

Honoring Sacrifice at Arlington National Cemetery

by CDR Tyler M. Sharp, PhD

Across from me sat a woman in her early 20s. In her hands, she cradled a well-worn picture of her hugging a man. Perhaps it was her father, or spouse, or brother. Her head was bent for most of the National Memorial Day Observance Ceremony, but she looked up once or twice as President Biden spoke. While the U.S. Navy Band and Sea Chanters played "God Bless America," she wept.

Several seats down sat a young man and woman who I suspect were siblings. He seemed agitated and uncomfortable, frequently shifting in his seat. He had a look on his face that I would describe as quiet anger. The woman with him exuded an aura of pride. She smiled as our nation's leaders spoke, and promptly rose to stand straight-backed as "The Star-Spangled Banner" played. The man with her remained seated.

While enroute to the Memorial Amphitheatre with my fellow USPHS officers who also assisted in the parade of colors, a young boy on the tram asked his mother, "Why are there so many dead soldiers?" I couldn't see his mother's face, but she didn't respond. Perhaps she couldn't.

These were just a few of the nearly 5,000 people in attendance to mark the occasion and remember, together with those who have made a similar sacrifice.



LCDR Oyebola Oladeinde during the National Memorial Day Observance at Arlington National Cemetery, May 29, 2023.

Participating in the Memorial Day Observance at Arlington National Cemetery was the most acute demonstration I have experienced of what it means to serve our country. There before me, were the faces of sacrifice that enable our country to be free – palpable evidence of the blood and pain paid for us to be able to live free. Sacrifice not only by the soldiers who paid the ultimate sacrifice on the battlefield, but their loved ones who continue to suffer long after their family member has passed. For them, there is no moving on. As the President stated

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from the
Executive
Director



Jacqueline Rychnovsky,
PhD, FAANP, CAE
Captain (Ret.), Nurse Corps, US Navy

Every so often it is fun to answer the question "How do you spend your days as the Executive Director of COA?" Rather than just a day, I will share some notable excerpts from the last few weeks.

WAIVED AIRLINE BAGGAGE FEES

COA is continuing to work with a pro bono legal team to right the wrong concerning airline baggage fee policies for active-duty USPHS Commissioned Corps (USPHSCC) officers. We have recently received the exciting news that Southwest Airlines now recognizes USPHSCC officers in their military baggage program! Correspondence from them included the following: "Southwest provides benefits to traveling uniformed service members, including uniformed service members of the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service. Uniformed service members who fly with us and who did not receive an "A" group boarding pass may board between the A and B groups with a valid uniformed services ID card. For our uniformed

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COA is a family and we appreciate your continued membership throughout the years. It is time to renew your annual membership and enjoy the benefits of COA for the next year. Please consider recruiting your fellow USPHS officers who have not yet joined so they, too, can enjoy the benefits of membership.



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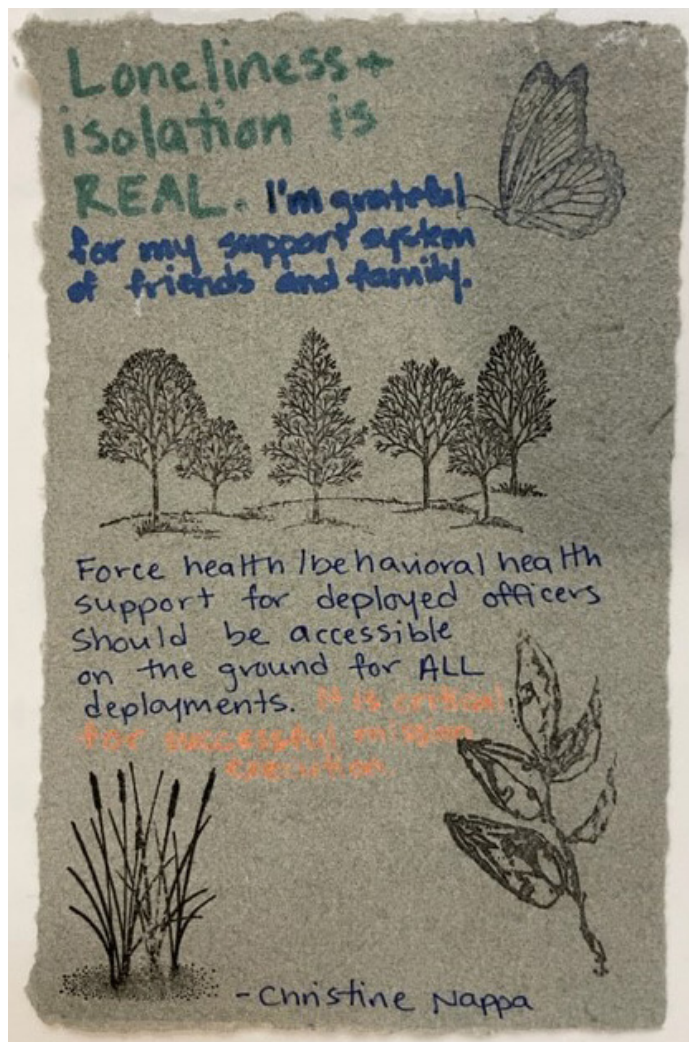
Covid Paper Project at the Tulsa Symposium

