

The Pentagon's Little Known Secret- The Armed Services Blood Program Blood Donor Center

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Have you ever wondered what goes on in the Pentagon? Arguably, one of the most important contributions taking place at the Pentagon is performed at the Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP) blood donor center (BDC): the act of collecting blood for service members and their families around the world.

“I am a strong advocate of the ASBP. I am a military family member and I know that at any time my husband, his comrades, and anyone in the military community could need blood or platelets, and I am proud to be a part of the blood-collecting force that will help those in need.” explains Azeb Gordon, ASBP blood donor recruiter at the Pentagon.

The Pentagon BDC draws from over 30 platelet and 40 whole blood donors each month. Since its opening in 2005, the Pentagon BDC has awarded numerous platelet donors with plaques highlighting their platelet donation achievements. The donors are recognized at every 25th, 50th, 75th, and 100th platelet donation and their plaques are proudly displayed on the BDC walls.

COL Marsha Curtis, a Pentagon BDC platelet donor since 2005, is one platelet donation away from her first plaque for 25 donations. She explains that the inspiration to donate platelets came when a fellow soldier developed Leukemia and a company-wide call for cross matching went out. Although COL Curtis was not a match for the fellow soldier, she was a perfect match for another patient who was battling breast cancer. “Although I don’t know the breast cancer patient personally, I am told that my platelet donations helped in her successful recovery,” adds COL Curtis.

Since platelet donations usually take about two hours, why would some prefer to give two hours of their time versus just 45 minutes for a whole blood donation? Aside from the fact that one single platelet donation provides six times as many platelets as one whole blood donation, COL Curtis gives her reason as to why she doesn’t mind the additional time:

“My ability to help someone is a priceless gift. Besides, I am able to read documents and get work done while I donate. It’s a new form of multi-tasking!”

Another devoted donor, Kevin Ackerman, is well beyond the 25th platelet donation and is aiming for the 50th donation plaque. He has regularly donated platelets to the ASBP since he first started working at the Pentagon in 2005. “I believe if you have the ability to donate, you should!” remarks Mr. Ackerman and explains:

“The platelets I donate every two weeks are transported to Walter Reed Army Medical Center and it is a great feeling to know that I am directly helping those in need.”

Blood and platelets can be donated to the Armed Services Blood Program at any of the 22 blood donor centers worldwide. Schedule an appointment today by visiting www.militaryblood.dod.mil and clicking on the “Give Blood Now” button.