

Groups Seek Recognition at Native American Museum Veterans Memorial

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A section of the National Native American Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC.

by Dana Hedgpeth

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A group that represents Public Health Service officers who have assisted during natural disasters, in overseas fights against Ebola and recently on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic is seeking recognition on a veterans memorial at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian, arguing its members were unfairly left out.

The Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service alleges that when the design was completed years

ago for the National Native American Veterans Memorial, the USPHS and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps should have been included.

The memorial, which opened in November, includes the seals of the Navy, Army, Air Force, Coast Guard and Marine Corps. The lawsuit, filed in March in U.S. District Court in D.C., seeks to have the seals of the commissioned officers' groups added.

Not being on the memorial makes public health service members who are Native American feel "marginalized, unimportant,

see **RECOGNITION** continued on page 17

from the
Executive
Director



Jacqueline Rychnovsky,
PhD, RN, CPNP, FAANP
Captain (ret.), Nurse Corps, US Navy

Recent Wins and Losses

As the saying goes, "You win some, you lose some, but you live to fight another day." This adage holds true for the many advocacy issues at COA. It is sometimes difficult to be patient because you work hard and deserve benefits offered to other uniformed services! In this month's column I would like to share a few recent victories, along with a few defeats. In the end, please know that COA is here to be your voice.

Recent Wins

Women Veteran's Leading the Way Campaign

In March, I received a news release from the Veterans Administration (VA) announcing the 27 winners of the 2021 VA Center for Women Veterans (CWW) Trailblazers program. The purpose of this campaign is to celebrate the contributions of women Veterans representing all "military uniformed services branches," by showcasing the impact these women have made in the areas of education,

see **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** on page 18

COA Member Benefits

Capitol Hill Representation

Efforts on Capitol Hill continually support all Commissioned Corps officers – active duty and retired

Local Representation

COA Local Branches provide venues for meeting fellow officers and a forum for the discussion of issues within the Commissioned Corps

Newsletter

Newsletter reports on monthly activities and items of interest about the Corps & COA

Ribbon

Authorized to be worn on the PHS uniform by members in good standing when attending COA functions

Insurance Programs

Low-cost insurance programs that may continue as long as your membership in COA remains current

USF Online Programs

Discounted degree and certificate programs like PhD, DrPH, MPH, MSPH, MHA

NYMC Online MPH

50 percent discount for the online MPH and certificate programs

Scholarship Program

College scholarships for children and spouses of COA members

USC Keck School of Medicine

Tuition discount for Master of Public Health degree

The Ohio State University

In-state tuition for graduate nursing and certification programs



Legislative Update COA Seeks Equal Access to National Parks for USPHS

by Judith Rensberger, MS, MPH

As the pandemic drags on, many of our fellow citizens find themselves housebound, stressed-out, over-worked or desperately looking to entertain school-age children. They may also be looking for relaxation and a change of scenery in one of our country's great national parks. PHS officers and their families may well be among them.

The National Park System offers multiple good deals, which they call "America the Beautiful Passes," to several groups: Veterans and Gold Star Families, seniors, 5th graders, 4th graders, and "current U.S. military members and their dependents in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and Space Force, as well as Reserve and National Guard members."

Notice anyone left out?

For the USPHS, we could identify no special breaks or discounts. Some park officials have kindly (but mistakenly) allowed PHS officers into the parks for greatly reduced fees, assuming they are "military" when in fact they are not.

Understandably, COA members would like to see the USPHS included in the special access granted to members of the U.S. military. Making that happen is one of COA's top priorities.

In gathering facts and building our case to support a possible legislative "ask," we are seeking first-hand accounts from COA members. It helps to be able to cite our members' experiences when we make the case for treating them as they treat armed services personnel. Please let us know if you and your family have been welcomed or disparaged in any way. Please identify the park, or parks, and provide any additional information you think would be helpful as COA builds its case. Please send information to me at jrensberger@coausphs.org

In concluding on a positive note, I want to thank CAPT Sara Newman for sharing this nugget: "This year celebrates the 100-year partnership between the National Park Service and the U. S. Public Health Service. In 1921, the first director of the NPS asked the U.S. Surgeon General (RADM Hugh Cummins) to assign an officer to NPS to inspect water, wastewater, and food issues, and address disease prevention. Today, there are approximately 60 USPHS officers assigned to NPS. This 100-year relationship is believed to be the oldest agreement between two federal agencies."

Benefits Delivery at Discharge

by Retired CAPT Alan Echt, COA Board of Directors

When I was preparing to retire, a friend suggested that I contact the military service coordinators from the Dayton Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center at the satellite VA/Department of Defense office in the Wright-Patterson Medical Center (WPMC) to ask about making a disability claim. One of the coordinators explained that by using the VA's Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) program, you can submit a disability claim 180 to 90 days before you leave active duty for an injury or illness you believe was caused or aggravated by your service. Using the BDD process may hasten the VA's evaluation of your claim so you can get your benefits faster.



Eligibility

To use the BDD program, you must meet all these requirements: You must be a servicemember on full-time active duty, know your separation date, which must be in the next 180 to 90 days, be available for VA examinations for 45 days from the date of your claim submission, and be able to provide a copy of your service treatment records for your current period of active duty when you file your claim.

You cannot use the BDD program if any of the following is true:

- You need case management for a serious injury or illness,
- You are terminally ill,
- You are waiting to be discharged while being treated at a VA hospital or military treatment facility,
- You are pregnant,
- You are waiting the determination of your Character of Discharge,
- You can't go to a VA exam during the 45-day period after you submit your claim,
- You didn't submit copies of your service treatment records for your current period of service,
- You added a medical condition to your original claim when you had less than 90 days left on active duty (added conditions will be processed after your discharge), or
- You need to have a VA exam done in a foreign country, except if the exam can be requested by the overseas BDD office in either Landstuhl, Germany, or Camp Humphreys, Korea.

Process

You can file a claim in person, online, or by mail. To finish the BDD process you will need to submit your medical records with your application and be available for a VA medical exam 45 days from the date you apply and complete all phases of the medical separation examination process before your release from the service. If you decide to do this, keep in mind that providers can't charge active duty service members to copy their records. Providers can submit a claim to Tricare to be reimbursed for photocopying and postage.

Patience

Bearing boxes of medical records on paper, disks, and flash drives, I showed up at the VA office at WPMC in February 2020, where a very patient Service Officer from AMVETS reviewed them with me and completed the application for disability compensation. I recommend you review your records ahead of time, so you know where to find the diagnoses. Then, the pandemic hit. I finally returned in July 2020 for my examination. I received my rating decision in November 2020 and my first payment in December. If a new condition or illness arises within a year of your separation, there is a presumption that it is service connected, and you may wish to file an additional claim.

Here is more information about the BDD program.

BDD Fact Sheet: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/general/BDDFactSheet.pdf>

Website: <https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/when-to-file/pre-discharge-claim/>

Presumptive Disability Benefits: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/serviceconnected/presumption.pdf>



PHS COMMISSIONED OFFICERS FOUNDATION *for the* Advancement Of Public Health

Forging Leadership for Generations

by CAPT Rob Tosatto, USPHS (ret.)
and RADM Steve Solomon, USPHS
(ret.)

