buildings away helping other privates. Ken expressed his belief that I was very sick, and that I should be taken to be seen that night. The DS asked if I (Del Barba) had gone to the hospital, to which he replied that I had been there already. The DS then suggested that there's likely little that could be done then.

On Sunday morning, Feb 10, 2019, I went to sick call again. During this trip to medical I was harassed, bullied and ridiculed by some Drill SGT for leaving training again.

I arrived at the Emergency Department at sick call. Prior to going to check in at the ED, there are 3 flights of stairs you have to go up, and I was told by my DS that I was not permitted to take the elevator as I recalled him stating that "Privates aren't allowed to take elevators". My legs were in so much pain that each step I took exerted so much energy out of me. I was finally seen at 0758 AM.

My medical records states "patient complains of sore throat since Wednesday to troop medical clinic, meds given, still has pain, no cough, hoarse voice." I was seen by Physician, and he asked me questions about how I was feeling. As I informed him of the unbearable leg and throat pain I was experiencing he proceeded to check my throat and tell me that I was fine.

The interaction with the doctor took all of three minutes. He clocked out of the room and left without saying anything further after three minutes. **Three minutes** is all the time he afforded me to evaluate what was happening inside my body that was causing me the worst pain I had never felt or experienced in my life. To make matters even worse, had this doctor ever bothered to check in my medical records, he would have seen I had tested positive for Strep A from information put in by the PA on the previous Friday. I was then discharged yet again with no antibiotics or medicine besides 800 mg of ibuprofen and throat lozenges you can purchase at your local pharmacy.

That evening I was in so much pain, a few of my battle buddies started massaging my legs and continuously tried to take care of me as I lay on my bed in the barracks. I took the ibuprofen and throat lozenges every 30 minutes hoping and praying the pain in my legs and throat will subside even for a few minutes.

That night I was in so much pain, I couldn't even fall asleep. I fell off my bunk because I was so lethargic, weak and in pain I didn't even have the strength to sit still. I had the feeling of needing to use the restroom but couldn't even get myself to go. It hurt so much to just walk 10 feet to the bathroom, I had to splash water on my face to get a second of relief...

My fellow battle buddies on fire watch saw me fall out of bed and they saw me struggle to get to the bathroom. At this point at around 3 or 3:30 AM EST, they searched for a DS to get help for me. It isn't until around 4-4:30 AM that a DS was found. He asked me if I really wanted to go to the ER, because if I miss today's day of training, I would be recycled and have to do a phase of BCT over again. I said I needed to go, and he walked away and said to meet him in his truck. I was left alone, and I struggled to walk without any pain my legs. A battle buddy of mine with a strained ankle had crutches, he gave them to me. Two other battle buddies helped me move my way to the truck which was about 50 yards away from my bed. As I am rushed to the ER at Martin Army Community Hospital, I was seen by and it was noted that I had swelling in both legs and it appeared I could walk but was uncoordinated. I was then taken by ambulance to Piedmont Hospital in Columbus GA at 0653 AM. The last thing I remember is the doctor cutting open my pant legs, numbing my left leg with some needle and proceeding to make a small incision on the left leg with a small scalpel. Black and purplish rotting flesh oozed out of the incision and the next thing I know I had an oxygen mask put over my mouth and then everything turned black.

I was placed in a medically induced coma during this time. The next series of events that happened to me I have no recollection of but are noted in my records.

On Monday, February 11 at 4:00 AM (PST), my parents received a phone call from Captain Andrew T. Schmidt, Bravo Company Commander and were advised to fly immediately to Columbus, Georgia, as I was in ICU and preparing to undergo my first surgery. Piedmont Doctors informed my parents that I had contracted Necrotizing Fasciitis from my Strep A infection and that I would need immediate lifesaving emergency surgery. Before my parents arrived in Atlanta, GA I had already undergone multiple debridement surgeries.

On Monday, February 11, my parents landed at 8:30PM in Atlanta, GA and were rushed to Piedmont Hospital, arriving there at approximately 10:00 PM. The doctors informed them that I was in extremely critical condition, and they were unsure if I would live. They were told that my chances of surviving were estimated at 10%.

On Tuesday, February 12, I underwent more debridement surgeries. Doctors from Piedmont Hospital coordinated with doctors from Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center (ISR) in San Antonio, Texas. Dr. Floyd Orthopedic Trauma Surgeon Specialist with over 22 years' experience informed my parents to make their "phone calls". My condition was uncertain and there was a high risk of me losing all four of my limbs.

On Wednesday, February 13, at approximately 3:00 PM, my transfer to the University of Alabama, Birmingham (UAB) burn unit was approved. I was flown to UAB in a specially equipped aircraft while my family drove.

On Wednesday, February 13, Piedmont doctors performed 19 surgeries to save my life.

On Wednesday, February 13, a kind woman stopped by to talk to my family. She informed them that her son was a Drill Sgt at Ft Benning and that 56 soldiers had tested positive for Strep A at Fort Benning around the same time that I did. My mom still has this text message saved from February 13, 2019.

On Thursday, February 14, in the morning, doctors from ISR arrived at UAB to assess my condition. That early afternoon, the doctors informed my parents that in order to save my life, they would need to amputate my left leg. They stated that the disease was very aggressive and that it had eaten away lots of flesh, muscle and tissue from my body already. They also informed my family that I would need to be moved to the ICU burn unit at Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center at BAMC in San Antonio, TX.

On Friday, February 15, I remained intubated and in critical condition. My transfer to Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center was approved. The doctors were unsure if my right leg could be saved but indicated they would do all they could to save it.

On Saturday, February 16, I was transported via private air ambulance to Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center, San Antonio, Texas to prepare for my additional surgeries and treatment that would save my life.

On Tuesday, February 19, Maneuver Center of Excellence Command Surgeon LTC Ethan Miles, SFC Congdon and a Master Sergeant (name unknown) from Ft. Benning met with my parents. LTC Miles informed my family that there were "56 positive cases in [my] company," and "405 positive cases in two brigades at Fort Benning" during the time that I contracted Strep A.

Today as I sit in front of you all, three years and nineteen days have passed since I contracted Necrotizing Fasciitis from a Strep Infection at Fort Benning, and I still have **ZERO** answers on whether or not the Army has conducted a prompt and thorough investigation into the medical care administered to me. After **one thousand, one hundred and forty-three** (1143) days, I still do not have clear answers on the status of any quality assurance investigation that may or may not have been initiated promptly or why it has taken over three years for it to be completed.

What happened to me did not have to happen. This was preventable. I can sit here and speak all day about what happened to me but my pictures will put my words into perspective of the damage that has been done to my body and my mind. Please see the attached photos for a better understanding of what I went through and what could have been avoided had the medical providers at Ft Benning given me adequate medical attention or promptly treated me after receiving my positive Strep results.

My life has been changed forever. That once active, and healthy 21-year-old man now must deal with a lifetime of challenges and obstacles because of the neglect I suffered at the hand of the medical staff and command at Ft. Benning, Ga provided me with.

If I was your son, if I was your brother, if I was your loved one, would you sit stagnant waiting for answers? I would think not. You would fight for their rights, and you would never stop until the questions are answered and the responsible people are held accountable.

I understand that the Medical Quality Assurance is managed by the military medical community. I understand that quality assurance takes time and patience. However, my medical records from Ft. Benning **total less than one hundred pages** and I cannot seem to understand or comprehend how the Army has taken **over one thousand, one hundred and forty-three** (1143) days, but still has not concluded on the Quality Assurance Investigation in my case.

I have enclosed with my statement, all the correspondence I have received from the Army Command regarding the status of my QAI for the committee to see how convoluted this process has been and how inconsistent the Army is when responding to inquires made by myself or members of Congress on the status of any QAI in my case throughout the years.¹

¹ 1) AMEDD Quality and Safety Center Fort Benning, GA (dated 05-05-2021); 2) Surgeon General (dated 08-19-2021); 3) Regional Health Command-Atlantic (08-24-2021); 4) Under Secretary of Defense (dated 12-15-2021), 5) Head-Quarters, and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (dated 01-06-2022).

I would pose the question; how can the Military say it is adequately providing medical quality assurance for servicemembers like myself if when it takes over three years to complete Quality Assurance Investigations in a case as egregious as mine.