by CAPT (Ret) Moira McGuire

The tables across from the symposium registration booth at last month's symposium were filled with colored pencils, crayons, magazines, stickers, paint pens, and rubber stamps. It was an unusual sight for both new and regular attendees of the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium. Members of the Surgeon General's Ensemble staffed the table and answered attendees' questions about the program. Attendees learned the tables were part of the COVID Paper Project, an arts engagement opportunity for officers to share their COVID experiences through creative expression. Each interested officer was invited to choose a piece of paper, measuring approximately 5"x 8", which was made by Air Force Veteran artist, MSgt Patrick Sergeant, who teaches at George Mason University and has a studio at the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria, VA. Patrick was first introduced to papermaking through a Combat Paper art workshop he took during his retirement process. The Combat Paper project was initially conceived by two Army Veteran artists who were paper makers. The workshops provided separating and retiring service members an opportunity to process their time in uniform by shredding a uniform item, pulverizing it into pulp, and using the pulp and other fibers to make paper. The workshops were a literal and figurative way to "deconstruct" one's uniformed service, in the process of shredding uniforms, and embark on a more intentional and person-centered next chapter. The workshops also provided opportunities to explore visual arts and creative writing so each attendee's paper often became a work of art that would be exhibited. Patrick has been making paper ever since and the paper he provided for this project was made from both military uniforms and scrubs from the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC.

Once an officer selected their piece of paper, the next step was to use the available materials to respond to the prompt "What do you want us to know about your COVID experience?" This could be from a personal perspective, a professional perspective, or a deployment perspective. Once completed, officers were able to take the paper with them or leave it for a future exhibit. If an officer was interested in having their paper art returned to them, they could place a label on the back providing their name and mailing address. In total, 80 officers left their COVID Paper art pieces to be displayed. There is an exhibit planned at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in October 2023, with other upcoming exhibits currently in the planning process. Additionally, local workshops are being scheduled to provide opportunities for officers in the DMV, who did not attend the symposium, to participate.

Interestingly, this project was not originally on my mind as I was preparing for my trip to Tulsa. It occurred to me when I came across some paper a veteran artist friend had given me after a recent trip to Combat Paper headquarters in NJ. Combat Paper changed their name a few years ago to Frontline Paper, to expand



their target audience and be more inclusive, and it was this name change that sparked the idea. I suddenly became aware that, at the symposium, I would be in the presence of the frontline response to the COVID pandemic. As I walked the convention center and attended sessions, I would be surrounded by those who selflessly left the comfort of home to care for and protect others. And that every single officer had been impacted, both personally and professionally, by the pandemic and contributed either through their current work, via deployments, or both. It was an amazing opportunity to hear from those whose sacrifices were pivotal, historical, lifesaving, selfless, and heroic. I am hopeful this will be the first of many arts engagements geared toward commissioned officers and I have been thrilled at the response thus far.

For officers who are interested in learning more about the COVID Paper Project, or would like to participate remotely, please send an email (with COVID Paper Project in the subject line) to CAPT (ret) Moira G. McGuire at moiragrace66@gmail.com.

A special thanks to Tim O'Neil and those Music Ensemble members, including CDR Luz Rivera and CDR Trang Tran, who assisted with this last-minute project.

Get Ready for PCS Season With TRICARE

by Military Health System and the Defense Health Agency Strategic Communications Division

Will you be embarking on a permanent change of station (PCS) this summer? If so, you aren't alone. Summer is a time of transition for military families with PCS orders. Whether you're moving to another state or relocating overseas, there are important steps you need to take to ensure a smooth PCS move. One of them is making sure you have TRICARE coverage in your new location.

Listed below are some tips and questions to think about, so you can stay a step ahead of your move.

What health plans are available in your new location?

You may have different health plan options when you move. If you're an active duty service member moving stateside, you must have either TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Prime Remote. Your eligible family members, however, may have additional options, such as TRICARE Select or US Family Health Plan. Moving overseas? If command-sponsored, active duty family members can enroll in TRICARE Prime Overseas or TRICARE Prime Remote Overseas. If you're retired, you and your family members may be eligible for TRICARE Select Overseas.

Do you need to fill prescriptions or schedule routine exams?

It's important to anticipate your medical needs for the move itself in the short-term, as well as what you'll need long-term once you've settled in. Fill your prescriptions to make sure you have enough medication to last throughout your move and immediately after. Schedule routine physicals or immunizations before the move.