The Commissioned Officers Foundation for the Advancement of Public Health (COF) celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2020, and we will soon be releasing our Annual Report highlighting COF's many achievements. However, our celebration was cut short by the COVID-19 global pandemic, the multiple challenges the world faced in combatting the disease, the tragic inequality of health outcomes that burdened underserved and disadvantaged populations, and the economic, social, and political dislocations that have touched nearly everyone in the world. The damaging effects of decades of underfunding and inadequate support of the public health infrastructure was made evident. But it was also a year that demonstrated the dedication and commitment of the public health workforce, including USPHS Commissioned Corps officers.

In assessing these events and their significance, the COF Board of Trustees felt compelled to reevaluate our mission and our "brand." While our broad strategic goals remain the same (advocacy, education and training, governance and development, preservation of heritage, project and research support), we also saw a

need to be clearer and more direct in our organizational focus and messaging. As a result, we have come together around the idea of Forging Leadership for Generations. You will begin to see this phrase more often in COF materials, publications, and communications. We believe this concept expresses the most important components of our mission.

We know that it is the youngest and the oldest among us who are often most vulnerable in a public health crisis. We know that underserved and disadvantaged populations of all ages suffer disproportionately, because for generations they have not been given the respect, the help, and access to services we should all receive. The pandemic has reminded us that everyone has a right to compassionate care and protection from health threats, without exception. Forging Leadership for Generations also reminds us that the Commissioned Corps and the USPHS, which traces its origins back over two centuries, has been serving Americans for generations. We expect that service to continue for many more generations.

Inspired, expert and compassionate leadership is as essential in public health as in any other part of our national life. Forging Leadership for Generations tells us that we can build

and support leaders who help our communities — and our Nation — to meet its public health challenges and overcome years of constrained funding and lack of support from political leaders at all levels of government. The USPHS Commissioned Corps has a proud history of shaping national public health leaders like Anthony Fauci, Anne Schuchat, Kenneth Moritsugu, and many others. COF recognizes that heritage and supports nurturing and encouraging the next generations of public health leaders.

Leadership is clearly necessary in a crisis and crises help forge leaders. Increasingly, USPHS Commissioned Corps officers are being called to respond to emergent problems in the most difficult circumstances, across the U.S. and around the world. In just the 21st century, even before the pandemic, from 9/11, to Hurricane Katrina, to Ebola, the Corps has sent officers into situations that forge the experience, the temperament and the quiet confidence that creates the best leaders.

Recognizing these needs, the COF has recommitted itself to supporting today's leaders and the leaders of the future who will be responsible for protecting and preserving the public's health now and for generations to come.

Creating Safer Communities

by CAPT Juliette Taylor Touré,
CDR Trang Tran, LCDR Doan
Singh, LCDR Tramara Dam,
LCDR Ruby Leong, LCDR
Kathleen (Ferguson) Tisdale,
CDR Michelle Tsai, CAPT Maria
Fields



As CDC Director, Dr. Walensky, recently highlighted, racism is a “serious public health threat...The pandemic has illuminated inequities that have existed for generations and revealed...a known, but often unaddressed, epidemic impacting public health.” In the wake of increased violence and hate crimes against the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Asian Pacific American Officers Committee (APAOC), conducted a survey in April 2021 to gather data on racial discrimination or hate crimes against APAOC members, their local community and their impact on mental health. Of the 77 respondents, half directly or had a community member suffer from racial discrimination or hate crimes and thirty-five respondents reported that their mental health has been negatively impacted with symptoms of anxiety and/or depression due to these incidents. However, only 3 of these 35 respondents sought mental health resources.

According to the survey results, the types of racism encountered ranged from overt attacks such as vandalizing personal property, being told to “go back to China” at the Navy Exchange, receiving a letter saying that Chinese people should die after the Atlanta shootings, being told that we do not deserve to wear the uniform, to subtle microaggressions such as delayed or substandard healthcare treatment. Several stories date back to childhood for APAOC officers. Some feared for their safety while on deployment or for their elderly parents in public places.

Roughly, a tenth of USPHS active duty officers identify as Asian or Pacific Islander. We hope you will join us in creating safer communities. A more comprehensive resource guide will be posted to the APAOC website. However, a couple ways in which you can help are:

1. Have awareness: Hate crimes and racism contribute to poor mental health and well-being, cause trauma, exacerbate health disparities, and may negatively impact generational health.
 - a. Tune into APAOC’s future training on this topic in May.
 - b. Seek out and enjoy activities during the AAPI Heritage Month and get to know the AAPI members in your community.



- c. Tune into the APAOC Facebook and Instagram platforms during the month of May to learn more about how AAPIs have contributed to America’s public health.
2. Educate self and others: APAOC will compile and share a growing number of resources on the APAOC website.
3. Take or advocate for informed action:
 - a. Victims: get medical help (mental and physical), if necessary
 - b. Report crime to local police:
 - i. Include details of the crime as soon as possible after the incident, e.g., perpetrator’s gender, age, height, race, weight, clothes, any other distinguishing characteristics. Include threats or biased comments in the police report.
 - ii. Always get a copy, even of the preliminary report.
 - iii. Request that the officer check the “hate/bias-motivation” or “hate crime/incident” box on the police report.
4. Seek mental health resources:
 - a. Recognize symptoms of anxiety or depression in self and others.
 - b. Seek medical care and/or counseling for mental health and overall well-being.
 - c. Show support for family, friends, and communities who have been negatively impacted by racial discrimination or hate crimes.

**This article is for informational purposes only and does not reflect official views of the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps or USPHS leadership.*



Board of Directors

All Officers Benefit (Membership has its Privileges)

by CAPT Karen Munoz, RN, BSN, MS

I am betting that many of you are members of the American Pharmacist's Association (APhA) or the American Nurses Association (ANA). The slogan for APhA is "For every pharmacist. For all of Pharmacy," and the ANA states that they have been championing the interests of Registered Nurses for over 100 years. But what about nurses who aren't a member of the ANA? And what about pharmacists who don't pay for an APhA membership? Do they get anything out of these memberships? Well, yes, they do.

When the ANA advocates for safe staffing, or for nurse practitioners (NPs) and clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) to order home health services for Medicare beneficiaries without physician approval, these achievements do not only apply to nurses that are members of the ANA. And if the APhA is successful in achieving provider status recognition for pharmacists in medically underserved areas, this will not simply apply if you are a member of the APhA. You see, associations generally represent the entirety of a group or profession – not simply their members. Associations can facilitate innovation, communication and connection; they can prioritize issues and, through the strength of its members, can have a unified voice on legislative issues affecting that group.

We know that it can be a challenge to choose which associations or professional groups you want to join. There are usually dues involved, and most of us have budgets to adhere to - so we get

it. But I can think of no other association that hits this close to home as does the Commissioned Officers Association of the USPHS (COA). COA is the only association that works solely on behalf of active duty and retired officers of the USPHS. Yes, there is another association that represents officers of all the uniformed services – and in fact, COA works collaboratively with them on issues that cross services. Yet – only 50% of active duty officers, and only 20% of retired officers are current members of COA.