I am here today fighting not only for myself but for all other servicemembers that have been subjected to an adverse event at a military treatment facility that have never had a proper or appropriate Quality Assurance Investigation completed to determine what happened to them and to ensure those responsible are held accountable. This is a grave injustice for our servicemembers, and this is the least that they deserve given that some of them are no longer here as a result.

As the saying goes “life goes on”. My life will go on, I will eventually find the strength mentally and physically to work past this horrendous time in my life. However, **this has re-shaped my identity as a human being**. Daily things that you all take for granted such as putting on your shoes before work, taking a walk around the neighborhood, going for a dip in the pool when it’s too hot outside, these are all things that I am not able to do either at all or as easily anymore as a 24-year-old man.

I cannot stress the negative emotional impact this has caused on myself as well as those close to me, so for a second, I’d like for you all to put yourself in my shoes. You are 21 years old at what is said to be the prime of your life, you get not only your identity stripped away but your simple will to live because if you make it out of this wretched time in life “what will the people you know think of you now for having to be in wheelchair? “Will I ever be able to be intimate, what will they think of my scars?” and so on.

I would never wish what I went through upon anyone, but unfortunately that may not be possible seeing that those responsible for the poor medical care I received are still employed by the Army to treat more service members. I can never forgive those who failed me in basic training. I will continue on, bettering myself every day, but I will never stop fighting to have my story heard and ensure those responsible for the neglect I faced during my time in the Army are held accountable.

I ask you to take away the feeling of motivation from what I have shared here with you today. The motivation to want to better a system that should be at its finest for the men and women who want to serve for our country.

Thank you for your time and attention and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Enclosures:

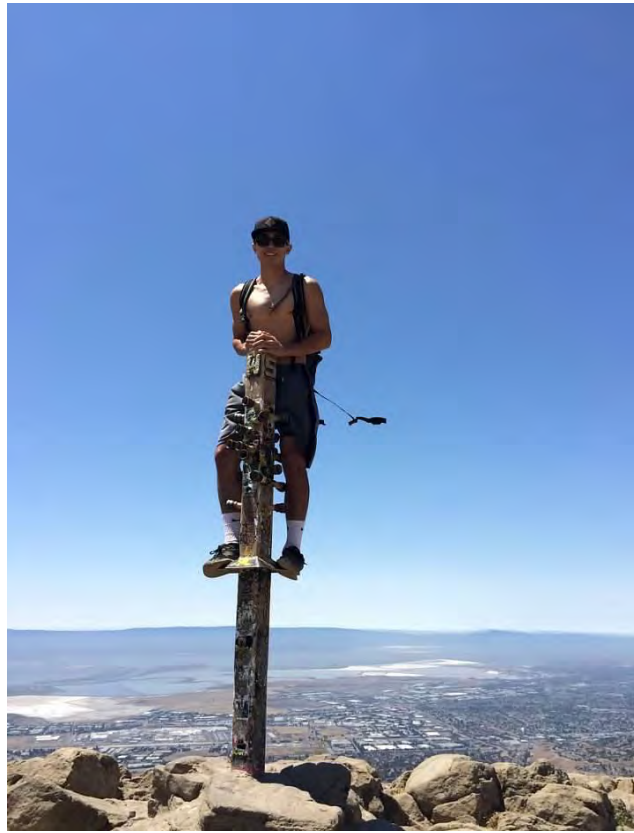
- 1) D. Del Barba Photos
- 2) June 14, 2019, U.S. Army Office of Surgeon General Letter to Representative McNerney
- 3) May 5, 2021, U.S. Army Medical Command, AMEDD Quality and Safety Center
- 4) August 19, 2021, U.S. Army Office of Surgeon General Letter to Representative McNerney
- 5) August 24, 2021, Army Regional Health Command-Atlantic in RE QAI
- 6) December 15, 2021, Under Secretary of Defense Letter to McNerney;
- 7) January 6, 2022, Headquarters, and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense Letter to Representative Speier
- 8) D. Del Barba Complete Timeline

Pictures

Dez Del Barba

3.30.2022

Military Health System Hearing







February 12, 2019



March 18, 2019



April 15, 2019



March 25, 2019



March 25, 2019

March 25, 2019

May 7, 2019



May 13, 2019



August 3, 2019



August 3, 2019



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August 3, 2019



August 3, 2019





DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE SURGEON GENERAL
7700 ARLINGTON BOULEVARD
FALLS CHURCH, VA 22042-5140

June 4, 2019

The Honorable Jerry McNerney
United States House of Representatives
2265 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative McNerney:

I have been asked to reply on behalf of the Secretary of the Army to your May 16, 2019 correspondence seeking the Army's specific findings on the medical care received by Private First Class (PFC) Dez Del Barba, as well as the corrective steps and preventive measures taken by Army Medicine to guard against the occurrence of a similar incident. The Army conducted a thorough review of PFC Del Barba's case. The Ft. Benning Infantry Training Brigade Commander and Martin Army Community Hospital Commander traveled to Joint Base San Antonio on May 13, 2019 to check on PFC Del Barba's recovery and to personally brief him and his Family on what happened and what the Army will do to prevent any recurrence of this type of incident.

The Commanding General at the Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE) at Fort Benning and I have discussed this case in great detail to better understand what happened and to ensure we are doing all we can to protect our Soldiers. He shared with me that the command investigation determined PFC Del Barba was not denied access to medical care and was permitted to seek medical attention for his healthcare needs. The Command will, however, conduct a thorough review of Sick Call procedures and processes for sending personnel to the military medical treatment facility to ensure Soldiers receive timely and adequate care. The MCoE will also review and retrain Cadre Members on the proper treatment of Soldiers under their care.

For its part, Army Medicine completed the clinical quality management review outlined in my previous correspondence with you. The Army is in the process of providing those documents in response to a formal request from the chairwoman of the Military Personnel Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee as authorized by Title 10, United States Code, section 1102 and Department of Defense and Army implementing regulations.

When the Commander of Martin Army Community Hospital visited PFC Del Barba on May 13, 2019, he personally informed PFC Del Barba that Army Medicine was taking the following measures to improve medical care at Fort Benning to prevent any future incidents. All Soldiers will be given a prophylactic

dose of an antibiotic upon entry into training. Additionally, existing admission criteria will be reviewed so that Soldiers who become sick and require medical care can be appropriately admitted. A training program will be initiated for medical personnel to ensure they understand vulnerabilities unique to Soldiers in the training environment. Finally, the medical team (hospital leadership included) will receive daily strep culture results, which will allow for immediate intervention.

These improvements to the healthcare and services provided to our new Soldiers at the U.S. Army Maneuver Center of Excellence will advance Army Medicine toward its goal of zero preventable harm. Thank you again for your interest in the health and welfare of America's Soldiers, and for your particular concern for PFC Del Barba.



1024 JUN 19
Madja Y. West
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army
The Surgeon General and
Commanding General,
U.S. Army Medical Command



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL COMMAND
AMEDD Quality and Safety Center
2272 Reynolds Road, Bldg 4024
JBSA FORT SAM HOUSTON, TEXAS 78234-6000

May 5, 2021

SPC Dez Del Barba
c/o Mr. Daniel Maharaj
Solomon, Maharaj, and Kasimati, P.A.
601 N. Ashley Drive, Suite 1100-192
Tampa, Florida 33602

Dear Specialist Del Barba,

Thank you for providing the military health system with the opportunity to review your statement and concerns of 31 March 2021. We are committed to providing a thorough and unbiased evaluation of the case facts for all adverse events and unanticipated outcomes. The primary goal of all medical quality assurance program (MQAP) activities is to promote patient safety and system wide improvement strategies, and to identify individual accountability, when appropriate.

For the MQAP review of your case, the AMEDD Quality and Safety Center at Headquarters U.S. Army Medical Command has been working in coordination with Martin Army Community Hospital and the Defense Health Agency. As you are aware, you have the right to submit your concerns in writing as a statement to be included as part of the MQAP review of the care you received. As we are now in receipt of your March 31, 2021 statement, it will be considered in the MQAP review to the greatest extent allowable under regulation.

I know that you seek additional information, as you have outlined in your questions sent with your statement; however, the information related to MQAP records is subject to 10 U.S.C. §1102 confidentiality and privilege. For this reason, I am unable to share specific answers in this acknowledgment letter, and I suggest the applicable Freedom of Information Office or U.S. Army Claims Service to you as an alternate point of contact.