Will you need to transfer your medical records?

Transferring your medical records will help the transition to a new provider. So, ask for copies of your medical and dental records before you move. You may even want to have these documents with you for safe keeping and easy access when moving. If you're enrolled to a military hospital or clinic, your electronic medical records will transfer to your new duty station. Your new military hospital or clinic, PCM, or family doctor may also request copies of your medical records for you. If you have questions about how to start the transfer process, reach out to your medical provider or TRICARE contractor.

Update your DEERS records

Your records must be up-to-date in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) to use TRICARE. As outlined in the TRICARE Qualifying Life Events Fact Sheet, you'll need to update DEERS with your new address and contact information whenever

see **TRICARE** continued on page 5



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ANMC Welcomes First Ever DHAT Service

by CAPT Sarah Shoftstall-Cone, CAPT Charles Truncale, and CAPT Molly Rutledge

On February 1st, 2023, Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) Inpatient Pediatric Unit welcomed their first ever Dental Health Aide Therapist (DHAT) service. Previously, dental concerns were addressed through the on-call system with the Southcentral Foundation (SCF) pediatric dental residents. The new DHAT service does not replace that and is additional service that focuses on education and prevention. This is a collaboration between ANMC in-patient pediatrics, the SCF dental department, and Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium.

Oral health is critical and connected to overall health. The education that is shared with patients and guardians helps establish healthy lifelong oral habits in some of our smallest patients. The focus of the work is to help pediatric patients get access to the dental care that they need.

Now, each Wednesday, a DHAT participates in in-patient pediatrics rounding, during which the DHAT discusses oral health concerns with the patients. The DHAT then makes visits to rooms and screens each patient, provides education, helps brush teeth and completes referrals to care, if needed. Another benefit of the program is that the DHAT providing the screenings, Leandra Beech, is an Alaska Native provider. Leandra speaks Siberian Yupik and often makes patients feel at ease. Both the pediatric patients and their families are often comfortable asking questions. Word has got out that oral health is part of the in-patient pediatrics team and some parents even request to see the DHAT upon admission to the unit.

The process of getting a DHAT into ANMC's in-patient pediatrics was a multi-year process. The process began when CAPT Molly Rutledge, a speech and language pathologist, began seeing a large portion of in-patient pediatric patients with unaddressed oral health needs. CAPT Rutledge contacted the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) Department of Oral Health Promotion to ask for help. The program started with providing toothbrushes and toothpaste to in-patient pediatric patients and has evolved



(Left to right) Thomas Allen, DMD, CAPT Charles Truncale, DMD, Leandra Beech, DHAT, and CAPT Molly Rutledge, SLP

to having a DHAT on the floor one day per week. The ANMC in-patient pediatrics team, the ANTHC Department of Oral Health Promotion, and the SCF Dental Department are excited to be working together to support some of our youngest patients.

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you experience a QLE, such as moving. If you start with a temporary address at your new location, you must go back and update DEERS once you have your permanent address. Any changes you make to your health plan will go into effect after your address change shows in DEERS. Remember, DEERS doesn't transfer your TRICARE enrollment.

Don't disenroll from your current plan before you move

Your TRICARE contractor can't complete your enrollment transfer until you arrive at your new location. So, it's important that you don't disenroll from your plan before you move. This ensures you're covered

for any care you need while traveling to your destination. If you disenroll before you move, you'll only be able to get care at a military hospital or clinic if space is available.

When do you notify your new regional contractor of your arrival?

Once you've finally arrived at your new location, contact the TRICARE contractor for your new region. They'll transfer your previous coverage to your new location, if necessary. Your contractor won't change if you're moving within the same region. But you may need to find another PCM or health care provider. If you're overseas, your TRICARE Overseas Program Regional Call Center in your new location can assist you with setting up care.

Arlington Community Foundation Awards Over \$700,000 in Scholarships for College Students – Applications Reviewed by D.C. COA Volunteers

by LT Christine M. Nappa, LCSW, BCD

In March of this year, U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) officers, including myself, volunteered through the District of Columbia branch of the Commissioned Officers Association (DC COA) to serve as Arlington Community Foundation (ACF) scholarship application reviewers for the 2023-2024 school year. Over \$700,000 in scholarships were awarded to 102 new Arlington college students, with 120 students receiving renewal scholarships.

My first time serving as a reviewer was in 2022. This year, 17 officers spent two weeks thoughtfully reviewing 20 applications each. We had six more USPHS officers in our volunteer cadre than last year. It was an enlightening and inspiring experience serving as a reviewer. I particularly enjoyed reading the applicants' personal statements highlighting their life challenges, how they overcame adversity, their goals and aspirations, and what earning a scholarship would mean for their future. Seeing the names from some of the applications I reviewed on the awardee list was heart-warming. I also look forward to serving as a volunteer next year.