When COA invested resources to helping ensure that active duty officers did not lose unused FY 2020 annual leave due to their inability to use it, that action benefitted any officer with left over unused FY 2020 leave. You didn't have to be a member of COA to have benefitted from this achievement. So, while you may have heard that "membership has its privileges", please understand that when COA advocates for the USPHS and its officers, every officer benefits. Do you only think about your COA dues when your Local Branch holiday party is coming up? Do you only pay up when it is time to go to the annual USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium, sponsored by the Commissioned Officers Foundation, so that you can get the discounted rate? If so, I sincerely ask you to honestly self-reflect for a moment, and consider whether you are you getting the benefits of COA's actions for free? I will tell you this – COA and its small but hardworking staff work all year long for you. I am not in any



Past Chair, CAPT Karen Munoz, RN, BSN, MS

way criticizing those of you who choose not to join COA. That is your choice and I do respect it. I am simply pointing out that everyone benefits, whether they are a paid member or not, and I'd like you to reflect on that – and I'd love for you to consider joining.

One more thing...through the years I have noticed that many officers conflate the COA leadership with the leadership of the USPHS – now let me be clear – the COA does not manage or direct the U.S. Public Health Service. The leadership of the USPHS does not have to do what COA wants them to do – and vice versa. I've often heard officers complain about something service related, and they believe that COA can fix it. COA cannot. But what COA can do, and what they are committed to doing, is to advocate for you when it is appropriate to do so. If there is a service wide issue affecting many officers, COA can communicate and facilitate a conversation with USPHS leadership. COA believes that a collaborative, positive working relationship with the leadership of USPHS would be most beneficial for its member officers, and COA works every day to help build this bridge. Will you help us, too?

Doing our Part

by Jessica Rouse, DeCA Public Affairs Specialist

Reprinted with permission from a DeCA news release on April 15.

Earth Day may be celebrated once a year, but the Defense Commissary Agency's efforts to employ sustainable work practices and recycle and divert waste from landfills is a year-round job.

"Our environmental management system is in our DNA," said Kenneth Walker, DeCA's chief, planning and programming division. "We continuously work to protect the environment. Whether recycling or donating edible but unsellable food to participating food banks, DeCA is fulfilling its role as a conscientious member of the military and global communities."

DeCA's environmental management system (EMS) is the framework the agency uses to achieve its environmental goals. One element of the system is the agency's food donation program.

Since 2013, food banks around the U.S. received over 21 million pounds of donated food. In 2020 alone, DeCA donated 4.1 million pounds of food during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when food banks were stretched even further due to widespread financial hardship.

And it doesn't stop there. Since 2005, commissaries have recycled or diverted an estimated 1.8 billion pounds of solid waste from ending up in landfills across the world, generating an estimated \$56.1 million in surcharge revenue, the fund that helps maintain, renovate, and build new commissaries.

DeCA also uses an equipment liquidation service to sell out-of-use items, which has diverted 1.5 million pounds of used equipment from landfills. The sale of these items has generated over \$3.9 million for the surcharge account.



A DeCA employee at the Fort Lewis Commissary collects recycled cardboard. (DeCA photo)

DeCA's EMS efforts also extend to commissary customers by providing shoppers with sustainable options when they shop. They can purchase quality reusable shopping bags, energy efficient lightbulbs, high-efficiency dish and laundry detergents and reduced-packaging products like paper towels and bathroom tissue without cardboard tube inserts.

"Customers looking for great deals on green items for their homes need to look no further than their commissary shelves," said Bonita Moffett, DeCA's director of sales. "We have soaps and cleaners you can trust to clean your home, protect the environment and save you money."

The agency's EMS allows it to balance the delicate task of protecting the environment and meeting DeCA's business goals, Walker said.

CAPT Crockett Recognized for Operation Warp Speed

CAPT Michael Crockett was awarded the Defense Meritorious Service Medal for his efforts as Liaison Officer for the BOP-Federal Government COVID Operations Response (formerly known as Operation Warp Speed). CAPT Crockett is Chief, Pharmacy Logistics, Health Services Division of the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

As Liaison Officer, CAPT Crockett coordinated efforts with representatives from the Department of Defense, CDC, and other agencies. His advocacy led to the prioritization of BOP staff for vaccinations. CAPT Crockett and a team of health

professionals developed the BOP Vaccination Plan and Training Guidance. CAPT Crockett led the distribution of vaccines to all BOP institutions, leading to the highest percentage of allocated doses among all jurisdictions and five Federal partners. The BOP vaccination model has been replicated by correctional systems nationwide.

This excerpt is from an article originally published by the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The full article is available online at https://www.bop.gov/resources/news/20210322_award.jsp.



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For more information, visit www.nymc.edu/usphs

*Tuition discount for active-duty service members including USPHS Commissioned Corps officers and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services employees.

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Impacting the Mental Health of Arizona's Families

by Tom Zimmerman, D.Min., MA,
President of Life Changers Counseling

Even before the 2020 COVID-19 crisis, the families of Central Arizona were struggling. Many are recent transplants from elsewhere and lack the family and community support structures to help them meet their life challenges. The issues found across America are even more pronounced in Arizona, including relationship challenges, family breakups, addictions, and mood disorders.

Life Changers Counseling and Life Coaching is a Christian non-profit organization, which serves the families of Arizona, offering low-cost counseling for children, adolescents, adults, and families.

In 2018, we received a \$5,000 COF Barclay-Giel Seed Grant. Our goal was to serve an additional 100 families in the Greater Phoenix area, using the grant to raise awareness of our services, to subsidize our already discounted

counseling fees for families and to demonstrate that a relatively small grant could make a big impact in people's lives.

In this way, we hoped to reach more people and enable them to receive mental health help regardless of their income levels. Our network of Christian Counselors and Life Coaches was ready to serve the new clients.

The Barclay-Giel Seed Grant allowed us to gain more visibility in the community. We used Google Ads, resulting in hundreds more people contacting us for help.

While confidentiality rules limit our ability to share specific improvements, we can share that many lives have been positively changed. People recovered from depression and anxiety, avoided divorce, learned new life skills, and became more effective parents as a result of this investment. Several teens learned coping skills in dealing with life's challenges.



We also demonstrated how a limited cash donation made a significant impact on the community. Since 2019, we have expanded our outreach to southern Arizona, using Tucson as a new base.

We are very thankful to the COF Barclay-Giel Seed Grant program for helping us to support these people! Funding led to a lasting difference in our communities.

America the Beautiful Passes

With COVID-19 pandemic restrictions subsiding and summer around the corner, Americans are ready to return to the great outdoors and visit over 2,000 federal recreation sites. A smart way to explore is by purchasing an annual pass. COA continues to fight for USPHS Veterans to receive the free Interagency Annual Military Pass. Until that happens, you still have options.

- Annual Pass: \$80 annual cost
- Interagency Annual Military Pass: free to current and Veteran service members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and Space Force, as well as Reserve and National Guard members.
- Senior Pass: \$80 lifetime or \$20 annual cost

- Access Pass: Free for U.S. citizens or permanent residents with permanent disabilities.

Why not USPHS?