Thank you again for taking the time to submit your detailed statement and provide input to the MQAP review.

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Dr. Susan Moon
Acting Chief, Quality Management Division
AMEDD Quality and Safety Center



ENCLOSURE 4

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE SURGEON GENERAL
7700 ARLINGTON BOULEVARD
FALLS CHURCH, VA 22042-5140

August 19, 2021

Office of the Surgeon General

The Honorable Jerry McNerney
United States House of Representatives
2265 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative McNerney:

I have been asked to reply on behalf of the Secretary of the Army to your August 6, 2021 correspondence requesting further information concerning your constituent's son, Private First Class (PFC) Dez Del Barba, and the Army's specific findings on the corrective steps and preventive measures taken to guard against the occurrence of a similar incident. As you are likely aware, the Army conducted a thorough review of PFC Del Barba's clinical quality management. The Army also conducted a command investigation that determined PFC Del Barba was not denied access to medical care. I understand a copy of the command investigation was provided to PFC Del Barba and his family, and a copy of the clinical quality management review was provided to the Chairwoman of the Military Personnel Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee.

In your letter, you discuss Mrs. Kamni Del Barba's inquiry regarding the quality of care reviews conducted for the care provided to her son, PFC Del Barba, as well as the investigations into the fatalities of Christopher Huss and Mohammed Dosani. Since records generated as part of an MHS Medical Quality Assurance Program review are subject to 10 U.S.C. §1102, I cannot discuss the findings of these investigations with you, and such records are not releasable to PFC Del Barba. Additionally, in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA), I cannot discuss the private medical information of PFC Del Barba or other Service members without a written Authorization for Disclosure of Medical Information from the patient.

I have been informed by U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) that the command investigation determined no member of the chain of command or training cadre interfered with PFC Del Barba's need or request to receive medical care. Ms. Del Barba is correct that trainees should not be discouraged from seeking medical care. As this relates to her son, I have been advised that Ms. Del Barba's concerns about whether her son was "mocked" by a Drill Sergeant for requesting to seek medical attention was thoroughly investigated as part of a command initiated Army Regulation


ENCLOSURE 4

15-6 investigation that was completed in March 2019. The issue of whether comments by any Cadre served to discourage trainees from seeking medical attention was also addressed in the investigation. On review of this topic, the Commander directed subordinate commanders to thoroughly review sick call procedures, including that trainees always notify Cadre Members immediately of any medical issues.

On the topic of Group A Beta-Hemolytic Streptococcus (GABHS) Outbreaks, from 1 January 2018 to present there have been two reported GABHS outbreaks or disease clusters of concern among trainees at Army Initial Entry Training (IET) sites. Both occurred during periods where tandem prophylaxis was not being administered, and both quickly resolved with mass prophylaxis. GABHS activity has remained low following the resumption of tandem prophylaxis at both installations. To prevent GABHS outbreaks during IET, the Army conducts active surveillance for febrile acute respiratory disease (including GABHS infections) and administers Benzathine Penicillin G (BPG) to all non-penicillin-allergic trainees upon arrival. BPG is also provided to all trainees and cadre in outbreak situations to quickly suppress outbreaks.

Thank you for your interest in the health and welfare of America's Soldiers, and for your particular concern for the health and well-being of PFC Del Barba.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'T' followed by a horizontal line that loops back to the left and then continues to the right.

Telita Crosland
Major General, U.S. Army
Deputy Surgeon General



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, REGIONAL HEALTH COMMAND – ATLANTIC
9275 DOERR ROAD
FORT BELVOIR, VIRGINIA 22060-2204

August 24, 2021

Mr. Mark and Kamini Del Barba
6463 Brook Hollow Circle
Stockton, CA 95219

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Del Barba:

Thank you for your recent letter to President Joseph R. Biden, dated 26 February 2021, concerning the series of medical events and the quality of medical care your son SPC Dez G. Del Barba received while stationed at Fort Benning, GA, in January 2019. We appreciate hearing your views on this issue. The White House has referred your letter to Department of the Army, Office of the Surgeon General/Commanding General, U.S. Army Medical Command for review, and we are pleased to respond.

We take the quality of healthcare delivered to our Soldiers and beneficiaries very seriously. We have comprehensive programs and regulations in place to ensure our providers are held accountable to the highest standards while delivering safe and quality healthcare. While we are committed to addressing your concerns, we are unable to do so at this time due to an on-going United States Army Medical Command Medical Quality Assurance Program investigation reviewing the care provided to your son. In accordance with Title 10 U.S. Code §1102 – Confidentiality of Medical Quality Assurance Records, medical quality assurance program records are not releasable and therefore, regrettably, I am unable to provide any information to you or your son during the investigation.

The United States Army Medical Department remains committed to providing quality healthcare in accordance with the Department of Defense laws and regulations governing our healthcare delivery and providers. We will address any identified concerns pending the outcome of the investigation.

Thank you for contacting our command with your concerns. I wish your family the very best during your son's recovery. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 571-231-5345.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mary V. Krueger", is written above the typed name.

Mary V. Krueger
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

DEC 15 2021

The Honorable Jerry McNerney
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative McNerney:

Thank you for your April 1, 2021 letter to President Biden on behalf of Mark and Kamni Del Barba regarding the health care provided to their son, U.S. Army Private First Class Dez Del Barba. We appreciate your patience in awaiting this response and apologize for the delay in responding.

Military Health System (MHS) personnel strive to provide world-class health care. When patients or families raise concerns about their care, we take those allegations very seriously. We commit ourselves to providing a thorough and unbiased evaluation of the surrounding facts and circumstances, done in accordance with 10 U.S.C. § 1102.

Our comprehensive clinical quality management programs are meant to ensure MHS health care professionals are held accountable to the same standards of care and practice as our civilian counterparts. In 2019, the Defense Health Agency (DHA) published DHA Procedures Manual (DHA-PM) 6025.13, "Clinical Quality Management in the Military Health System," which established clinical quality management procedures that further strengthened accountability in military medicine. Furthermore, the Department is in the process of implementing section 744 of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, which codified into law much of what is currently in DHA-PM 6025.13.

Thank you for your continued strong support and well-being of our Service members, veterans, and their families.

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.

Dez Del Barba Complete Timeline

October 2018: Ft. Benning is having cases of Streptococcus A among the recruits.

October 31, 2018: I was sworn into the California Army National Guard. Awaiting my date for Army Basic Training. I was accepted into the California Army National Guard Officer Candidate School (OCS).

December 2018: After taking a semester off from Sonoma State University I receive my date to ship out to basic training.

January 7, 2019: I ship off to Army Basic Training at Ft. Benning GA. This is the beginning of my new chapter in my life. 'To serve this Great Nation'

(Late)January 2019: My parents find picture of me on the Ft. Benning Facebook page. One picture shows me shivering due to the extreme cold.

January 13, 2019: Death of PVT Mohammed Abdul Nabi Dosani. No news reports. No media coverage. Same battalion as myself

January 19, 2019: I take my first Army Fitness Test (time unknown) Age 21; scores 53 Push up points 75; 69 Sit-ups points 86; 14:50 on the 2 Mile run. **Total Points 235**

January 22, 2019: Death of PVT Christopher Huss. No news reports, No media release. Assigned to the same company as myself (He was in 3rd platoon I was in 1st).

February 2, 2019: My parents received a letter from me. I write of the extreme cold weather. And also mention the death of Christopher Huss.

February 3, 2019: My parents receive first phone call from me. On the evening of Feb 3rd, my lower body started to feel achy. I decided to go to the PT to get my legs looked at because that pain was bothering me. I turned in my MCAT slip that evening for morning of MCAT.

February 4, 2019: My request for sick call is granted however myself and my battle buddy William Back are late 30-40 minutes due to logistical issues between the Drill Sergeants. The **Athletic Trainer** [REDACTED] came outside and told us to **"go the fuck away and be on time tomorrow."** We didn't even have a chance to explain it wasn't even our fault that we were late. I proceeded to continue training that day besides the aches in my lower body.

