

My Life, My Story

Student Interns: Aaron Bradley *University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine*

Victoria Kranz *University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine & Perelman School of Medicine, Center for Public Health Initiatives*

Community Preceptor: Melissa Heinlein PhD, CAVS Chief, Voluntary Service Corporal Michael J. Crescenz *Veterans Affairs Medical Center*

Academic Preceptors: Joan Gluch PhD, RDH, PHDHP *University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine*

Brittany Watson MS, VMD, PhD, DACVPM *University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine*

Introduction:

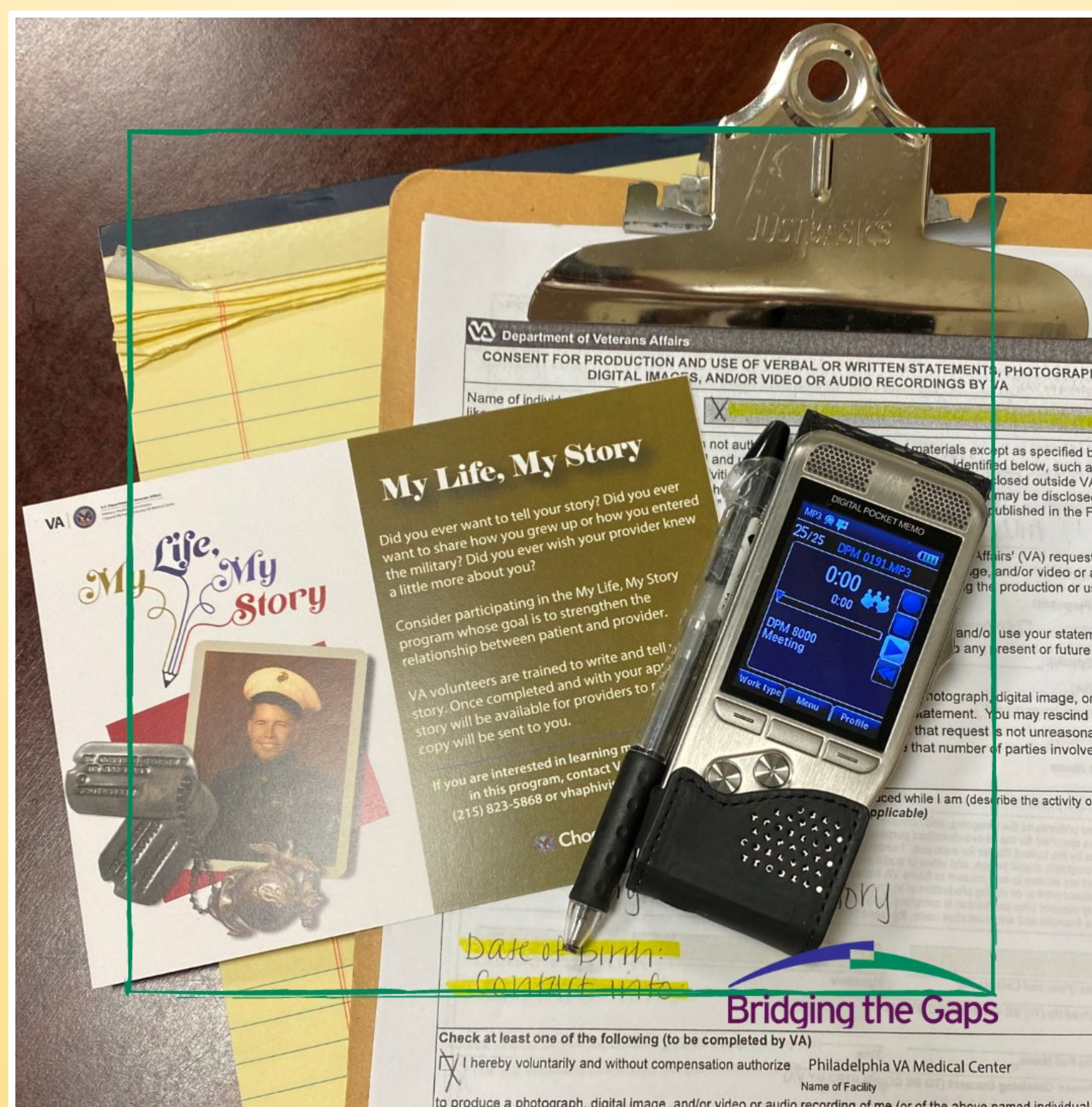
Corporal Michael J. Crescenz Veterans Affairs Medical Center is a nearly 300-bed Joint Commission accredited tertiary care teaching hospital affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania. Located in West Philadelphia's University City district, CVCVAMC serves over 57,000 US veterans through more than 450,000 visits per year. Its mission statement is to **"Honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well being."**

Project Goals:

Incorporating Veterans' life stories into their medical records helps their healthcare providers - and VA leadership - to acknowledge and appreciate each patient as an individual.

The My Life, My Story Project improves each patient's care. In addition to fostering deeper connections between Veterans and their care team, MLMS can directly contribute to a Veteran's treatment plan.

Interviews provide Veterans with the opportunity to safely voice concerns and directly address issues they have faced during the course of their care, allowing all those involved to hear their perspective.



Our Project:

BTG interns solicited bedside interviews with Veterans at CMCVAMC. Topics ranged from childhood and upbringing to military service, family, current hobbies and future goals.

In addition to handwritten notes, audio recording captured finer details and exact wording. Interns then wrote up a 1000-word piece summarizing the Veteran's story.

Post-interview conversations allowed Veterans to request revisions to the phrasing or content of their story. When approved, each piece was uploaded to the appropriate Veteran's medical record.

39 Interviews, 1,100 Minutes

Outcomes:

In a recent Madison, WI VAMC survey, the program drew an "overwhelmingly positive" response from VA providers who felt that reading these stories was a good use of clinical time and that it would help improve clinical care. Some clinicians use the stories to establish rapport with their patients, others use them to help develop treatment plans.

<https://www.va.gov/HEALTHCAREEXCELLENCE/news-room/newsletter/spotlight-on-excellence/2018/special/my-life-my-story.asp>