Section §6804 of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act delegates authority to the Secretary of the Interior to administer various passes not to exceed 12 months. Secretarial Order 3387 established the current program for the Interagency Annual Military Pass and extending its benefits to Veterans of the armed forces. <https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/elips/documents/so-3387-signed-508.pdf>

But I still received a pass.

It is possible a PHS officer who didn't have prior service in an armed service could show identification listed below and receive a free annual pass. According to the NPS site, "In national parks that



charge an entrance fee, a veteran will need to present one of the following forms of identification to receive a free annual Interagency Military Pass:

- Department of Defense Identification Card (CAC Card)
- Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC)
- Veteran ID Card
- Veterans designation on a state-issued U.S. driver's license or identification card

SoCal COA's PATH to Volunteerism

by LT Christy Mello, RN, FNP, MSN

As PHS officers we are constantly reminded of the importance of demonstrating officership and this past holiday season LT Hyun Jin and seven other officers of the Southern California (SoCal) COA exemplified what it means to be a PHS officer. In their free time, they volunteered with a charitable organization called People Assisting The Homeless (PATH).

Started in 1983, PATH expanded to include greater Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Jose, San Francisco, Orange County, and San Diego. Homeless residents have been hit hard by COVID-19, making attaining necessities more important. Likewise, PHS officers have experienced burnout and exhaustion throughout the pandemic. LT Jin and others took time out of their busy schedules in San Diego to help coordinate making over 100 kits for the homeless. The kits included hygiene items, collapsible water bottles, socks, and personal notes.

This compassion toward vulnerable populations is not a first for SoCal COA officers. In 2019, 12 officers pitched in to organize a warehouse that stored clothes used in job interviews and served lunch to over 150 residents. SoCal COA is proud to have officers that go out of their way to serve those at risk and looks forward to the continued contributions of its members who participate with the PATH organization.

More information regarding PATH can be found at <https://epath.org/>

T Hyun Jin, MPAS, PA-C, CCHP, creates kits for the homeless.



Items SoCal COA added to kits for the homeless.



Shannon James, Esq

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ADDRESSING THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF COMMISSIONED CORPS OFFICERS

ACOA Hosts Career Development Webinars

by CDR Allyson Brown

As a part of their 2020-2021 “Lunch and Learn” Professional Development Series, the Atlanta Commissioned Officers Association (ACOA) hosted two interactive webinars that featured successful senior officers sharing practical career development strategies for their fellow USPHS officers. Between 50 and 60 officers attended each session.

On February 23, CAPT Juanika Mainor-Harper and CAPT Jennifer Adjemian presented “What Does It Take?” sharing their own professional and personal development journeys. They also shared keys for success that include dedicating a couple of hours every week to actively prepare for promotion, reviewing promotion precept benchmarks for all ranks and categories, and having a regular accountability partner. CAPT Mainor-Harper and CAPT Adjemian emphasized the importance of networking and proactively creating your own career path by being open to all growth opportunities and “learning to fight the urge to say no” to challenging assignments that may open doors later. Both officers benefitted greatly by having a diverse set of mentors who represented other categories, agencies, and professions and serving as mentors themselves for many junior officers. Their shared pearl of wisdom: officers should consistently prioritize some aspect of their USPHS career every week, continually developing their leadership abilities to stand out from the rest of the pack during the promotion process.

On March 5, CAPT Althea Grant-Lenzy presented “Beyond Promotion: Effectively Navigating Your Career as a USPHS Commissioned Corps Officer.” Her talk focused on career maintenance, planning, and leveraging timely opportunities. CAPT



CAPT Juanika Mainor-Harper (left) and CAPT Jennifer Adjemian (right) shared strategies for a successful USPHS career

Grant-Lenzy highlighted the importance of regularly using metrics to track accomplishments throughout the year. Capturing this data will not only benefit the officer during performance reviews but can also assist with award write-ups and real-time project management discussions with your supervisor. Planning strategies include mapping and updating a career timeline that includes both short-term and long-term milestones, including promotion eligibility and potential programmatic/geographic assignment changes. Successfully leveraging career opportunities depends on having a supportive supervisor who is invested in their employee’s success. An officer can then use their individual career map to “job craft” or proactively redesign your career using additional training, details, and deployments.

As a result of the popularity and positive feedback received from these sessions, ACOA is currently planning additional “Lunch and Learn” sessions with other senior and retired officers.



CAPT Althea Grant-Lenzy shared how to effectively navigate a career as an USPHS Commissioned Corps officer

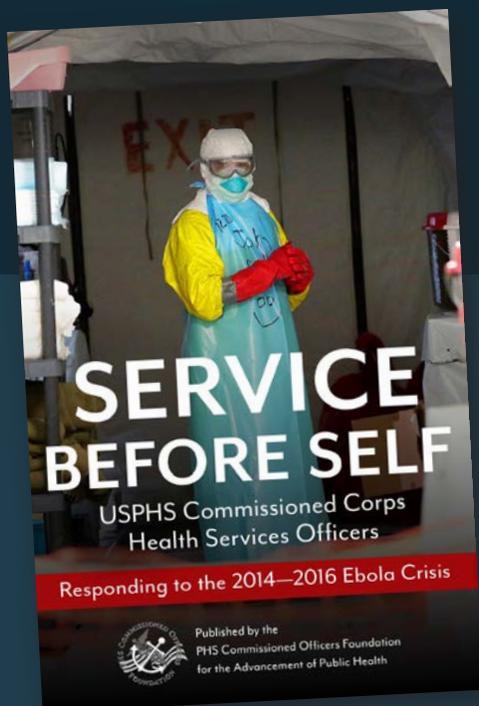


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“Service Before Self” documents one of the USPHS emergency responses to a public health emergency and is a must read for anyone interested in the history and capabilities of our Corps.”

- RADM (ret.) Sven Rodenbeck



Spiritual Wellness

by LCDR Katrina Redman, MT, SPOC, MDiv, Chaplain(BGCT)

What Does It Mean to be Humble?

Humility is often viewed negatively. We tend to associate this word with the word “humiliating,” which means causing someone to feel ashamed and foolish by injuring their dignity and self-respect. Humility, or being humble, however, is taught in most belief systems as an important part of spiritual wellness. Even in non-belief based and virtue based systems of spirituality, humility is considered a very positive virtue. Why is that and how can it help us?

Andrew Murray writes in his book titled Humility, “humility is nothing but the disappearance of self in the vision that God is all.” Murray believes “humility is simply the disposition which prepares the soul for living on trust.” Another description of humility that I read said that humility was required for unity not only with God but also with our fellow man. Humility toward others doesn’t mean that you view them as superior and yourself as inferior to them. It means that you view others with a love that sees everyone as worthy of preferential treatment. What a beautiful way for us to relate to our fellow man.

I could not think of a more fitting topic for May, when we celebrate Mother’s Day and Memorial Day. Mothers are known for putting the needs of their children above their own. Fallen veterans, who gave their lives for our freedoms, also put others’ needs before their own. What perfect examples of humility.

