

Navy Secretary thanks UCLA team behind Operation Mend

UCLA's Operation Mend program and the UCLA Health System welcomed the U.S. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus to the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center on Oct. 22.



Cpl. Louis Dahlman (left), who has undergone facial reconstructive surgery, meets U.S. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus.

One of the country's highest ranking officials, Mabus made a special trip to UCLA to learn more about Operation Mend, a flourishing collaboration between UCLA and the military which offers reconstructive surgery to servicemen and women wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Operation Mend began in 2007 as a pilot program funded by philanthropist and UCLA Medical Center board member Ronald A. Katz, with the goal of easing the literal scars of war. Through the program, UCLA doctors have seen more than 30 patients, many of

them injured by bomb blasts while serving in the Middle East.

Mabus spent quality time with four of Operation Mend's current patients and their families, and he personally thanked the physicians and Operation Mend team for their efforts.

During the visit, Dr. Timothy Miller, professor and chief of plastic surgery as well as a Vietnam War veteran, showed Mabus some of the surgical techniques used to repair the wounds of war. Dr. Paul Vespa, professor of neurosurgery, demonstrated how robotic technology developed at UCLA can be deployed in the field; and Dr. David Feinberg, CEO of the UCLA Hospital System, discussed how Operation Mend plans to expand its services to include limb transplantation surgery and advanced treatment for traumatic brain injury.



Dr. Timothy Miller, lead plastic surgeon for Operation Mend, greets Mabus.

Mabus was appointed Secretary of the Navy by President Obama last June. Previously, Mabus served as the United States ambassador to Saudi Arabia under President Bill Clinton and was governor of Mississippi. He served in the Naval ROTC while studying at the University of Mississippi and later spent two years in the Navy until 1972.

To learn more about this program, see this [website](#).

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Four patients from UCLA's Operation Mend program.