February 5, 2019: My request for sick call is granted again and my symptoms were quite similar. I was seen by **Athletic Trainer** [REDACTED]. This time I was on time and got in the door. **Athletic Trainer** [REDACTED] evaluated my legs; I explained to him they were very sore. He gave me some stretches to do and just told me my legs were sore from all the running in our combat boots that we were doing. I didn't understand this as to why that would be the issue, being that I was such an athletic and in shape as a 21-year-old. However, I took his opinion and trusted it knowing **Athletic Trainer** [REDACTED] was the professional. I received a "No Profile" and continued to do the same training as my battle buddies.

Dez Del Barba Complete Timeline

February 6, 2019. My request for sick call is granted again, however I was seen by *Athletic Trainer* [REDACTED]. I was again examined for knee pain. No vitals were taken. Provider exams me with my clothes on. I was told to return to barracks, and I given stretching guidelines. I was told to return if pain still exist. “No Profile

On **February 6, 2019** or possibly **February 7, 2019** I was going to weapons range, I was the last one sitting on the bleacher, slow to move I was in so much pain and moved extremely slow, slower than my normal pace, all I remember from that day was a Drill SGT from *3rd Platoon last name Kuzarda*, yelling at me to move faster and get off the bleacher. My body was in so much pain but I still continued to push.

Thursday, February 7 at 4:45 AM: sick call formation. I informed my Drill Sergeants that I was not feeling well and I needed to go to sick call. A Drill Sergeant ridicule and bully me and the other recruits who need medical attention. They call us “pussies” and told us “you will be recycled to another basic training class if you go to sick call” and that we “need to man-up.” *SSG Muravy was the Drill instructor who made the previous statements.*

Thursday, February 7 at 6:37 AM: in-processed at sick call. I went to sick call for a sore throat and was seen by *Physician Assistant* [REDACTED]. Medical records state “...complaints of sore throat that started yesterday” and “feels like razor blades when I swallow.” Rapid Strep test was given and was negative. Throat culture taken and submitted to lab at 1215 PM on February 7. I was advised to gargle with salt water, provided throat lozenges and Ibuprofen (800 mg). I returned to my company and continued training. My vitals were taken by [REDACTED] (unknown provider title). I was examined fully clothed.
Vitals: BP:110/57 HR:99 RR:16 T:99.2F SpO2:100%

Friday, February 8 at 7:28 AM: I went back to sick call for physical therapy for knee pain. My extremities are examined and judged fully functional for “squats and lunges”. *Athletic Trainer* [REDACTED] tells me to continue stretching. I returned to my company and continued training. No Vitals taken. Examined fully clothed.

Friday, February 8 at 12:26 PM: My Lab results of the throat culture return and I was positive. *A handwritten note inserted into My medical record states “+ culture →call Monday AM”. The official lab results are also loaded in Dez’s medical record indicating “Results: Final Report; Quantity 4+ G Streptococcus pyogenes.”* No one contacts myself or my command about the positive result.

Saturday, February 9: I take the Army Fitness Test (time unknown). My scores 42 Push up points 60; 69 Sit-ups points 86; No Run Profile. *Total Points Zero*

Saturday, February 9: Approximately 6:00pm Recruit SSG Ken Del Valle tries to get help for me from the DS. Recruit SSG Ken Del Valle can clearly see something is wrong with me. He reaches out to *SSG Muravy* who is two building away helping other privates. Recruit SSG expressed his belief that I am very sick, and that I should be taken to be seen that night. The DS asked Recruit SSG if “Del Barba” had gone to the hospital, to which he replied that he had been

Dez Del Barba Complete Timeline

there 3-4 times. The DS then suggested that there's likely little that could be done since every time they sent Me they sent me back saying I am not as ill. **(Recruit SSG Ken Del Valle is a recruit in My company. He is a former USAF SSG, and joined the Army. He is considered an equal to the DS and he should have been allowed to be heard).**

Sunday, February 10 at 6:36 AM: I was harassed, bullied and ridiculed by my Drill Sergeants when I requested to go to sick call again, but was allowed to go. I arrived at the Emergency Department for sick call. I was seen at 0758 AM. My medical records state *“patient complains of sore throat since Wednesday to troop medical clinic (TMC) meds given. Still has pain. No cough. voice hoarse.”* I was seen by [REDACTED] RN and Dr. [REDACTED] and discharged “home without activity restriction.” I was provided more throat lozenges and ibuprofen (800 mg). Examined fully clothed.

Vitals: BP:100/52 HR:127 RR:22 T:99.5F SpO2:99%

“The morning of Feb 10, I went to the ER. I was in so much pain going to the ER that I remember there was a flight of stairs to go up (we weren't allowed to take the elevator) and it was so painful to go up those stairs. When I was finally seen by a nurse and after explaining to him what I was feeling, he proceeded to get the doctor. The doctor comes into the room for literally **2 minutes**, checks my throat and says to me “You're fine”. He prescribes me some throat lozenges and ibuprofen for my legs and sends me back to training.”

No one looked at my Strep A culture results, which were positive and loaded into his medical records at 1226 PM on February 8.

Sunday, February 10 at 7:00 PM: *I was in so much pain that a few of my friends began massaging my legs and attempt to care for me in the barracks.* They give me medication to ease my pain in my throat and legs. *They search for Drill Sergeants but they cannot be found.* We know that Dez falls off his bed and few soldiers help Dez back into his bunk. Dez is in such serve pain.

I became so lethargic I don't remember much of this day. The following part of the timeline are from emails, text messages, letters, medical records, firsthand information from recruits, military members, medical providers and my parents. I would eventually be put into a medically induced coma.

Monday, February 11 at about 5:19 AM(EST) – Dez is rushed to Emergency Room at Martin Army Community Medical. “Numbness and swelling to both legs onset 0400 today. Able to walk- appears uncoordinated”. Immediately admitted to Piedmont Hospital, Columbus Georgia at 0653 AM under the care of **Dr. G. Harris.**

Monday, February 11 at 4:00 AM (PST): Dez Del Barba's parents received a phone call from Captain Andrew T. Schmidt, Bravo Company Commander and were advised to fly immediately

Dez Del Barba Complete Timeline

to Columbus, Georgia, as Dez was in ICU and preparing to undergo his first surgery. Piedmont Doctors informed Kamini and Mark of Necrotizing Fasciitis and that Dez would need immediate life saving emergency surgery. Before Mark and Kamini would arrive in Atlanta Dez had multiple debridement surgeries.

Monday, February 11: Mark and Kamini Del Barba land at 8:30PM in Atlanta, GA and are rushed to Piedmont Hospital, arriving there at approximately 10:00 PM. The doctors informed them that Dez was in extremely critical, they were unsure if he would live and that his chances of surviving were estimated at 10%.

Tuesday, February 12: Dez underwent more debridement surgeries. Doctors from Piedmont Hospital coordinate with doctors from Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center (ISR) in San Antonio, Texas. Piedmont **Dr. Floyd Orthopedic Trauma Surgeon Specialist** with over 22 years' experience informed Mark and Kamini to make their "phone calls". Dez's condition was uncertain and there was a high risk of Dez not surviving and losing all four limbs.

Wednesday, February 13: At approximately 3:00 PM, Dez's transfer to the University of Alabama, Birmingham (UAB) burn unit was approved. Dez was flown to UAB in a specially equipped aircraft while the family drove.

Wednesday, February 13: *Piedmont Doctors performed 19 surgeries to save Dez.*

Wednesday, February 13: A sweet lady by the name of [REDACTED] stops by to talk to the family. She tells the family her Son is **Drill Sgt [REDACTED]** from Ft. Benning. The family is told that 56 soldiers had tested positive for Strep A at Fort Benning. Kamini has this text message saved from February 13, 2019

Thursday, February 14: In the morning, doctors from The Institute of Surgical Research (ISR) arrived at UAB to assess Dez's condition. That early afternoon, the doctors informed us that in order to save his life, they would need to amputate Dez's left leg. They stated that the disease was very aggressive and it had eaten away the majority of his flesh, muscle and tissue. They also informed us that Dez would need to be moved to the ICU burn unit at ISR in Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC), San Antonio, Texas.

Thursday, February 14: Kamini informs Dr. Jennifer Gurney (COL) about Christopher Huss death, the positive Strep A cases.

