

DCMA SOUTHERN EUROPE FLIGHT OPERATIONS DIRECTOR GIVES OF HIMSELF TO SAVE A LIFE

By Jo Adail Stephenson, DCMA Public Affairs

When Air Force Maj. Timothy “Nathan” Tart, Jr. signed up to become a bone marrow donor, he had no idea that nine years later he would actually help save a leukemia patient he did not even know.

Tart, who is currently the Defense Contract Management Agency Southern Europe director of flight operations with additional responsibility for Northern Europe and the Middle East, had registered with the C.W. Bill Young/ Department of Defense Marrow Donor Center as a potential donor while at pilot training at Moody Air Force Base in Georgia in 2001.

He was contacted last summer as a potential bone marrow donor on the DoD list and was told to contact the center if he was interested. “I called straight away, and that began the start of a process,” Tart said.

His hectic travel schedule proved to be a challenge.

“The medical professionals at Wiesbaden Army Airfield Clinic and at the clinic at Fort Lee, [Va.] were fantastic in getting me in on short notice for blood tests and a special bone marrow donor physical,” Tart said.

He was at Fort Lee taking a Defense Acquisition University class when the center asked if he could do a physical specifically tailored for bone



Air Force Maj. Timothy “Nathan” Tart, Jr., Defense Contract Management Agency International Southern Europe director of flight operations, smiles after donating his bone marrow for a 45-year-old male leukemia patient. The procedure was performed recently at Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, D.C.

marrow donors, including answering questions similar to those asked of a blood donor and then getting an electrocardiogram and chest X-ray.

Once the medical requirements were met, the center arranged his travel to Washington, D.C., where the procedure was performed at Georgetown University Hospital in December 2009.

“The process wasn’t painful. To me, the worst part was the anticipation or fear of the unknown. However, the team did a phenomenal job of explaining the procedure and reminded me that this could make a life-changing difference to an individual and their family,” he said.

Tart added he was asleep for the process and woke up with a bandage on his lower back.

“It feels like you’re sitting on an airplane with a pillow in the small of your back. They give you great medicine to help you heal up with very little pain. I could only describe the pain in your lower back as just being a little sore, like after a tough workout,” Tart explained. “The biggest thing is that you’re tired. ... It just wipes you out ... so you need to take it easy for a couple of weeks.”

He said he was up the next day and felt fine but was just moving a little slower up stairs, etc. “Although it was



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the next day after my procedure, I was able to join my wife, Emily, on a private tour of the White House where we had a chance encounter with the “First Dog, Bo. I was a little tired, but I felt great and had no problems walking around some of the sites in D.C.,” he added.

About a month after the procedure, Tart was told by the center that the 45-year-old male leukemia patient who received his bone marrow was doing very well and was showing no signs of the disease. “I have told my military friends I would gladly do this donation again and encouraged them to step up and do the same. We join the military to serve a greater good, whether that be through typical DoD missions or support within the community. DoD’s bone marrow program is another great example of this service, and I feel honored to be a part of it. I couldn’t have done it without the fantastic support of my family and coworkers here in DCMA,” Tart said.

Anyone interested in becoming a bone marrow donor can find out more information at

www.dodmarrow.org and www.marrows.org. 

C.W. BILL YOUNG DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE MARROW DONOR PROGRAM

As an integral part of the national effort for matching unrelated marrow donors, a marrow donor program was established within the Department of Defense. The program’s primary objectives are the development and application of this distinctive lifesaving technology toward the military medical application for rescue of casualties with marrow damage resulting from radiation or certain chemical warfare agents containing mustard. The program was named for Congressman C.W. Bill Young, who initiated and supported the development of the National Marrow Donor Program and the DoD program for unrelated donor marrow transplantation. DoD established the C.W. Bill Young Department of Defense Marrow Donor Center in Washington, D.C., to support DoD volunteer marrow donors. The C.W. Bill Young Marrow Donor Center coordinates all the medical and logistic support for DoD personnel who volunteer for the possibility of donating marrow.

The DoD program focuses the efforts of this national program toward military contingency and homeland security initiatives for the treatment

of casualties exposed to marrow toxic injury. The program provides for humanitarian support for patients every day while the same medical technology for treating patients is available to provide rapid and effective marrow rescue for military or civilian casualties exposed to marrow toxic ionizing radiation or chemical agents containing mustards. During both military exercises and recent conflicts, the program demonstrated military medical support capability.

Eligible volunteers under the DoD program include all active-duty military members and their dependents, DoD civilians, Coast Guard, National Guard and Reservists, ages 18 to 60 and in good health. A blood sample or buccal swab is taken from volunteers, and the sample is sent to the C.W. Bill Young/DoD Marrow Donor Program laboratory in Washington. The tissue type (human leukocyte antigen) of the volunteer is registered with the National Marrow Donor Program without identifying demographics.

The National Marrow Donor Program is the coordinating center in Minneapolis with more than 200 participating organizations, including donor centers, transplant centers, clinical and research laboratories for transplant matching. The NMDP provides a national coordinating



center where patients can become matched with volunteers registered at donor centers like the C.W. Bill Young/DoD Marrow Donor Center. This transplant therapy is used to treat as many as 70 different potentially fatal diseases that can be cured by replacement of diseased marrow from a healthy donor. If a volunteer matches a patient, he or she will be contacted by a staff member

of the C.W. Bill Young/DoD Marrow Donor Center. Donors receive extensive counseling and medical evaluation to ensure their desire to proceed with the process and that they are in good health.

DoD has played a vital role in the development of this life-saving national program due to the established spirit of volunteerism of members within the Armed Forces.

The C.W. Bill Young/DoD Marrow Donor Center is one of the largest in the world and provides the largest volume of lifesaving marrow for patients throughout the world.

Information from the C.W. Bill Young Department of Defense Marrow Donor Program website at www.dodmarrow.org



Air Force Maj. Timothy "Nathan" Tart, Jr., Defense Contract Management Agency International Southern Europe flight operations director, and his wife pose for a picture with first dog, Bo, during their tour of the White House the day after his bone marrow surgery.