



EXCELSIOR SURGICAL SOCIETY



Dear Colleagues,

I began last year's [message](#) with the sentence *“Now more than ever military surgeons need to rely on one another and on opportunities within the Excelsior Surgical Society as a way to weather tumultuous times and optimize professional wellness.”* I'm not sure I could have predicted the amount of change that has occurred within the Military Health System over the last 12-month period, but the year has seen a transition in the country's political leadership, the ebb and flow of a persistent global pandemic, and an end to the longest war in the country's history. I stick by my words from a year ago and sincerely hope that the society has been a relevant and useful way to find partnership and professional growth during this time.

With a tremendous amount of support from the professional staff within the office of Military Health System Strategic Partnership American College of Surgeons (MHSSPACS), committee leads, the Executive Council, and dedicated individual members, we have had a successful year. Membership in the society has increased to more than 300 and in the process, we have examined the society's composition and demographics to identify ways to improve its inclusivity. For the first time, the Excelsior Surgical Society has been asked to nominate a representative to and will have a seat on the American College of Surgeons Board of Governors. Under the leadership of highly capable chairpersons, the society's Diversity Equity and Inclusion, Membership, Mentorship, Outreach and Research committees have expanded opportunities for participation of our members, and the ACS Clinical Congress has now committed to including our symposium's agenda as part of its annual program.



The society's Vice President LTC (Dr) Danielle Holt, has taken the lead in organizing a new effort, our society-wide monthly webinars. This project has allowed scheduled and hopefully useful interaction among members and leadership who are spread across the U.S. and the world. The Excelsior Society webinars have had great participation and generated lively discussion on topics such as unconscious bias within military surgery, military surgical GME, scholarly success in a non-academic health system, and clinical topics such as ways for general surgeons to manage complex colorectal conditions. The webinars have themselves provided informative content and discussion, but they have also been a way to make connections and amplify communication and coordination among our ranks. Keep these webinars going by providing suggested topics and by participating!

The year has also been one of personal change as I have retired from military service to start a new chapter in civilian surgery. It's been a transition I am navigating with mixed emotions as I feel irrevocably linked to the people, patients, and mission of Military Health System. It has been such a privilege to be part of the Military Health System, and I can affirm from my current vantage point that the challenges and opportunities I had as a military surgeon (good, bad, and ugly) have prepared me for this next professional phase. As the Excelsior Surgical Society continues to grow in numbers and relevance, I encourage you to use it as a touchstone to remain engaged and ready. As those of you who completed planned deployments this past year and those who found themselves at the Kabul airport on August 27th can attest, it's vital to remain together, flexible, and ready.

It has been an honor to serve as president of the Excelsior Surgical this past year. Thank you for the opportunity and thanks to the society's vice president LTC (Dr) Danielle Holt, members of the MHSSPPACS staff, and the leadership of the executive council and our committees for your dedication and support. The



society is in good hands moving forward, and I encourage you to “lean in” to its efforts and initiatives as a means for you to weather tumultuous times and to optimize your professional wellness.

With Gratitude and Respect,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd E. Rasmussen".

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