

Brett J. Theeler, MD

*Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army Medical Corps
Chair, Department of Neurology, School of Medicine
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences
Bethesda, Maryland*



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One drop at a time...

Among the thousands of drops of water necessary to fill a bucket, rarely, if ever, do we know the exact drop that will cause the bucket to overflow. The same can be said about the accumulated experiences that collectively lead a person toward a specific life-long path. Brett Theeler, MD, credits the people who introduced him to many interests and experiences in his youth with significantly contributing to his decision to pursue a career in medicine.

Brett Theeler, MD, loved science as a kid. And he always wanted to give back to his country. He wasn't a military brat, and he doesn't come from a family of medical professionals. His earliest influence was his high school biology teacher, Mr. Jerry Opbroek, who introduced him to the medical sciences including a field trip where students, amongst other things, got to view cadavers.

Dr. Theeler was inspired by his time in the classroom and the laboratory with his Neuroscience professor, Dr. Charles Lamb. Due to Dr. Lamb's influence, he began medical school with an interest in the neurological sciences. It wasn't until residency training that he learned about the field of Neuro-Oncology and determined this was his chosen field. Today, Dr. Theeler is now the only fellowship-trained Neuro-Oncologist in the Military Healthcare System, including physicians in the United States Army, Navy, and Air Force.

Dr. Theeler was directly commissioned into the United States Army as a Second Lieutenant in June 2001. He attended the Uniformed Services University, F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine. He completed Neurology residency training at Madigan Army Medical Center in

2009. He completed Neuro-Oncology fellowship training at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston in 2012. He was then stationed at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) in the Department of Neurology. From 2012 to 2021, he served in multiple GME and leadership roles at WRNMMC including Associate Residency Program Director, Deputy Chief, and Chief, Department of Neurology. In June 2021, Dr. Theeler was named Chair, Department of Neurology at the Uniformed Services University. He holds the academic rank of Associate Professor in the Department of Neurology at USU.

Dr. Theeler has an active Neuro-Oncology practice at the John P. Murtha Cancer Center located within WRNMMC. He sees patients and is a regular contributor to the clinical research program at the National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, Neuro-Oncology Branch in Bethesda, MD.

Dr. Theeler has fond memories of his time at MD Anderson Cancer Center and the clinical experience and clinical research opportunities afforded him during fellowship. He also noted that being a small part of an outstanding organization provided insights on leadership and professionalism that he would take with him as a career Medical Corps Officer and military Neuro-Oncologist.

While at MD Anderson Cancer Center, Dr. Theeler says he would often interact with world renowned neuro-oncologists, neurosurgeons, neuropathologists, neuropsychologists and neuroradiologists within a single workday. The multi-disciplinary environment afforded a focused educational environment where learning was the main mission for the Neuro-Oncology fellows. He is also proud of his more than 20 years of military service stating that he has received much more from his time in the military than he could ever give back.

This is my story

<i>MD Anderson School(s) from which I graduated</i>	Neuro-Oncology Fellowship – 2010 - 2012
<i>Academic area of specialization</i>	Neuro-Oncology, Adult
<i>Current Employer</i>	United States Army Medical Corps
<i>Current City</i>	Washington D.C.
<i>Current Position</i>	Chair, Department of Neurology, School of Medicine Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences Bethesda, Maryland
<i>Who are your mentors?</i>	<p>I've have had significant influence from mentors beginning with high school teachers who introduced me to the field of neuroscience. While at MD Anderson numerous faculty members contributed to my clinical education as well as provided me invaluable lessons about effective leadership and about how a successful organization operates. In addition to learning about brain cancer, research, and practical applications such as how to have difficult conversations, I got to see how a successful team works from the inside. I've applied and will continue to apply these learnings in every role I am in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John de Groot, MD, professor and former Chair, Department of Neuro-Oncology, Division of Cancer Medicine, MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas • Mark Gilbert, MD, Chief, Neuro-Oncology Branch, NIH/NCI; former professor and Deputy Chair of Neuro-Oncology, Division of Cancer Medicine, MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas • Vinay K. Puduvalli, MD, Chair, Department of Neuro-Oncology, Division of Cancer Medicine, MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas • Alfred Yung, MD, professor and former Chair, Department of Neuro-Oncology, Division of Cancer Medicine, MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morris Groves, MD – former faculty member, Department of Neuro-Oncology, Division of Cancer Medicine, MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas • Charles Conrad, MD - former faculty member, Department of Neuro-Oncology, Division of Cancer Medicine, MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas
<i>Research Interests</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neuro-Oncology • Rare Primary CNS Neoplasms • Neurological Education
<i>Works of interest</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult pilocytic astrocytoma in the molecular era: a comprehensive review. • NCI-CONNECT: Comprehensive Oncology Network Evaluating Rare CNS Tumors-Histone Mutated Midline Glioma Workshop Proceedings. • Proceedings of the Comprehensive Oncology Network Evaluating Rare CNS Tumors (NCI-CONNECT) Adult Medulloblastoma Workshop • De novo and secondary anaplastic meningiomas: natural history, prognosis, and the TERT promoter. • Advances in the treatment of newly diagnosed glioblastoma. • Adult pilocytic astrocytomas: clinical features and molecular analysis. • Moving toward molecular classification of diffuse gliomas in adults. • Recurrent PIK3CA mutations in rosette-forming glioneuronal tumor. • Post-traumatic headaches in civilians and military personnel: a comparative, clinical review. • Prevalence and impact of migraine among U.S. Army soldiers deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.
<i>Representative Publications, Projects and/or Deployments</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alpha Omega Alpha, Gamma Maryland Chapter, Fall 2005. • Theater Neurologist, Craig Joint Theater Hospital and Level III Concussion Specialty Care Center, Bagram Air Force Base, Afghanistan, July-November 2013. • Captain Calvin B. Early Award for Excellence in Teaching from the National Capital Consortium Neurosurgical Residency Program, June 4, 2018. • Workshop Co-Chair. NCI-CONNECT - Comprehensive Oncology Network Evaluation Rare CNS Tumors. Histone Mutated

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	<p>Midline Glioma Workshop. September 27, 2018. National Institutes of Health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honorary Doctorate of Science from Black Hills State University, awarded at the graduation ceremony, May 4, 2019. • ‘A’ Proficiency Designator awarded November 2019 by the United States Army Medical Command. • FY2020 programmatic review panel member for the Rare Cancers Research Program (RCRP). Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs. • Inducted into the Order of Military Medical Merit (O2M3) in June 2020.
<i>Family</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Married with 2 children
<i>Graduate school(s) from which I received a degree(s)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center Neuro-Oncology Fellowship, 2010-2012 • Madigan Army Medical Center, Fort Lewis, Washington Adult Neurology Residency, 2005-2009 • Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine M.D., 2001-2005
<i>Undergraduate school(s) from which I received a degree(s)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Hills State University, B.S., 1996-2001
<i>High school from which I received a degree.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitchell High School Mitchell, South Dakota, 1996

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