In a letter of appreciation to the USPHS officers who volunteered, ACF President & Chief Executive Officer, Jennifer Owens stated, "This year's Annual Scholarship Program could not have been a success without your volunteer time and support. Your unparalleled enthusiasm and meaningful contribution are greatly appreciated and will benefit Arlington students for years to come."

ACF has operated out of Arlington, Virginia for over 30 years and is a community endowment backed by charitable donations from individuals and organizations. The Foundation supports more than 20 local non-profit organizations. Over the last 10 years, ACF's Annual Scholarship Program has granted more than \$5 million to Arlington college students.

If you want to be a reviewer for the 2024 ACF Annual Scholarship Program, look for an email blast from DC COA calling for volunteers in early 2024.

Find more information on ACF's Annual Scholarship Program here: <https://www.arlcf.org/scholarships/>



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Promotion List For USPHS

Medical Officer To Temporary Captain (O-6)

Baumblatt, Jane
Bengson, Christopher
Briggs-Hagen, Melissa
Brostrom, Richard
Dziuban, Eric
Evans, Mary
Gokhale, Runa
Goodman, Alyson
Hagan, Jose
Havers, Fiona
Joseph, Djenaba
Kim, Lindsay
Meyer, Sarah
Oboho, Ikwo
Patel, Minal
Ridpath, Alison
Samuels, Aaron
Yeoman, Kristin

To Temporary Commander (O-5)

Ahima, Ohenewaa
Dixon, Meredith
Free, Rebecca
Gonzalez, Marilou
Hesse, Elisabeth
Hines, Jonas
Ijeoma, Ugonna
Imoisili, Omoye
Itoh, Megumi
Kelley, Toya
Marx, Grace
Murthy, Neil
Pattara-Lau, Tina
Petrosky, Emiko
Reyes, Melissa
Robarge, Rebecca
Surie, Diya
Tromble, Erin
Young, John

Dental Officer To Temporary Captain (O-6)

Effective Date
Clark, Philip
Collins, Joseph
Nascimento, Lucia
Popescu, Rodica O
To Temporary Commander (O-5)
Begay, Lisa
Burke, David
Ikahihifo, Emily
Lockhart, John
Sipin, Maria Heidi

Nurse Officer To Temporary Captain (O-6)

Beauvais, Karen
Egelebo, Christopher
Gill, Ranjodh*
Lucero, Karly*
Luna-Greene, Juanita
Lyons, James
Martinez, Katrina
Medina-Jarrin, Dyanne
Molloy, Brian
Sewell, Latoya
Trinidad, Sarah

Vargas, Antonio
Velazquez, Marybel
Wilborn, Shayna
Williams, Billita
Winbush, Deborah

To Temporary Commander (O-5)

Adams, Penelope
Allen, Tracey
Altman, Jaime
Andrada, Frances
Bacon, Abby
Caulk, Nathan
Cherup, Jamie
Cloos, Beth
Corliss, James
Cullop, Jason
Culver, Rhonita
Davis, Christopher
Dufek, Anne
Einhorn, Seth
Enos, Laura
Garcia, Reyna
Gerson, Brian
Gibson, Dwala
Gustin, Courtney
Hager, Mary-Katherine
Haney, Carissa
Herrera, Steven
Holshue, Michelle
Hughes, Peter
Irish, Everard
Jenkins, Yolanda
Jimerson, Billye
Johnson, Solveig
Jones, Kimberly
Katonak, Rachel
Keel, Andrew
Kenney, Cara
Kerr, Kelly
Kim, Elizabeth
Lanham, Stephanie
Lee, Naisha
Livingston, Michelle
Macklin, Yvette
Mason, Barbara
Mckinney, Yolawnda
Miranda, Gustavo
Moua, Chao
Mros, Stephanie
Obasi, Uruaku
Onserio, Timothy
Perakathu, Sudhir
Pierce, Kelly
Ratliff, Andrew
Reyna, Jesus
Rhodes, Heather
Sanchez, Josue
Smith, Rosson
Smith, Candrea
Smith, Derek
Smith, Nicholas
Stamand, Ingrid
Stewart, Rebekah
Stewart, Lakeshia
Uttchin, Venus
Wright, Trisha
Yung, Stacy

To Temporary Lieutenant Commander (O-4)