As PHS officers, we respect the chain of command. This is our duty, and it preserves the sanctity of our Commissioned Corps. Sometimes we can be guilty of rebelling against this. What would happen if we applied the virtue of humility to how we viewed our superiors? Could viewing our command with love and as worthy of preferential treatment change our interactions with each other? Could being an example of humility help to comfort our co-workers, our patients, and those in the communities that we serve? Yes!

May we all strive to bring unity to our Corps, our nation, our units, our communities, and our families by viewing each other with love and as worthy of preferential treatment.



Education: Baha’i and Humility

Baha’i is a belief system which follows the teaching of Bahá’u’lláh who instructed followers that “True humility does not breed passivity or inaction and should not be confused with a lack of motivation. Humility and trust in God bring steadfastness and joy to a spiritual life.”

Spiritual Exercises

1. Meditate on a time when you gave someone else preferential treatment even though others did not. Did it make you feel like you were doing something virtuous? What would it feel like to do this all the time?
2. Did you ever feel humiliated? How does it make you feel about those who humiliated you?
3. Learn more about the Baha’i belief system at www.bahai.org.

Questions or comments? Contact me at khredman@hotmail.com.

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We Care and You Save

by Kevin L. Robinson, DeCA public affairs specialist

Reprinted with permission from a DeCA news release on April 22.



Commissary patrons can stock up on their favorite items at significant savings during the Defense Commissary Agency's Military Appreciation Month Sidewalk Sale event in May.

"This is our way of saying 'thank you' to our patrons for their service and sacrifice," said Bonita Moffett, DeCA's director of sales. "These U.S. sidewalk sales give our military members and their families a chance to realize extra savings during this military recognition month. We care and you save!"

Weather permitting, most commissaries will have one event – a two- or three-day outdoor weekend sidewalk sale – featuring extra savings on variety of everyday items.

Customers have a variety of options to choose from. Sale items may include products in the following categories: snacks, beverages, pet food, international foods, baking goods, canned goods, non-food items, and health and beauty products.

"This is another way the commissary brings quality and savings together for our military families," Moffett added.

Check the DeCA website for sale dates and hours: <https://commissaries.com/shopping/store-locations/find-a-store>

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Junior Officer Profile – LT Courtney Wood, M.Ed., CCC-SLP

LT Courtney Wood was “first on sight” to an emergency in which a civilian woman was found semi-conscious on a hiking trail at Fort Carson, Colorado. Minimally conscious and facedown, the woman was underdressed for the weather and cold (with goosebumps). LT Wood wrapped her jacket around the woman and called 911. LT Wood instructed another person who had approached the scene to assist.

Because the location was neither immediately visible nor easily accessible, the assistant provided a sweatshirt and kept watch for the military police and ambulance. LT Wood positioned the woman in a safety position and then watched the woman experience a seizure with vomiting and choking. Through the initial positioning on her side by LT Wood, the woman was able to clear her airway. Although the woman was non-verbal before, during and immediately after the incident, she was able to speak a bit with paramedics in the ambulance. The total time for the emergency was about 20-30 minutes from initial discovery to assisting the woman into the ambulance.

COA applauds LT Wood for recognizing someone in distress and acting quickly to render lifesaving aid. Bravo Zulu!



LT Courtney Wood

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RECOGNITION from page 1

disposable and forgotten,” said retired Navy Capt. Jacqueline Rychnovsky, who is also executive director of the Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service.

A spokeswoman for the museum said it had no comment.

About 280 Native Americans and Alaskan Natives serve in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. They make up about 6 percent of the corps and represent the highest percentage of Native Americans and Alaskan Natives of the other uniformed services, according to U.S. service statistics.

Public health service and NOAA corps members have a history of service dating to World War I. They serve as doctors, nurses, scientists and engineers in assignments overseas and on tribal reservations. Many have also cared for those sick with the coronavirus and administered the vaccine

Rear Adm. Brandon Taylor, who has served in the USPHS for more than 23 years and is a member of the Seneca-Cayuga Nation in Oklahoma, said many Native American tribes view their “citizens who have served in the armed forces as warriors.”

“We may not carry weapons, but we fight,” Taylor said. “We are public health warriors. We fight in the silent war against disease, and we fight every day to promote, protect and advance the health and safety of our nation.” Not being recognized on the American Indian museum’s memorial, Taylor said, was “very disheartening.”

The suit says the exclusion of Public Health Service and NOAA commissioned corps veterans reinforces a misconception that the two branches “are not ‘the real military,’ continuing the stigma” they say their members often face.

Rychnovsky, a member of the Osage Nation of Oklahoma, said Native Americans who have served in the two corps “have earned the right to be acknowledged on the memorial alongside their sister services.” Not including them, she said, is “an egregious oversight and unequivocally discriminatory.”

She also said there is enough space at the memorial to add two more plaques.

Still, officials said, any changes to the memorial might not be easy.

The American Indian museum memorial was created through an act of legislation passed in 1994. It was meant to honor Native Americans, Native Hawaiians and Native Alaskans who served in the armed forces.

The memorial features a 12-foot, stainless steel circle balanced on a carved, stone drum. The circle is meant to represent “the hole in the sky where the creator lives,” according to Harvey Pratt, a Cheyenne and Arapaho member who designed the memorial. It includes plaques to honor the five armed forces.

When the NMAI memorial legislation passed, the Public Health Service and NOAA corps weren’t specifically included in the legislation’s wording, officials said.

Kevin Gover, who was then director of the museum, wrote in a 2019 letter that the legislation to create the memorial mentions the five armed forces but “does not mention the Commissioned Corps.”

Officials with the Commissioned Corps said they filed the suit after letter-writing campaigns to congressional leaders, officials at the Smithsonian Institution and the museum.

In 1917, the Public Health Service was made part of the nation’s military forces during World War I, with members detailed to the Coast Guard, Navy and Army, according to the Military Coalition, which represents several military service groups. More than 600 of its officers served with the Coast Guard and some of them were on cutters that were “lost to enemy action” in World War II, according to the coalition.

Members of the NOAA Corps also served in World War II in a variety of roles, including as artillery and reconnaissance surveyors, as well as engineers.

Rear Adm. Kevin Meeks, a member of the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma who served for 32 years in the Public Health Service, said not being included in the memorial was disheartening.

He wrote in a letter to museum officials: “We may not be an armed service, but we are on the front lines of protecting our country against disease and injury every day.”

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employment, entrepreneurship, homelessness, law, mental health, and wellness. The 27 winners of the 2021 award were women Veterans who had served in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard, but no members of the USPHS. I reached out immediately to Elizabeth Estabrooks, Acting VA Director for the CWV. I requested that for 2022 and beyond, awards should be open to Veterans of “uniformed services.” I explained that USPHS Veterans were entitled to the same benefits, rights and services afforded to the Armed Forces. She replied, “Thank you for your email and for bringing this to our attention! The Center for Women Veterans has always reflected the language of the VA and has taken pride in being inclusive of all women Veterans. Of course, we see our sisters with PHS and NOAA as Veterans. Although our 2019 and 2021 Trailblazer Initiative language mirrored the VA ‘military service’ language, I have reached out to my staff about ensuring that the 2022- 2023 language be altered to reflect all Veterans, including those who serve with the Uniformed Services. Please be assured that nomination forms and press releases will be worded to state uniformed services so as to be inclusive.” Thank you, Ms. Estabrooks!

Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA)

In April, I attended a meeting as part of COA’s participation in The Military Coalition. Attendees had the opportunity to meet the new DeCA Director, Mr. William Moore. Mr. Moore discussed many changes he is spearheading to make the commissary not just a good value and safe place to shop, but convenient as well. He proudly shared their recent strategic plan along with DeCA’s new vision to be “The grocery provider of choice for our eligible patrons – delivering a vital benefit exclusively for our military community and their families.” When it was time for Q&A, I introduced myself and described the mission of COA. I pointed out that the commissary provides a vital benefit for every uniformed service. He was extremely gracious and immediately admitted that he was not aware we had eight uniformed services in the United States. He went on to explain that he recently became aware of the creation of the Space Force and was proud to have their logo added to his challenge coin. He said that he simply had “no idea” about the USPHS but acknowledged that the 13,000 active and retired Commissioned Corps officers are valued commissary patrons too. He vowed to be more inclusive in the future and graciously asked for me to share this quote with you. “On behalf of the Defense Commissary Agency, I’d like to thank those serving in the U.S. Public Health Service for their continued patronage of their commissary. With some 6,000 officers on active duty and another 7,500 retirees, we certainly welcome and encourage all who are near a commissary to check us out. We will save you money on your grocery bill, with a safe and clean shopping experience and many healthy options. A good way to maximize your hard-earned benefit is to become familiar with the many features of our website, www.commissaries.com. There you can find information about our many new initiatives, sales flyers,

commissary locations, healthy recipes, and the latest news about the agency and your commissary benefit.” Thank you, Mr. Moore!

Legislation on Capitol Hill

On February 8, Representative Lauren Underwood (D-IL-14) introduced H.R. 958, titled the “Protecting Moms Who Served Act.” This bill addresses training and support, funding, and reporting of care to women Veterans. Unfortunately, however, the language of the bill used the word Veterans in the “Armed Forces” instead of “Uniformed Services.” I immediately reached out to Jack DiMatteo, Legislative Assistant for Rep. Underwood, requesting that the language be changed. Mr. DiMatteo was extremely gracious and asked whether Veterans in the uniformed services (NOAA and USPHS) qualify for health care through Veterans Administration. When I said, “They sure do,” he immediately wrote back with a promise to amend the bill during markup, should it progress that far. Although this might sound like a small victory, it has now been brought to the attention of Rep. Underwood and her staff that USPHS officers become full-fledged Veterans when they leave active duty service. Thank you, Mr. DiMatteo, and Rep. Underwood!

Recent Losses

American Express Platinum Card

COA continues to advocate on your behalf to American Express to allow USPHS officers to qualify for the AMEX Platinum card. We have reached out on several occasions and always receive the same response, that being that AMEX has switched to using the Military Lending Act (MLA) database which only includes members of the Armed Forces. We do not think this is fair and know that many COA members agree. Your voice has power. Please consider reaching out directly to the AMEX Chairman, Mr. Steve Stephen Squeri, Three World Financial Center, 200 Vesey Street, New York, New York 10285-4803. Personal stories have impact.

Ski Lodges

Many ski lodges offer a reduced cost “military pass,” and many USPHS officers report their requests to take advantage of this benefit are denied. COA has reached out to many ski resorts on your behalf with no success. These programs apparently started in support of wounded warrior programs and remain open to support members of the Armed Forces. I do not think we will gain traction on this initiative.

Membership in the American Legion

Recently, a small group of members asked COA why Commissioned Corps officers cannot become members of the American Legion. I reached out to the American Legion’s National Commander and was referred to the American Legion’s Director of Internal Affairs, Mr. Jack Querfeld. I explained that retired PHS officers are considered, by law, to be Veterans and entitled to all benefits and services. Also, according to law, PHS officers are members of the military, and reminded him that the Public Health Service is one of the eight uniformed services in the United States. Unfortunately, the American Legion reported back that their national

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Planting Seeds at Connecticut College

by CAPT Esan O. Simon, MD, MBA, FS, USPHS

In February, I had the honor of speaking with students of Connecticut College, whose Latin motto translates to “Like a tree planted by rivers of water.”

As Medical Director of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy (CGA), I was invited by Associate Professor of Economics Mónica López-Anuarbe, Ph.D., to present to about 45 students of the spring 2021 Public Health Thematic Inquiry Seminar. With an interest in health economics and game theory, Professor López-Anuarbe is a member of the Connecticut Governor’s COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group.

Despite Connecticut College being across the street from the CGA, all students attended the lecture remotely per COVID-19 restrictions at the time. The presentation covered a history of the PHS and the Commissioned Corps, mission and vision of the uniformed service, examples of recent deployments and agencies to which PHS officers are assigned, and personal examples of PHS opportunities.

Students in Professor López-Anuarbe seminar came from various majors, but all had an interest in public health. The virtual lecture was a chance to expose students to a wide range of career paths, options for scholarships, and previously unheard-of choices such as the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. The



CAPT Simon speaking with Connecticut College Students (#1) from Coast Guard Academy Quarters #3 Residence

session was replete with active listening and career queries. A mutually beneficial and enriching discussion, there were certainly seeds planted for future public health pursuits as well as enhanced collaboration between the academic institutions.

The views expressed herein are those of the author and are not to be construed as official or reflecting the views of the Commandant or of the U.S. Coast Guard or the CGA Commandant.

Apply for RADM Michael Fellowship

by Jacqueline Rychnovsky, PhD, RN,
Executive Director

Do you have what it takes to be a RADM Michael Fellow?

For over 10 years, the PHS Commissioned Officers Foundation for the Advancement of Public Health (COF) has provided junior officers the opportunity to earn a Certificate in Global Health or Certificate in Principles of Public Health from the University of Maryland School of Public Health. To be eligible, officers must be a member of the Commissioned Officers Association (COA) and be currently serving on active duty in the USPHS Commissioned Corps at the rank of O1-O4. Before starting the program, each applicant must be accepted to the University of Maryland School of Public Health as a non-degree seeking student.

COF will be funding one fellowship for calendar year 2021. To apply, applicants must submit a current resume or CV, transcripts from past undergraduate or graduate studies, and a statement explaining how they will use this continuing education to advance public health. Applications will close on May 15 and the selection will be announced in June.

Once selected, the Fellow will begin the program in August and will earn their certificate in 12 months. Credits earned from this non-degree seeking program (12-14 credit hours) may be used toward an advanced degree at the University of Maryland, such as a Master of Public Health. The cost of this certificate program is valued at \$12,000.

COF established the RADM Michael Fellowship to honor the late Rear Admiral

Jerrold M. Michael, an engineer officer who was a lifelong advocate for improved public health education. The devotion RADM Michael had for both the USPHS Commissioned Corps and academia is legendary. Following his 20-year career in the United States Public Health Service, RADM Michael served as Dean of the School of Public Health at the University of Hawaii from 1972 to 1992 and continued as Professor of Public Health through 1995. He later served as Emeritus Professor at the University of Hawaii and as an Adjunct Professor of Global Health at the Milken Institute School of Public Health, The George Washington University.

