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NEWS & VIEWS

Jessica Cromheecke

*Research and Development Program Director
at Travis Air Force Base, CA*

The idea of technology may cause the average person to harness thoughts of Apple®, Microsoft®, or perhaps Tesla®. After all, who doesn't want to know what daunting task the next cell phone will alleviate us of, or how immersive the next video game console will be, or if we can take a long nap in the driver's seat of a new car and still arrive home safely? However, for Jessica Cromheecke at Travis Air Force Base in California, thoughts of the next medical marvel to save humanity may come to mind.

Many of the ideas relating to medical technology at Travis's David Grant Medical Center cross Cromheecke's desk for approval, funding, and collaboration. As the Deputy Director of the Clinical Investigation Facility (CIF) at the medical center, she ensures operations run as smoothly as possible to allow research to bring valuable opportunities to fruition.

Cromheecke also heads the Office of Research and Technology Applications, or ORTA, which is responsible for developing collaborative interactions with industry, academia, and other government entities through an Air Force program called Technology Transfer and Transition. "Within my technology transfer role," explains Cromheecke, "I provide support to the CIF for Intellectual Property Filings, Cooperative Research and Development Agreements, Material Transfer Agreements, Memorandums of Understanding, Educational Partnership Agreements, and more."

Her support is key to bridging the gap between idea and reality which, to this point, has been more enjoyable than challenging. "As a problem-solver, I enjoy working with the staff to find solutions that are best for the warfighter and the organization, and [determine] if they have translational capabilities to the civilian sector," Cromheecke states.

Unique research that originated at the CIF and has grown into university partnerships, most notably advances in automated critical care with the University of Utah and Wake Forest University in North Carolina. Naturally, being roughly 25 miles away, the University of California, Davis has been one of their biggest partners.

Cromheecke reveals that some of the surgical invention research has also been conducted with Belmont Medical Technologies and Ex Thera Medical Corporation, enabling the issuance of four patents

since 2018 for their discoveries and methodologies.

The Vascular Access Disassembling Needle Device and Method, Flow Rate Control Device for Variable Intra-Aortic Occlusion, Fetal Ultrasound Phantom, and Electromagnetic Artificial Muscle Fiber patent applications were all approved by the United States Patent and Trademark Office. "I would absolutely say being part of the patent filing

process has been a highlight of my time at the CIF," she says. "It has been one of the most rewarding parts of my position."

Cromheecke and her team of professionals at the CIF has also been instrumental in the local community by providing the Solano County Public Health Laboratory with an important piece of equipment to double their daily COVID-19 testing capability. She thanks Lt. Col. Laurie Migliore, Lt. Col. Kim Hopkins, Maj. Savannah Jumpp, and Dr. J. Kevin Grayson for taking on such tasks during the pandemic. "I serve with a great team. When provided the chance to start a Medical Intelligence group at the beginning of COVID-19, my immediate co-workers did not hesitate to jump on the team," she proudly claims.

Cromheecke is no stranger when it comes to jumping on a great team when the opportunity is presented. While studying at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, she sang with the London Philharmonic Choir, a moment she calls one her most treasured memories. "My hope, for when this pandemic is more under control, is to be part of a choral group again," she says.

Until she sings again, you can rest assured that your tech-savvy gadgets are taking a back seat in the minds of Jessica Cromheecke and her team at the David Grant Medical Center.

To learn more about the Clinical Investigation Facility at David Grant Medical Center, please e-mail Jessica Cromheecke at jessica.l.cromheecke.civ@mail.mil.



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