Akinyemi, Olumide
Ambersley, Shireen
Ayojiak, Paula
Bailey, Sarah
Barton, Iman
Baymon-Allen, Sharon
Behrens, Kristina
Benoit, Lorna
Brown, Steven
Brown, Matthew
Carlson, Danica
Carrero, Fabiola
Chesser, Carissa
Chu, Jun
Cleveland, Amber
Collins, Bobby
Doherty, Jennifer
Duncan, Randi
Essig, Andrea
Eziakor, Chiazor
Figueiredo, Amanda
Foster, Natasha
Fraboni, Loreena
Gadson, Christy
Garcia, Christie
Gorgoroso, Isabel
Gorman, Gena
Hall, Joshua
Hammel, Charley
Heinze, Eric
Hernandez-Ware, Carmen
Hewitt, Robin
Hill, Joseph
Hodges, Genevieve
Igbinosun, Celestina
Ighile, Adeola
Johnson, Michael
Jones, Chandria
Kahue, Ma Regina
Kelly, Patrick
Kendrick, Dwan
Kinney, Tina
Lafferty, Nancy
Lewis, Thornell
Little-Wolf, Shannon
Mccandless, Julie
Mcminn, Robert
Means, Amber
Miller, Nicolett
Mitchell, Cassandra
Moseley, Whitney
Reed, Hollis
Rhinehart, Erica
Robinson, Letaya
Scott, Regina
Shakya, Aneida
Sile, Inel
Smith, Patrice
Summers, Whitney
Taylor, Ava
Thomas, Ashante
Trevino, Steven
Wallace, Melissa
Wallace, Mendoza
Weigle, Alex
Young, Jennifer

Engineer Officer To Temporary Captain (O-6)

Chua, Francis
Coburn, James*
Gumapas, Leo Angelo
Hench, Mark
Kesteloot, Kurt*

To Temporary Commander (O-5)

Ali, Ali
Bandukwala, Abbas
Beamer, Bryan
Junes-Harvey, Julianne
Kachurak, Kelly
Kenney, Weston
Noble-Sudjadi, Tanya
Palo, Matthew
Peter, Thomas
Qi, Chaolong*
Riley, Gary
Simpson, James*
Tidwell, Steven
Tollon, Michael 07/01/2023

To Temporary Lieutenant Commander (O-4)

Effective Date
Beck, Timothy
Blaise, Yesna
Eisberg, Kim
Julius, Brian
Katherine, Drew
Lee, Morgan
Parra, Christian
Perry, Adriel
Price, Schuyler*
Rotimi, Eniolorunda
Stracener, Shaun
Tack, Colin
Tian, Geng
Wimer, Bryan
Zimmerman, Dara

Scientist Officer To Temporary Captain (O-6)

Flowers, Artensie
Gardner, Tracie
Gomez, Jose
Green, Seth
Nielsen, Carrie
Rodriguez, Michelle
Tsai, Michelle
Vagi, Sara

To Temporary Commander (O-5)

Benbassat, Danny
Francin, Rudolph
Freeland, Amy
Galloway, Michael
Galloway, Eboni
Goosen, Vanessa
Grant-Greene, Yoran
Link-Gelles, Ruth*
Martin, Iman
Mathew, Shiny
Mitzner, George
Rahman, Nazia
Razzaghi, Hilda

Restrepo, Adriana
Schlessinger, Kari
Scott, Colleen
Steele, Matthew

To Temporary Lieutenant Commander (O-4)

Effective Date
Brown, Evan
Chard, Anna
Deputy, Nicholas
Dodd, Brett
Ejike-King, Lacreisha
Finch, Dianca
Francin, Shara
Gahl, Robert
Griffing, Sean
Helm, Charles
Jacobs, Jesica
Jayasekara, Pushpa
Johnson, Michelle
Kang, Jueichuan
Kim, Hana
Kracalik, Ian
Lauer, Ana
Mayer, Oren
Rubenstein, Beth
Salvatore, Phillip
Samson, Marsha
Stokes, Kindra
Wiese, Nicholas
Womack, Lindsay
Woodard, Lauren
Xu, Kerui
York, Shannon

Environmental Health Officer To Temporary Captain (O-6)

Evans, Erin*
Hurst, Harold
Mills, Danielle
Sakris, Derek
To Temporary Commander (O-5)
Carter, Racio
Czamecki, Brian
Dunn, Kevin
Galvez, Steven
Garner, Kimberly
Gooch, James
Hill, April
Hull, Kimberly
Johnson, Jona
Joplin, Dustin
King, Ronan
Madson, Molly
Tsatoke, Andrea*
Victory, Kerton
Wilkinson, Kelli
Witkovskie, Christian
Wittry, Beth

To Temporary Lieutenant Commander (O-4)

Effective Date
Antwi, Lewis
Bridges, Stephanie
Bunn, Justin
Cooper, Charissa

see **PROMOTIONS**
continued on page 8

PROMOTIONS from page 7

Dillahun, Richard
Ferry, Jason
Garcia, Jeremy
Genskow, Kelly
Haddeland, Shelby
Hickey, Braden
Hughes, Sarah
Lumbu-Kinard, Karen
Lydon, Madeline
Mathis, Phillip
Mcnamara, Kathryn
Park, Francis
Strait, Tristian
Todd, Andrew
Vandusen, Amberlynn
Wrona, Patricia