Friday, February 15: Dez remained intubated and in critical condition. Dez's transfer to Institute of Surgical Research Burn Center was approved. The doctors are unsure if his right leg can be saved, but indicate they will do all they can to save it.

Saturday, February 16: Dez was transported via private air ambulance to the ISR. Dr. Gurney (COL) was the only one who accompanied Dez during the flight.

Dez Del Barba Complete Timeline

Tuesday, February 19: Martin Army Hospital Surgeon General, LTC Ethan Miles, SFC Congdon and Master Sergeant (name unknown) from Ft. Benning met with the parents of Dez Del Barba. LTC Miles informs the family of “**56 positive cases in Dez’s company,**” “405 positive cases in two brigades at Fort Benning.” Fort Benning requested an order of 10,000 units penicillin from Pfizer pharmaceuticals at the **cost of 1.7 million dollars.** Pfizer tells Ft. Benning they only had 60,000 units available for the entire world.

Wednesday February 20; Dez underwent another painful surgery. Doctors conducted skin grafts and covered his right leg with cadaver skin. The medical teams plan from today forward is to aggressively cover his open wounds to hinder and reduce any further infection. This means that Dez will undergo at least two surgeries a week.

Friday February 22: Doctors performed wound cleaning and the Orthopedic surgeon attached his sciatic nerve on his left leg. The remainder of the surgery debridement of infected areas, was postponed due to infection and fever Dez contracted. The doctors want to wait until he strong enough to undergo another aggressive surgical procedure.

Monday February 25: Dez went back to the operating room today for more debridement. During the debridement process, the doctors located a small infected area of necro disease. The doctors removed it and placed antibiotic powder over it. In addition, his right and left obliques were stapled today.

Wednesday February 27: Dez underwent a four- and half-hour surgery today. The doctors performed skin grafts, using his chest and abdomen area skin and placed it to cover a portion of the open wounds on his left and right thigh. A portion of both armpits and obliques were closed with staples and stitches to begin the areas for recovery. The orthopedic surgeon also prepared his amputated left leg to be shaped for the next surgery.

March 3: Dez completed another surgery. The doctors performed more skin grafts, the doctors removed skin from Dez’s back to cover a portion of the top of his legs. His chest is still recovering and healing from the last surgery.

March 7: Today’s surgery was more skin grafts to cover the open wounds. Doctors took the remaining skin from the right side of his back to cover the remainder of the top of his legs.

March 12: Dez underwent another surgery with more skin grafting to cover up his open wounds on his amputated leg.

March 15: Today’s surgery consisted of more skin grafts to cover his open wounds. Today the surgeons skin grafted his buttocks area to close the wounds with skin grafts This disease destroyed all muscle and tissue in its path. This surgery number 13 for Dez.

March 18: Dez went to back to the operating room for wound cleaning and evaluation of his skin grafts. The doctors removed all plastic wound vacuums placed on his open wounds and

Dez Del Barba Complete Timeline

replaced the plastic with cloth dressings. The family and the doctors wait to see if the skin started to take from the previous surgeries

March 19: Dez confide with this girlfriend and tell her about his treatment at Fort Benning. The name calling the harassment and bullying. His girlfriend passes this information on to Kamini Del Barba and then talks to Dr. Gurney (COL) at 6:30pm. Dr. Gurney (COL) ensures she will find out what took place and makes calls to Martin Army Hospital Surgeon General, LTC Ethan Miles.

March 19: Dez received his belonging from Fort Benning in a used old cardboard box that was used for toilet paper. This is what Dez's belongs were shipped in. The box was labeled "Skill Craft Box NSN on the box is 8540-00-530-3770". All we received were dirty socks, old used Army t-shirt and ZERO uniforms. We took pictures of this box and the disrespect it displayed for Dez who was fighting for his life.

March 20: Fort Benning initiates the first 15-6 on Dez's case. Ft. Benning Brigade Commander COL Allen assigned Investigating Officer Major Simon for the 15-6.

March 22: Dez's Basic Training class graduates.

March 22: Today the doctors performed more skin grafts this time to cover the remainder of his armpits and his right leg. The doctors used the back again as the donor site for today's surgery. Because of the complexity of this surgery and in order for the skin to take, Dez is unable to move his arms until Monday March 25 2019.

March 22 to Monday March 25: Multiple phone calls from Dez's Basic Training unit, his battle buddies calling and reaching out to communicate what they witnessed regarding the treatment of Dez and what transpired after he left. They all were quarantined, food was brought to them, the soldiers who were Strep A positive were administered antibiotics. We have names of these soldier as well as Text Messages.

March 26: Visit from Ft. Benning Brigade Commander COL Allen and presents Dez with an honorary certificate.

March 28: Today's surgery was successful. The skin graft from last week's surgery took in the arm pits. Doctors covered any open wounds they saw on the right leg. A small portion about 3 inches on the right leg toward the ankle remains uncovered. The surgeons will undergo this procedure next week on April 1 2019 and asses how to perform muscle transplant to cover the missing muscle from Dez's right shin.

March 29: Ft. Benning Brigade Commander COL Allen ships a proper Tuff box with new uniforms for Dez.

April 1st, 2019: Dez went into surgery this morning. He received wound care and had all of the wound vacs removed.

Dez Del Barba Complete Timeline

April 2st, 2019: The parents file multiple Congressional Inquiries. Inquiries were sent to Rep. McNerney, Rep Bishop, Rep. Speier, Senator Feinstein, Senator Harris, and multiple other congressional representatives and Senators.

April 3, 2019 at 1045hrs: Investigating Officer Major Simon interviews Dez at ISR Burn Center. Please know **Dez is still under heavy medication.**

April 4, 2019: Army Times published Dez's story with this face on the front page and the headline was: **"WHAT WENT WRONG?"**

April 6th 2019: There were multiple news articles being released regarding Dez.

April 10th, 2019: Dez needs 5000 to 6000 calories a day to help with his healing. Today he also had his childhood friends visiting.

***April 10th 2019:** Congressman Bishop writes to Army Surgeon General LTG Nadia West

***April 11th,2019:** Congressman McNerney writes to Dr. Mark Esper.

***April 14th, 2019:** Congressman Jerry McNerney from California visits Dez.

***April 15th, 2019** Dr. Mark Esper response back to Congressman Jerry McNerney directing US Army Surgeon General LTG Nadia West to response to the Congressmen.

(All letters will be attached)

April 16th, 2019: Another successful Surgery

April 22, 2019: Dez completed his 1st 20 steps on his limb salvaged leg with the support of a walker and assistances from two Physical therapist

April 23, 2019 Dez back into the OR for another surgery

April 23, 2019 Army Surgeon General LTG Nadia West response to Congressmen Bishop.

April 29,2019: Dez back to the OR to be examined by the medical team to get an update on all his healing progression.

May 5th, 2019: the doctors have all agreed he is progressing to the point where they are comfortable in discharging him soon. However, he'll still need another skin graft, they feel this can be done later as an outpatient. His discharge from the hospital has to be approved by his physical therapist team, he has to complete several tasks in order to prove he's able to take care of himself. With this being said his physical therapy will be greatly intensified, hopefully he'll show his strength and determination and he will be released soon.

May 13, 2019: Martin Army Hospital Commander COL McCord, Ft. Benning Brigade Commander COL Allen and Investigating Officer MAJ Simon Visit Dez for official 15-6 briefing. After the 15-6 briefing **Martin Army Hospital Commander COL McCord apologizes to Dez for the lack of care he received.**

Kamini Del Barba request a letter from Col. McCord regarding his statement to Dez.

Dez Del Barba Complete Timeline

May 18, 2019: day 99 in the hospital for Dez. Through these 99 days, Dez has had his good days and his bad days.

May 21st, 2019: Today marks day 100 of Dez's Recovery Journey for his fight against NF. Today also marks Dez's discharge from the hospital.

Dez continued to have **over 41 Surgeries** until he was discharged on May 21, 2019. spending exactly **100 days in the hospital**.

Thursday May 23: Dez starts his physical recovery at the ISR Burn Center outpatient PT clinic.

May 29th, 2019: Surgery on his right open tendon. This surgery was outpatient. Small wound Vac was placed. Dez is not allowed to put pressure on his right leg for 3 weeks.