For more information about the Fellowship please visit <https://www.phscof.org/radm-michael-fellowship.html>

IN MEMORIAM

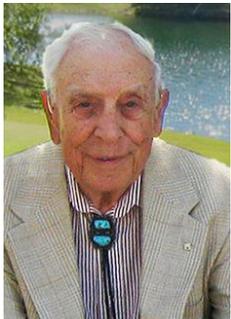


Captain Eleanor Frances Smith

Captain Eleanor Frances Smith

Captain (ret.) Eleanor Frances Smith, a COA Life Member, passed away on December 11, 2020, in Malibu, California. She was born in Somerville, Mass., on January 24, 1924, and was raised in the Boston area. She earned a B.S. degree from Emmanuel College in 1945, majoring in chemistry with a minor in Latin, and went on to earn her M.D. at Tufts University. Captain Smith met her future husband, Howard Smith, in 1941.

Howard served in WWII on the USS Iowa from 1943 until the end of the war. In 1954, Eleanor earned a Master's degree in public health from Harvard University. After graduating, she taught medical economics at Harvard. The following years brought another five children to the family, and during this time Eleanor served in the Public Health Service in various locations around the country. In 1970, she was accepted to the doctoral program at the UCLA School of Public Health. In 1973, she earned her PhD in public health and attained rank of Captain in the Public Health Service. She retired in 1985.



Captain Perry Chester Brackett

Captain Perry Chester Brackett

COA Life Member Captain Perry Chester Brackett passed away peacefully on January 2, 2021, at the age of 97. Born on June 19, 1923, he was the second child of James Harvey Brackett and Eliza Perry Brackett of Helena, Montana. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Montana State University in 1952. Commissioned in 1963, Perry was assigned to the Billings Area Indian Health Service as Assistant Area Engineer. During

his career, Captain Perry served in many capacities including: Chief of Sanitation Facilities Construction Branch (SFCB) in Anchorage, Phoenix, and Albuquerque; Director and Chief Engineer of Environmental Health in Albuquerque and Aberdeen. One of his proudest and most challenging accomplishments as Chief of SFCB was managing a project which brought running water to the village of Kotzebue, Alaska, forty miles north of the Arctic Circle. In New Mexico, Perry worked closely with Pueblo tribal leaders to supply running water to the independent sovereign nations.

In 1969, Perry received a Master of Public Health in Environmental Health from the University of Minnesota School of Medicine. In 1973, he was promoted to Engineer Director of the USPHS, rising to the rank of Captain. He received the USPHS Commendation Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal. In 1982, he was nominated for Federal Engineer of the Year. Perry retired from the USPHS in 1984. He was a registered Professional Engineer and Land Surveyor in the State of Montana.

Perry is preceded in death by his beloved wife Lillian (2009), his son James (2002), his sister Edith Elizabeth (Brackett) Miller (1995), and his parents.



Captain Herbert Tabor

Captain Herbert Tabor

Captain (retired) Herbert Tabor, MD, a COA Life Member died August 20, 2021 at his home on the campus of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland. Dr. Tabor was a leading scientific investigator at the NIH whose 77 years of service made him the longest-serving employee at the medical research center and among the longest-serving in the federal workforce. He was "the world's foremost authority on the enzymatic pathways of polyamines," said Michael M. Gottesman, an NIH deputy director, in announcing Dr. Tabor's death.

Herbert Tabor was born in New York City on November 28, 1918. He graduated from Harvard University in 1937 and from Harvard Medical School in 1941. His graduate school professors urged him to forgo a career in clinical practice and instead do research in biochemistry. As an intern at Yale New Haven Hospital in 1942, he participated in the first major clinical trial for penicillin. Early in 1943, Dr. Tabor joined the U.S. Public Health Service and was assigned as medical officer aboard the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Duane (CG-67), which was escorting ship convoys across the North Atlantic. In a battle with a German submarine, the Duane rescued American and enemy casualties and Dr. Tabor helped provide the medical care.

Dr. Tabor is survived by four children, Edward Tabor of Bethesda, Stanley Tabor of Brookline, Mass., twins Marilyn Tabor of Cambridge, Mass., and Richard Tabor of Moss Beach, Calif.; 10 grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.



Captain Fritz Gluckstein

Captain Fritz Gluckstein

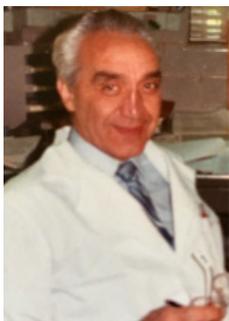
Captain (ret.) Fritz Gluckstein, a Life Member of COA, passed away on February 14, 2021. Born on January 24, 1927, in Berlin, Germany, to a Jewish

father and a Christian mother, Captain Gluckstein survived intense antisemitism. His father, a liberal Jew, was a judge and a decorated veteran of World War I. When Hitler came to power in 1933, his father was dismissed from office, forcing the family to live in drastically reduced circumstances. Raised as a Jew, Fritz was a Geltungsjude, a "counted Jew," and was subject to all the restrictions imposed on the Jews of Germany, including the wearing of the Yellow Star. In 1942, his Jewish school was closed, and he was sent to work in a Jewish cemetery. On his 16th birthday he was interrogated by the Gestapo. Following that, he was assigned to work in a factory which made armaments for the German Air Force/Luftwaffe. He and his father were picked up with the rest of Berlin's remaining Jews during the infamous Fabrikaktion on February 27, 1943.

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Released from the Clou nightclub, one of the holding centers where Jews were taken, he was rearrested the following week when he went to pick up the family's ration cards. He was then interned with other husbands and children of non-Jewish women in a building on the Rosenstrasse. That building, which had previously been an administrative office of Berlin's Jewish Community, was the scene of a demonstration by the non-Jewish wives and mothers demanding the release of their loved ones. The only public demonstration against the Nazi regime ever to take place in Germany, it resulted in the release of all those being detained. Following the demonstration, Fritz and his father were assigned to forced labor gangs, which were sent to demolish damaged buildings after air raids. When the war ended, Fritz returned to a special course to finish his high school diploma. In January 1948 he immigrated to America and became a veterinarian. He joined the U.S. Public Health Service in 1966 and became a Veterinarian Director before his retirement in 1993 following a 27-year career as a Commissioned Corps officer. To hear more about Captain Gluckstein's life, we encourage you to view his "First Person Program" interview sponsored by the United States Holocaust Memorial at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJTisX6jit0>.



Captain Sotiros Demetrios Chaparas

Captain Sotiros Demetrios Chaparas

Captain (ret.) Sotiros Demetrios "Sam" Chaparas, a COA Life Member, passed away on December 27th 2020, due to complications from COVID-19. Born in 1929 in Lowell, Massachusetts, he earned his B.S. from Northeastern University, a M.S. from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and Ph.D. from St. Louis University. An advocate of the less fortunate, he devoted his life to helping his fellow man, as reflected in his

31 years as a Commissioned Corps officer at the NIH and FDA. He was involved in many medical organizations and societies; his intense desire to pass on knowledge through his teaching positions at St. Louis University, the University of Southern California and Howard University; his numerous lectures in scientific forums around the world; and countless articles in medical and scientific journals. He was the recipient of many professional honors and awards.