Veterinary Officer
To Temporary Captain
(O-6)
Sinclair, Julie

To Temporary
Commander (O-5)
Adams, Laura

To Temporary Lieutenant
Commander (O-4)
Abouraya, Mahmoud
Joseph, Debbie
Rossow, John
Siu, Allison

Pharmacy Officer
Effective Date
To Temporary Captain
(O-6)

Chino, Reasol
Choi, Jae
Davids, Kimberly
Deconti, Selena
Degarmo, Stacey
Dolence, Larron
Houck, Misti
Janik, Christopher*
Khan, Ibad
Klimo, Andrea*
Kurowsky, John
Landers, Joseph
Langley, Kimberly*
Lester, John
Lind, Jennifer*
Munoz, Monica*
Nguyen, Phung
Patel, Hiren
Rincon, Margaret
Thompson, Weston
Valente, Kelly
Williams, Kellie

To Temporary
Commander (O-5)
Acheson, Darrell
Arnatt, Catherine
Barbosa, Michelle
Blankenship, Lacey
Brodhead, Leann
Brooks, Shamika
Campbell, Tyler
Casberg, Jessie
Chong, Christopher
Corser, Christine
Daniel, Nicholas

Deshields, Lysette
Dhanormchitphong, Pariban
Dillinger, Tabitha
Eng, David
Foss, David
Gould, Catherine
Gustafson, Samantha
Hall, Elizabeth
Hamil, Daniel
Harris, William
Harris, Jason
Hubler, Samuel
Imam, Malik
Ireland, James
Jangchup, Tenzin
Januszewicz, Ashlee
Johnson, Kristi
Johnston, Marie
Jones, Latorie
Kanakri, Muhammad
Kit, Anna
Konosky, Kristen*
Le, Benjamin
Lee, Daniel
Leiferman, Angela
Liu, Roger
Locke, Michelle
Lovell, Weston
Lwin, Eithu
Markley, Justin
Maroor, Tincy
Mckillip, Katie
Mortimore, Christi
Myers, Clayton
Nettling, Henry
Ogbonna, Casmir
Ogoegbunam, Ogochukwu
Oleszczuk, Zachary
Page, June
Pfundt, Tiffany
Rael, Ronnie
Sayegh, Sandra
Singh, Doan
Snider-Kreger, Jessica
Swigart, Drew
Thompson, Trevor
Thor, Shannon
Tran, Quynh Anh
Valles, Karla
Vaughn, Laura
Vehovic, David
Voqui, Jessica
Warshany, Keith
Williams, Michelle
Wong, Rebecca
Zepeda, Josephine

To Temporary Lieutenant
Commander (O-4)
Adams, Phillip
Akan, Mfonabasi
Beddow, Maria
Belanger, April
Burnett, David
Bye, David
Calderwood, Megan
Chen, Shanly
Cox, Daniel
Dunlavey, Alyson
Edwards, Alexandria
Ellstrom, Jordan
Gazarian, Dmitry
Gossett, Jennifer

Haggard, Amanda
Huynh, Miaka
Iacob, Florin
Eng, David
Jaiyeola, Olubunmi
Jean-Louis, Michtta
Jones, Gerrick
Kahsai, Emanuel
Khan, David
Kim, Colleen
Lai, Deborah
Lee, Irene
Lim, Nora
Mantick, Sara
Martinez, Janelle
McFadden, Chelsea
Moore, David
Morris, Taylor
Nevala, Drew
Nguyen, Phuong
Nguyen, Kyle
Nham, Amy
Odens, Christina
Odigwe, Ijeoma
Ogle, Stephanie
Oyewole, Rachael
Pavlechko, Madison
Phan, William
Pinkerton, David
Satlak, Joshua
Sharp, Victoria
Simmons, Warren
Thomas, Santhosh
Vanhorn, Austin
Weiss, Leah
Wondimu, Tekalign
Woods, Joshua
Yau, Adena
Yeh, George
Zenebe, Helina
Zino, Vered

Dietician Officer
To Temporary Captain
(O-6)
Noe-Varga, Michelle

To Temporary
Commander (O-5)
Berube, Jayne
Edleman, Anatheia
Ellis, Patricia
Ruvalcaba, Rogelio

To Temporary Lieutenant
Commander (O-4)
Riojas, Brenda
Van-Meter, Alesya
Wapniak, Rachel

Therapist Officer
To Temporary Captain
(O-6)
Bonebrake, Tami
Estevez, Carlos
Rutledge, Molly

To Temporary
Commander (O-5)
Beardslee, Amber
Berry, Stephen
Krusholm, Lars
McGrew, Scott

Nobles-Mcculley, Tanesha
Tappitake, Narisa

To Temporary Lieutenant
Commander (O-4)
Brandon, Zavera
Casimir, Samora
Cavanaugh, Alyson
Christensen, Kip
Cordel, Douglas
Doran, Maria
Graham, April
Huryta, Whitney
Knight, Kyle
Krumbeck, Jason
Lynch, Ryan
Marshall, Brooke
Ryder, Lee
Taylor, Brent
Timmons, Gabrielle
Todd, Robert
Wasson, Alati
Weathers, Katherine