June 3rd, 2019: Gary Schofield with MEDCOM at BMAC receives COL McCord's written apology letter via email for Dez Del Barba, this letter is forward to Kamini Del Barba via email. Sometime in the month of June Kamini also emailed COL Allen asking him to grant Dez a completion for Basic training. He deserved this much. Kamini continue to communicate this request for several months

June 4th 2019: Army Surgeon General LTG Nadia West response to Congressmen Bishop and Congressmen McNerney.

June 5-20, 2019 Dez continues to push at the ISR Burn clinic.

June 21, 2019: Dez is fitted for his first official socket at the Center for the Intrepid. It was a super exciting day.

June 23, 2019: Right leg tendon is still healing.

July 3, 2019: Follow up with the plastic Surgeon on right tendon. Plastic Surgeon never shows up to see Dez. The plastic surgeon Intern arrives and tells the RN to put a wound vac directly on Dez's new skin graft. The RN is hesitant due to the area is healing, but follows orders and puts on a wound vac **INCORRECTLY**. Unknowing to Dez or his parents.

July 6, 2019: After taking a shower, and the beginning of his wound care, Dez notices the area where the wound vac was placed is full of blood and also noticed there was no barrier between the healing tendon and the wound vac. The RN incorrectly placed the wound vac over the healing area with no barrier. Kamini Calls Dr. Gurney to address excess blood in the Wound Vac. The skin and tendon were healing perfectly on July 3rd so the blood was a concern. After consulting with Dr. Gurney, it was decided to remove the dressing and not to reapply the wound vac. The healed area was now damaged more and this was a major setback for Dez's recovery.

July 8, 2019: The surgery on May 29 was a waste. Pictures showing valid proof can be provided.

Dez Del Barba Complete Timeline

July 9, 2019: Head nurse of the ISR burn clinic apologies for Dez not receiving the proper care on July 3rd and that Intern and the Nurse **should have never placed a wound Vac on New skin that was clearly healing.**

July 19, 2019: Nadja Yudith West retires as the 44th Surgeon General of the United States Army

****NOTE:** July 19, 2019–October 17, 2019 not sure who filled this Position after West Retired.

July 2019: Kamini address Dez's mental health to CFI Mental Health Jorge Torres staff.

August 2019: Dez Starts to learn how to walk again. Kamini continues to have concerns about Dez's Mental health. Dez's TSGLI is denied. Kamini reaches out to LTC Miles for assistances.

Wednesday September 11 2019: Surgery number 42. Close up scalp wound from when Dez was intubated.

Wednesday September 25 2019: Flew home for the first time to visit family and friends.

Sunday September 29 2019: Flew back to Brooke Army Medical Center/ Fort Sam Houston.

September 2019: LTC Ethan Miles written a memorandum for Dez to TSGLI to reconsider his claim. Kamini files FOIA with Fort Benning on Dez's Care.

Thursday Oct 3, 2019: Dez receives a denial letter that his basic training completion request will not be granted. Kamini starts making her phone calls. She gets in touch with COL Dawson Plummer the new Brigade commander for the 194th at Fort Benning they talk for several minutes. He continues to give his reasons for denial. Email communication is exchanged and can be provided for proof. After showing him few pictures of Dez's condition COL Plummer has a change of heart and ensure me he will try his best to get some answers.

Approximately around Oct 9, 2019: Dez had an extensive Multi-disciplinary meeting with all his medical providers, Wounded Warrior Leadership, Center for the Intrepid staff and leadership. During this meeting they highlighted how well Dez was doing and in order for him to move back to California he would need to show independent living. Dez would have to move out of the Fisher House where he was living with his mother, Kamini, and into the Wounded Warrior barracks. His mother could not live with him since he was no longer needing a caregiver/ Non-medical assistance. During this meeting they has asked Kamini Del Barba to go back to California. Kamini refused to leave her son.

Monday October 14, 2019: Dez moves into the Wounded Warrior Liberty barracks. Dez took his first shower at his new barrack. The high pressure of the shower caused severe damaged to his skin grafts which caused severe bleeding and an open wound. His Wounded Warrior Leadership should have paid more attention to Dez's medical needs. It took his mother to demand a new shower head to be installed that had better control of the water pressure. But this never happened, the military had to get approval from maintenance. Kamini Del Barba and her sister, Dez aunt, who was visiting for the week went to Walmart and installed it themselves.

Dez Del Barba Complete Timeline

October 17, 2019–present: Raymond Scott Dingle assigned the 45th Surgeon General of the United States Army and Commanding General, United States Army Medical Command.

Friday October 25, 2019: Dez and his mother traveled to California and returned back to Ft. Sam Houston on November 3, 2019. Dez is happiest when he's home close to his core network.

Thursday November 7, 2019: Dez travels with other wounded warriors and servicemembers to Dallas to watch the Dallas Mavericks basketball game. Kamini is stopped by Major Jeremiah Brady, commander of the Wounded Warrior Battalion. Major Brady proceeds to tell Kamini that she needs to leave Ft. Sam Houston and that she is no longer needed for Dez's recovery. **Kamini tells Major Jeremiah Brady "I am not leaving without my Son."**

Friday November 8, 2019: Dez's recruiter back home discovers Dez's ATRRS Screen reads **completion of Basic Training**. Kamini reaches out to COL Plummer to thank him, the COL is unaware of this approval.

Tuesday November 12, 2019: Dez who is alone in his barracks decides to take his life. While on the phone with his girlfriend, Dez takes a large amount of medication. His girlfriend recognizes something is wrong and immediately contacts Dez's mom who was at the Fisher House located at Brooke Army Medical Center. Kamini contacts Sgt. Cardenas who is on staff duty at the Wounded Warrior Barracks. Sgt. Cardenas enters Dez's room and finds Dez unresponsive and no heartbeat. Sgt. Cardenas begins CPR. Kamini calls 9-1-1 while responding to the Dez's barracks. Even though Fort Sam Houston military fire department is across the street from the barracks, it takes them longer to arrive due to the 9-1-1 system transferring the call to other dispatchers. Kamini arrives to Dez's room to see Sgt. Cardenas performing CPR. He tells her to get the AED and the fire department arrive moving slowly. Kamini tells them to hurry her son is unresponsive and to be careful of his skin graft. Dez is transported to the Brooke Army Medical Center emergency room.

Tuesday November 12, 2019: While at the ER the ER doctor tells Kamini he is unsure what things will look like for Dez since his brain did not have oxygen it needed for several minutes. Kamini again falls apart for her son but must stay strong.

Wednesday November 13, 2019: Dez's father, Mark arrives to Brooke Army Medical Center.

Wednesday November 13, 2019 – November 16, 2019: Dez is admitted to the ICU.

Wednesday November 13, 2019: Kamini is immediately interviewed by the CID and questioned as if she was the criminal, while her son is laying in the next room of the ICU ward.

Wednesday November 16, 2019 – November 23, 2019: Dez is admitted to the Mental Health ward at Brooke Army Medical Center. Dez is only allowed 30 minutes of visitation rights with his Mom and Dad.

November 23-30, 2019: Dez stays in the Fisher House with family.

Around December 3rd: Dez decided to move back to the barracks. Dez is also assigned an roommate who becomes a good friend. Dez is required to attend three weeks of Mental health

Dez Del Barba Complete Timeline

group therapy. Dez continues to improve and looks forward to going home for the Christmas holidays. Dez's Skin Graphs are still a concern for infection and opening.

December 13th, 2019: Dez received letter from President Trump.

December 21th, 2019 – January 3, 2020: Home for the holidays.

January 4, 2020- February 12, 2020: Dez continues to get stronger but he also has hip and back pain and he isn't able to sit normal. Dez's Skin Graphs are still a concern for infection and opening. The family continues to write letter to Congress, Senators, the Vice President and the Commander in Chief.

January 30, 2020: Dez's TSGLI is approved.

February 12, 2020 – February 17, 2020: Back home for family visit and Dez's Sister birthday. Dez's mental health is getting better. Skin Graphs are still a concern and continue to tear open.

March 1 2020- March 5, 2020: Dez goes on a skiing trip to Vail, Colorado with the Center for the intrepid and his girlfriend accompanies him on this trip.

March 13, 2020: Dez request his original 15-6 conducted April 2019 be set aside and Re-investigated with new facts, findings and allegations. Memorandum was sent to General Gray Brito. Kamini also files FOIA with Fort Benning on Christopher Huss and Dez's Care.

