



CAPT Margaret A. Riggs, USPHS (Ret) PhD, MPH, MS

Board Position: Veteran (Retired) Representative

CAPT Riggs retired in 2022 after a 21-year career in the USPHS and the US Army. She serves as the Retired Officer representative on the COA Board of Directors and is the current Chair of the Veterans Affairs Committee. She currently works as the Environmental Outbreak Investigations Lead for the Kentucky Dept for Public Health.

CAPT Riggs started her military service just after high school in the US Army assigned to Berlin, Germany, completed her education at the University of Florida and began her PHS career as an Epidemic Intelligence Officer at CDC. She served in a variety of positions at CDC including: supporting state health as a Career Epidemiology Field Officer (CEFO) in Kentucky; CEFO Supervisor overseeing 30 CDC field assignees stationed around the US; Associate Director at CDC Zambia helping establish the Zambia National Public Health Institute; and Healthy Communities Director, a CDC senior field assignee, at a regional nonprofit, Shaping Our Appalachian Region, that champions regional programs and advocates for coordination of health improvement in Eastern Kentucky.

CAPT Riggs received numerous PHS awards including a Distinguished Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Commendation Medal, Presidential Unit Citations, Outstanding Unit Citations, and US Embassy Meritorious Service and Franklin Awards. In addition, she received the 2011 USPHS Responder of the Year and the 2011 SciPAC Scientist Responder of the Year Awards.

CAPT Riggs and her husband, Jeff McDonald, live in Eastern Kentucky with their two dogs and two cats. They enjoy traveling internationally and compete in dog sports around the US. She is eager to continue her work for USPHS veterans in support of COA's mission.

Position Statement

CAPT (Ret) Margaret A. Riggs

Board Position: Retired Officer (Applicant for 2025-2028)

Thank you for considering my application to continue serving as a Retired Officer

Representative to the COA Board of Directors. As a retired officer and veteran, it would be my honor to continue to serve on the Veterans Affairs Committee. As a USPHS officer, I served 17 years at the CDC and through many deployments with RDF, had the privilege of interacting with a wide array of officers across our various agencies. I enjoy working with fellow active-duty and veteran officers to advance the COA mission of Your Corps, Your Causes by advocating, engaging, and serving. As the current Chair of the COA Veterans Affairs Committee, I have used my leadership, social networks, and communication skills to assist COA in identifying needs of officers and veterans and have worked to address those needs through quarterly gatherings, virtually and in-person, to stay connected, share information, and create a forum to voice concerns. I also am working to develop strategies to help USPHS veterans stay active with PHS and to understand and access the benefits earned by serving our nation. If elected, I will continue efforts to advocate for veterans benefits and work to link our retired veterans with active-duty officers for mentorship and guidance. Throughout my career, mentoring junior officers and advocating for PHS issues was critically important to me and if elected to this board position, I will continue to work toward assisting our junior officers in developing pathways to leadership and promotion while also engaging our veterans to feel connected to the active-duty and veteran communities. Advocating for parity in benefits that all uniformed officers have earned is my main goal. I am prepared, have pride our USPHS service, and would be grateful to continue my commitment to volunteer with COA.