Captain Bernard Shleien

Captain Bernard Shleien

CAPT Bernard Shleien, a member of COA since 1975, passed away on December 29, 2020, at the age of 86. CAPT Shleien completed his undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of Southern California and the Harvard School of Public Health, where he received a Doctor of Pharmacy and Master of Science degree in Radiological Health, respectively. He entered the Commissioned

Corps of the US Public Health Service in 1957 and served initially at the US Public Health Service Marine Hospital, Seattle, WA and then

as a manufacturing and analytical control chemist at the USPHS Medical Supply Depot, Piney Point, MD. In 1959, CAPT Shleien was transferred to the Bureau of Radiological Health, later the FDA's Center for Radiological Health and Devices. The bulk of his life work was spent in Maryland while working at FDA's Rockville location. He was also Chief of Environmental Radiation Studies at the USPHS Northeastern Radiological Health Laboratory in Winchester, MA, and later served as the Department of Health and Human Services project officer for the Federal Radiation Council and the first Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation committee of the National Academy of Science.

CAPT Shleien authored or co-authored more than fifty articles and reports on environmental fallout, radiation doses from medical radiation to the US population, emergency responses to radiation accidents, biological effects of iodine-131, and radiation dose reconstruction studies around nuclear facilities. He received the Public Health Services Outstanding Service medal for his work on protective actions and the use of potassium iodide in radiation accidents, which played a significant role in the emergency response to the Three Mile Island nuclear plant accident. He retired from the US Public Health Service in 1983. On moving to Israel with his wife Debbie, he was the Chief of the Environmental and Radioisotope Branch of Israel's Ministry of Health (1984-1986). CAPT Shleien was a Certified Health Physicist and a Fellow of the American Public Health and Health Physics Society.

He is survived by his daughter Sara (Eric) Waskowicz, son Joshua Shleien, and grandchildren Sam, George, and Lucy Waskowicz. His wife Debra Shleien preceded his death in 2015.

Captain Alice Marie Stang

Captain Alice Marie Stang, a COA Life Member, passed away on August 31, 2020, at the age of 95. Stang was born in Jordan, Minnesota on February 2, 1925. She graduated from the University of Minnesota in Dietetics, and later earned a Master of Science degree in Public Health Nutrition. Her career led her to a variety of positions in hospitals and communities. In 1952-53, Captain Stang completed nutritional studies in Kyoto, Japan, and returned to participate in opening the new Clinical Center of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). In 1956-58, she taught at the American University of Beirut in Lebanon and was the hospital dietitian. Then, she returned to NIH to design metabolic studies, earning her commission in the U.S. Public Health Service in 1964. In 1972, Captain Stang moved to Albuquerque as a dietary and nutrition consultant with the Indian Health Service. Upon retiring in 1994, she moved to Minnesota to be with family. Captain Stang enjoyed volunteering in the library, schools, nursing homes and church, as well as traveling.

Seed Grant Feeds Healthy CHOICES in Georgia

by Kenya Heard, MSM

Program & Development Director,
CHOICES

The Center for Helping Obesity in Children End Successfully (CHOICES) is a nonprofit based in Kennesaw, Georgia. Since the year 2002, CHOICES has worked with more than 125,000 children and adults. Its mission is to be a resource center for at-risk and clinically diagnosed overweight children. The 2019 Barclay-Giel Seed Grant for \$7,500 supported the Cooking with CHOICES Program, designed to provide innovative cooking classes for children and much needed food to families in Metropolitan Atlanta.

The CHOICES Community Teaching Kitchen serves as the headquarters for the Cooking with CHOICES program. This three-week workshop-based program teaches children and parents five basic nutrition education concepts using nutrition tips and grocery lists for food shopping. The program participants learn the culinary skills needed to prepare nutrient-dense meals, which they can then repeat at home in their kitchens. This free program places a preference upon children at risk of obesity and families enrolled in WIC or SNAP food programs. According to Ashley Keyes, the Executive Chef with CHOICES, "We teach families how to stretch their limited food budgets



A father and daughter participate in the cooking workshop.

by planning meals in advance and showing them how to use the food they have in new ways."

CHOICES helps to address the challenges families face when trying to access affordable foods and figuring out how to make seasonal foods into tasty meals.

The CHOICES Mobile Pantry brings fresh fruits, vegetables, and pantry stocking foods directly to communities where families are most in need. The annual Thanksgiving Turkey event that started in 2017 at an elementary school has become a year-round program. Over the past year, CHOICES has distributed 175,000 pounds of food which helped

16,000 people. The partners that assist in securing food and recruiting volunteers for this program include the Atlanta Community Food Bank, The Atlanta Culinary Federation, First Congregational Church of Atlanta, GoodR, Royal Foods, and WellStar Health System.

Currently, CHOICES provides virtual programming via Facebook, Instagram, Zoom, and YouTube, which has reached over 10,000 viewers. This summer, they hope to reopen their Community Teaching Kitchen for onsite children's cooking classes, summer camps, and family health workshops. To learn more about CHOICES, visit www.Choicesforkids.org.

PHS Commissioned Officers Foundation

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CAPT Philip Nyberg

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Dr. Maria Benke ^
 CAPT Bruce Burnett
 Mrs. Carol Dellapenna
 Mr. Stephen Deming
 CAPT Judith Maeda

^ C. Everett Koop Living Legacy

\$ Disaster Relief Fund

All other donations were made to the COF General Fund



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We Welcome New Members of COA, April 1, 2021 to April 30, 2021

LT Natasha Bennett
 LT Tia McClelland

LT Sung Jik Park
 LCDR Brandon Parker
 CAPT Betty Rufus

LT Sylvester Smith
 LT Jamie Williams

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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constitution and by-laws requires service in the Armed Forces. They did say that if a PHS officer serves, even for one day, attached to an Armed Forces component (while on active duty) they would qualify for membership. Presently about 2% of Commissioned Corps officers are assigned to the U.S. Coast Guard. If this is you, and you are interested in membership in the American Legion, you appear to be eligible.

We are advocating for many other things on your behalf. Work continues initiatives such as the military pass to the National Park Service and inclusion of the Public Health Service on the Smithsonian National Native American Veterans Memorial at the National Museum of the American Indian. We hope to bring you news on these and other initiatives in the future. Please know that we are here to fight for you. Drop me a line any time at jrychnovsky@coausphs.org.

COA Donations

Commissioned Officers Association of the USPHS Donations Received,
 April 1 to April 30, 2021

CAPT Ruben Acuna	LCDR Anthony Massenzio
Dr. David Berkowitz	CAPT Jon May
CAPT Delwin Buckhold	CAPT K. Robert McIntire
CAPT Lawrence Chaitkin	CAPT Marc Reynolds
CAPT Gregory Glahn	Mrs. Patricia Rodak
CAPT Darrell Harris	CAPT Edgar Seagle
CAPT Karen Herbelin	CAPT Donald Smith
CAPT Alvis Jordans	CAPT Bruce Weintraub
CAPT James Keene	CAPT David West

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COA

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