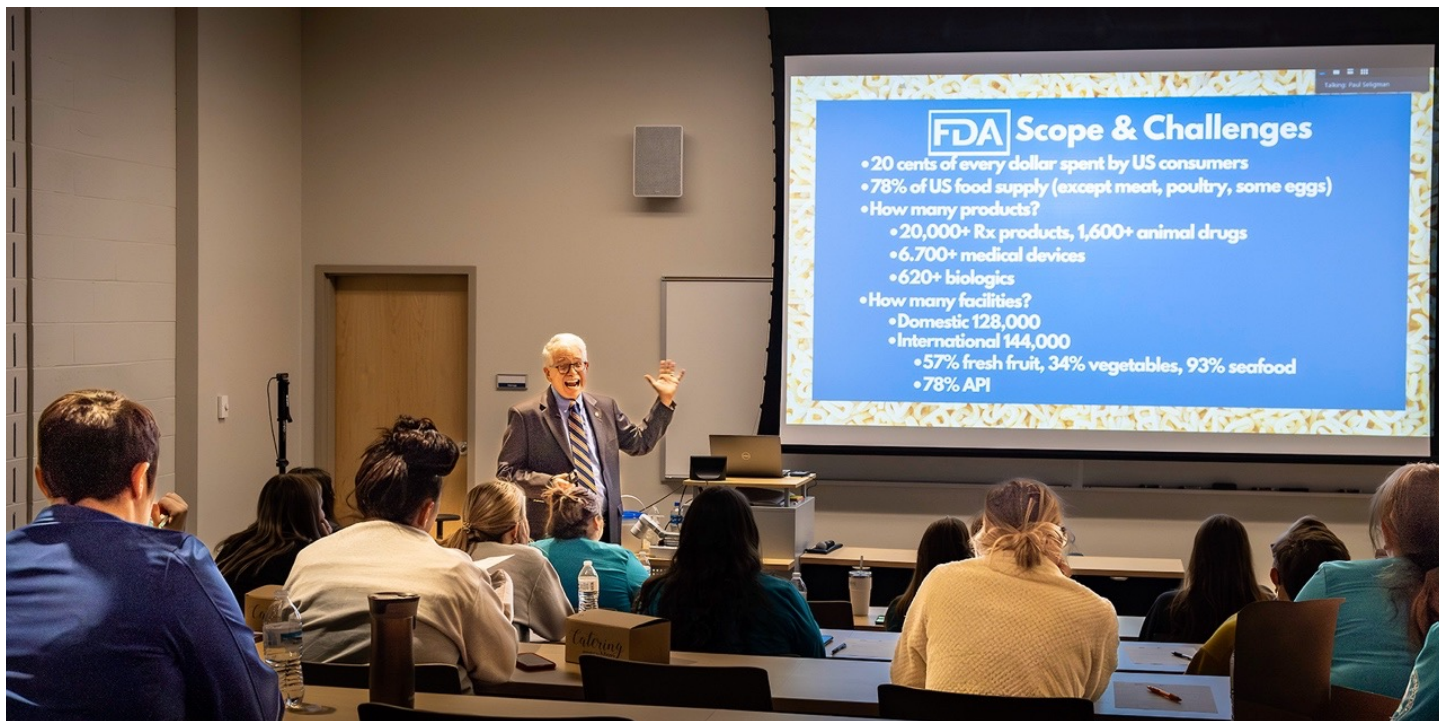
Health Services Officer
To Temporary Captain
(O-6)
Bayne, Keisha
Beer, Catherine
Bertulfo, Francis*
Boyles, Tricia
Degrange, Elizabeth
Eubanks, Zanethia
Faria, Aisha*
Felder, Stephanie*
Garza, Elizabeth
Ghiya, Neelam
Hooban, Tala*
Hunter, David
Manning, Ryan
Morrison, Denise
Nelson, Joel
Nichols, Cara
Sison, Erica
Smith, Jacinta
Smith, Gregory
Smith, Damon
Stein, Avi

To Temporary
Commander (O-5)
Effective Date
Albrecht, Valerie
Alexander, Cara
Arango, Paula
Argaw, Melka
Avila, Tracy
Baize, Tyson
Baker, Bridget
Bakker, Michael
Banyas, Michael
Barnes, Jamar
Barragan, Tanya
Barrow, Olivia
Bennett-Meehan, Jody
Bergerson, Dustin
Bosso, Eileen
Brockman, Larry
Brose, Megan
Cannon, Renee
Carpenter, Onieka
Chennault, Cynthia