March 15, 2020: Trip home for visit with family.

March 17, 2020: State of California is locked down for COVID 19. DoD is also on high alert. Dez and Kamini are to remain at home in California per DoD protocols.

March 18, 2020: Kamini reaches out to ISR burn unit for wound care equipment. Since Dez only packed for 7 days' worth. The Military politics began regarding shipping him medical equipment.

March 19, 2020: Phones calls and emails are made to help ship wound care. We get no positive answers from the ISR Burn center, WTB or the command

March 19, 2020 – March 30, 2020: Dez is thankful he's home however being isolated starts to bring his mental health down. Dez tries to stay positive and understands we cannot have any visitors.

March 26, 2020: Memorandum sent to General Gary Brito March 13, 2020 to set aside and **re-investigation 15-6 was denied by COL Douglas Vincent.**

April 1, 2020: Dez is transferred to WTB at Joint Base Lewis McCord. He is allowed to live in California.

April 2, 2020: Kamini communicates Dez's open wounds with CPT Nash Dez's new Nurse case manager at JBLM.

April 3, 2020 – April 10, 2020: Nurse case manager at JBLM, Kamini and UCSF coordinator Ms. Andaya try to get Dez the medical care he's needed.

Dez Del Barba Complete Timeline

April 10, 2020- April 15, 2020: Kamini continues to reach out to ISR Burn center for medical supplies. Email communication on **April 15, 2020 states “I would like to provide Dez supplies, I cannot do that at this time. For safety, these new wounds need to be physically seen and examined so that appropriate treatment can be ordered”**

April 16, 2020: The frustration is high with no medical care for Dez. Dez’s open wound isn’t healing from early in the month. Pictures are available for proof.

April 17, 2020: Eventually a Home health Nurse is assigned to Dez. They would continue to come 2 twice a week until June 2020. Being home is amazing healing for Dez.

April 18, 2020 – May 2020: Home health Nurse visits continue. Dez does few zoom meeting with JBLM.

April 22, 2020: Dez files official DoD IG complaint on his treatment while at Fort Benning.

April 23, 2020: Dez hears back from DoD Office that his complaint has been received.

June 4th 2020: Kamini and Dez have a phone conversation with **Major Ahmad Yassin** the JBLM WTB Medical Director. **JBLM wanted to start Dez’s MED board immediately** trying to push him out. Kamini had several questions for Major Yassin. Kamini requested another wheel chair for Dez and was told Dez did not need it. emails where exchanged between. Proof of emails can be provided if needed. Kamini also ask Major Ahmad Yassin for his direct line supervisors which he never provides.

NOTE: Kamini does her research and finds the information. Just imagine a Wounded Warrior trying to recover and deal with this on his/her own. Trying to recover can be stressful enough. **For every Dez there are 40 Dez’s who don’t have Advocates.** No wonder the suicide rates in the military has sky rocketed. ZERO consideration for soldier care!

June 16th 2020: LTC Michael Dengler, the WTB commander reaches to Kamini and Dez and concerns are addresses via email and Phone conversations. During this time Dez is also approved to move close to UCSF for his medical care. **NOTE:** Kamini reaches out to Ombudsman at JBLM; **“A Care Conference”** is request by Ombudsman Ms. Denton at JBLM.

June 23th 2020: COL Dawson Plummer 194th commander writes a letter to MEB members for recommendation to retain Dez.

June 29th 2020: Dez is promoted to E-4 by the California Army National Guard.

June 30th 2020: Dez wounds are healing he continues to get stronger and the wheelchair issue is squashed. **No one from JBLM visits Dez.**

July 2020: Dez decided to register for Fall semester class at his Sonoma State University. Dez US Army Tuition assistance is **denied** he must pay for it himself if he wishes to complete his degree. **No one from JBLM visits Dez.** Via email to COL Plummer, Dez requests his first official face to face meeting with General Gary Brito.

Note. The Doctor and Physician Assistant that failed Dez continue to work at Martin Army Hospital.

Dez Del Barba Complete Timeline

August 2020: Dez enrolls back into school to finish up his last semester of college. The physical healing is going strong. He is learning his new normal. It's the mental health that's always a concern. **No one from JBLM takes the time to visit Dez.** Dez continues to follow up via email to COL Plummer, for his official face to face meeting with General Gary Brito.

September 2020: Dez has not heard back from DoD regarding his complaint. The family reaches out to Representative Jackie Speier Office for Dez's case and requests a zoom meeting. **No one from JBLM takes the time to visit Dez.** Dez continues to follow up via email to COL Plummer, for his official face to face meeting with General Gary Brito.

September 29, 2020: FOIA Request on documents pertaining to Homer A. Richardson, MD, Jennifer Wampler, PA, and Eric Bales.

October 2020: Continue to follow up with Representative Jackie Speier Office and request a Zoom meeting. **No one from JBLM takes the time to visit Dez.** Dez continues to follow up via email to COL Plummer, for his official face to face meeting with General Gary Brito.

During this month the Army created the **"People First Task Force"**

November 2020: Continue to follow up with Representative Jackie Speier Office and request a Zoom meeting. This time Kamini again shares pictures of Dez with Representative Jackie Speier staff to bring some attention on the matter for words will never due justice. **No one from JBLM takes the time to visit Dez.** Dez continues to follow up via email to COL Plummer, for his official face to face meeting with General Gary Brito. **During this time, we are also informed the QAI was never initiated.** Kamini also requests an update from Rep. Speier office on update from **DOD's "Red Team"** on the movement for the policies and procedures for the NDAA 2020.

November 4, 2020: Response for FOIA Request submitted on September 29, 2020 on Documents pertaining to the Doctor, Physician Assistant and Physical Therapist from Martin Army Hospital. Only received the Human Recourse Job/Position description for the physician assistant.

December 3, 2020: Dez starts communication with Investigating officer from Fort Benning assigned by General Donahoe. **Investigating officer LTC Baka is assigned Dez's DoD IG Complaint filed April 22, 2020.** Dez would continue to communicate with LTC Baka. Kamini and Dez provided him with all necessary documentation. Dez also continue to follow up with Representative Jackie Speier Office. **No one from JBLM takes the time to visit Dez.** Dez continues to follow up via email to COL Plummer, for his official face to face meeting with General Gary Brito.

Representative Jackie Speier staff sets up Zoom meeting for December 17, 2019; **QAI was discussed with up with Rep. Speier's office.**

December 16, 2020: Dez received letter of Recommendation from General Brito endorsing him to remain active duty. Dez had request a letter from both General Brito and COL Plummer and at this point of Dez's life he **did not** want to get MED board from the military he was afraid to be pushed out into the world with his disabilities. **No one from JBLM takes the time to visit Dez.**

Dez Del Barba Complete Timeline

Dez continues to follow up via email to COL Plummer, for his official face to face meeting with General Gary Brito.

December 17, 2020: A 30 Minute Zoom meeting is scheduled with Rep. Speier.

January 2021: Dez's MEB board process continues to push forward. Still no face to face visitor from Dez's Chain of Command at WTB/CCU at JBLM. Dez also continues his bi weekly emails to follow up with via email to COL Plummer, for his official face to face meeting with General Gary Brito. Communication with Investigating officer LTC Baka continues.

February 2021: Dez MEB/PEB/IDES process are being reviewed for out processing. Zoom meeting with Rep. McNerney's office. Dez continues to send emails to Rep Speier asking for QAI answers to his questions submitted earlier. One of which was the following,

“If there is an on-going QAI in this matter, will Mr. Del Barba be afforded the opportunity to submit his concerns in compliance with DODM6025.13, Enclosure 6?”

In accordance with DODM 6025.13, Patients within the military health system (MHS) **have the opportunity to submit concerns regarding the quality of care they were provided throughout the quality assurance process and have to the concerns considered as a part of the quality assurance review.** These concerns could be submitted through various mechanisms at the MTF level including the patient advocate and healthcare resolutions team.”

Note: Dez never received this opportunity.

February 26, 2021: Del Barba Family continues to write certified letters to Congress, Senators and the President. Dez's Skin Grafts continue to open.

March 2021: Dez's was only granted a rating of 90% by the VA. The US Army rating came back at 75%. These ratings added further issues to Dez's case. The VA reviewer never took the time nor gave the attention it deserved. Dez's case and care was once again disregarded, the due diligences never took place in reviewing his file properly by the government agency whose sole purpose is to provide quality assistance to our servicemembers especially our wounded warriors. They failed to ask the simple question as to “what happened to this young man.” The VA continued to check the blocks and move forward to the next case. If Dez and his family decided to leak this arrogance to the media it would have been very disgraceful for the Military and the VA. Kamini contacted the ombudsman from JBLM, Ms. Denton who helped with fixing this horrid mistake within 48 hours. We are thankful for people like Ms. Denton who takes **pride in her profession and truly cares for our servicemembers.**

March 8, 2021: FOIA request is rejected by Diane C. Kizinkiewicz from Martin Army Hospital. Ms. Kizinkiewicz also provides a **power point on treating Streptococcal Infection During Initial Entry Military Training. This PP was dated 21 February 2019. 10 days after we received the phone call that our son was dying.**

March 30, 2021: Dez writes to COL (Dr.) Joshua Will, Deputy Commander for Clinical Services Acting Chief Quality Management Division; Dr. Susan Moon, Acting Chief Quality Management Division Martin Army Community Hospital AMEDD Quality & Safety Center and

Dez Del Barba Complete Timeline

Dr. Edward Oestreicher, Deputy Commander for Quality Services Martin Army Community Hospital. Dez continues to communicate with Investigating officer from Fort Benning assigned by General Donahoe. Dez's Skin Grafts continue to open.

April 2021: Dez and his families continue to communicate with Rep Jackie Speier.

May 5, 2021: Dr. Susan Moon Acting Chief, Quality Management Division AMEDD Quality and Safety Center response to Dez's letter dated March 31, 2021. She writes "you have the right to submit your concerns in writing as a statement to be included as part of the MQAP review of the care you received. As **we are now in receipt of your March 31, 2021 statement**, it will be considered in the MQAP review to the greatest extent allowable under regulation."

"primary goal of all medical quality assurance program (MQAP) activities is to promote patient safety and system wide improvement strategies, and to identify individual accountability"

The medical providers who have been identified per medical records, who are solely responsible for this medical negligence continue to work for DoD and the US Army. They continue to have valid license to practice. THIS IS AN ENORMOUS ISSUE OF FAILURE BY THE DoD TO HOLD THE RESPONSIBLE PARTIES ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS,

May 5, 2021: Letter to GAO Ms. Brenda Farrell on concerns the US Army has not abided by all applicable regulations and agency procedures in conducting the Quality Assurance Investigation in Dez Case.

June 2021: NDAA 2020 Sec 731- Interim final Rule open for comments to the public. June 21, 2021 Dez send final follow up emails to COL Plummer, his last attempt for an official face to face meeting with General Gary Brito. Dez's initial email request to meet with General Brito was send July 2020. Dez and his families continue to communicate with Rep Jackie Speier. Dez's Skin Grafts continue to open.

July 19, 2021: Del Barba Family writes to Generals Gary Brito, Michael X. Garrett, Joseph M. Martin, James C. McConville, General Funk II and General Laura Yeager. Asking for answers and accountability. Identifying Dez case at the highest level for the US Army. Dez's last attempt to address this request was on June 21, 2021, and he has yet to hear back from COL Plummer. The United States Army new propaganda, "**PEOPLE FIRST**" is nothing but an empty statement with no meaning.

July 8, 2021: Discuss Stayskal Act Rule with Rep. Speier Office via Zoom.

July 22, 2021: Dez Del Barba has **Surgery number 43!** Surgery was performed by USFC. Still no face to face visitor from Dez's Chain of Command at WTB/CCU at JBLM. Dez also continues his emails to follow up with via email to COL Plummer, for his official face to face meeting with General Gary Brito. Dez and his families continue to communicate with Rep Jackie Speier.

August 16, 2021: NDAA 2020 Sec 731 - Interim final Rule comments are closed.

Dez Del Barba Complete Timeline

August 17 2021: Dez is official Medically discharge and Medically retired from the US Army. On this day Dez also lost his Tri-Care benefits. He was not educated on the importance of having Medicare in order for Tri-Care benefits to continue. Dez's follow up care appointment had to be cancelled at UCSF. Dez reached out to the VA for help, they coordinated referral to UCSF which took a few days. Another failure by the military when it comes to assisting wounded warriors on what to do for medical care information after being retired.

August 19 2021: Major General Telita Crosland, U.S. Army Office of the Surgeon General writes to Congressman McNerney "as you are likely aware, the Army conducted a thorough review of PFC Del Barba's clinical quality management. The Army also conducted a command investigation that determined PFC Del Barba was not denied access to medical care. I understand a copy of the command investigation was provided to PFC Del Barba and his family, and a copy of the clinical quality management review was provided to the Chairwoman of the Military Personnel Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee."

August 24 2021: Del Barba Family receive a letter from **General Mary Kruger** at the Regional Health Command. She addresses the letter to President Biden dated February 26, 2021. She writes "we take the quality of healthcare delivered to our soldiers and beneficiaries very seriously. We are unable to address you concerns due to the on-going United States Army Medical Command Medical Quality Assurance Program investigation reviewing the care provided to your son. The US Army Medical Department remains committed to providing quality care. Dez's Skin Grafts continue to open.

Dez and his families continue to communicate with Rep Jackie Speier.

August 30, 2021: Requesting status on Dez's DoD IG complaint and we were told. "DoD IG status update on Dez's investigation. The August timeframe depended on their oversight review of the Army's work."

September 21, 2021: Phone conference with **General Mary Kruger** Commanding General Regional Health Command Health. Kamini spoke with the General for 45 minutes, General indicated her office has no clue about Dez's situation. She was made aware of it when President Biden asked her office to get us resolutions. That she would connect Dez with a Case Manager at her level.

September 29, 2021: Spoke with **Ms. Barbara Moidel**, Special Assistant for Healthcare Resolutions Walter Reed National Military Medical Center called Kamini and they Speak for 45 minutes. **Ms. Moidel had never heard of Dez's case.** She says DoD has 17 Healthcare Resolutions here to assist with situation like Dez's and at this point she is unable to assist Dez since his care is in the litigation pipeline. Ms. Moidel also provided me with information on how to file a complaint with "The Joint Commission"

September 29, 2021: Kamini files a compliant with "The Joint Commission". Dez and his families continue to communicate with Rep Jackie Speier for accountability and the NDAA 2020 Section 731. Dez's Skin Grafts continue to open.

Dez Del Barba Complete Timeline

October 2021: Physician Assistant [REDACTED] is still working with US Army at Fort Benning. US Army publishes a news article on her great work and admires her commitment to our servicemembers.

November 2021: Kamini writes letter to General's James C. McConville, Daniel R. Hokanson, David Baldwin and Laura Yeager addressing issues with Dez's incorrect DD 214, VA rejection letter for his 9-11 application for Graduate Classes, No Medical insurance till November 1, 2022 due to lack of communication and educating the soldier on Medi-Care part A and B. and finally, a generic Nonspecific retirement letter thanking Dez for his "Years of Service".

Dez and his families continue to communicate with Rep Jackie Speier for accountability and the NDAA 2020 Section 731. Dez's Skin Grafts continue to open.

December 15, 2021: Dez Del Barba completes his requirements from Sonoma State University for BA in Business Degree. Dez's Skin Grafts continue to open.

December 17, 2021: Dez and his family are invited for a face to face meeting with Rep. Jackie Speier. **QAI is discussed**, and Rep Speier invites Dez to speak in front of Congress regarding his failed treatment by the Army and DoD medical providers.

December 19, 2021: The Sacramento Kings Basketball organization honors Dez as "A Hometown Hero."

January 6, 2022: Dez is hired with a software company. Moving forward and staying positive

February 4, 2022: Kamini's FOIA is denied.

March 21, 2022: The Del Barba family finds information regarding [REDACTED], MD. Dr. [REDACTED] is currently employed with Atlanta VA Medical Center, 1670 Clairmont Road, Decatur, GA.

STILL NO ANSWERS, ACCOUNTABLIY OR COMMUICATION FROM THE MILITARY ON DEZ's NEGLECT.