Diria, Khadar
Downie, Diane
Felix, Andrew
Frost, Ashley
Goodger, Elizabeth
Hampton, Rochelle
Hoffman, Paul
Hohensee, Michelle
Johnson, Richard
Joseph, Heather
Krepps, James
Lee-Ramos, Jennifer
Lowe, David
Lucio, Macarthur
Lugo, Alfred
Manning, Leticia
Martinez, Jamie
Matthey, Michelle
Oglesby, Sandra
Ogonowski, Pamela
Pascua, Nicole
Perry, Ijeoma
Redman, Katrina
Richardson, Diane
Shelton, Janay
Sloan, Katrina
Smaw, Shercodea
Smith, Tiffany
Smith, Ryan
Truax, Jason
Vaughn, Shariffa
Vonnahme, Laura
Warnstadt, Emily
Wyche, Brandon

To Temporary Lieutenant
Commander (O-4)
Armell, Amy
Brant, Robert
Chon, David
Criss, Jessica
Drew, Nathan
Finch-Hall, Tamika
Francisco, Amalia
Fuller, Kayla
Hagerman, Curtis
Hardy, Regena
Harvey, Karnisha
Hatzenbuehler, Angela
Ishaq, Zohaib
Jackson, Katana
Leseane, Erika
McClelland, Tia
Mcdonough, Zachary
Merchant, Darcy
Pallack, Cindy
Pittman, Lance
Pullman, Amanda
Ratzlaff, Diego
Reynolds, Heidi
Simpson, Jerome
Simpson, Khadija
Song, Eugene
Steiger, Brenda
Trent, Courtney
Walker, Jeffrey
Wato, Kiki
Wiley, Marien
Wilson, Melody
Woldeamanual, Melaku
* Denotes Epp

Commissioned Corps Officers Collaborate on Public Health Education with Western Maryland College



RDML (Ret) Paul J. Seligman discusses the various public health roles of federal, state, and local agencies to an audience of more than 100 students and practitioners in Cumberland, Maryland.

by Martin Heavner

As part of a series of continuing education initiatives in an area hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, Rear Admiral (Ret) Paul J. Seligman, USPHS, and member of the COF Board of Trustees explained the government's role in public health at the Allegany College of Maryland (ACM) in Cumberland, Maryland.

More than 100 students, faculty members, and other professionals representing the spectrum of health care learned the "Alphabet Soup for Healthy Communities: The Roles of FDA, CDC, NIH, Other Agencies and YOU in Public Health" at his November presentation.

The series was organized by retired USPHS Captain Gale Heavner, Nurse Officer, and her husband Martin, in collaboration with ACM.

"Mountain Maryland – the western part of the state – is where my husband and I grew up," said Capt. Heavner. "Ever since most of the industry operating here left in the 1970s, there's been a lot of skepticism of the federal government and, specifically during the pandemic, low vaccination rates and high transmission rates, even among health care providers."

Seligman's presentation was the third in the educational series. "It's not an exaggeration to say he got rave reviews!" Capt. Heavner continued. "Several faculty members expressed their gratitude. They admitted they rarely have gotten an inside look at how the federal government's public health infrastructure works and serves the American people."

Earlier in the year, Capt. John R. Su, M.D, Ph.D, M.P.H., provided an "Overview of Vaccine Safety Monitoring in the U.S. and Safety Profiles for COVID-19 Vaccines." Su, the lead for vaccine safety on the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force, is Team Lead for the Adverse Event Reporting System within the Immunization Safety Office at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

"Today's COVID Vaccines: Facts and Fiction" was the first presentation of the ACM series. Gigi Kwik Gronvall, Ph.D., Senior Scholar at Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security and Associate Professor in the Department of Environmental Health and Engineering at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, focused on common myths about COVID-19 vaccines, sources of reliable information, and practical responses to concerns raised by vaccine-hesitant patients.

Because of the pandemic, the first two ACM presentations were provided via teleconference. All three sessions offered free continuing education credits from various health professional accreditation bodies.

"We are so thankful we were able to bring public health experts, especially two USPHS officers, to our hometown," Capt. Heavner said. "All three have dedicated their lives to the service of the American people, and we believe this kind of critical education can save lives. We hope other USPHS officers consider doing something similar for their own communities."



Introducing COF's New President



COF's new president, CAPT Gene Migliaccio, DrPH, USPHS (Ret)

This is my first article as the newly elected President of the PHS Commissioned Officers Foundation for the Advancement of Public Health (COF).

Many of you may wonder – well, what is COF and what does it do for me?

I would like to start out by telling you that COF was established in June 2000 as a not-for-profit organization to serve the education and research needs of the [Commissioned Officers Association of the USPHS \(COA\)](#). Since that

time, COF has grown and matured through the generosity of our donors which has allowed us to expand our programs to support U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) officers in their professional development, and to sustain the USPHS Commissioned Corps into the future.

We - COF – focus on five strategic goals:

ADVOCACY

Advance public health and public health leadership through participation in, and collaboration on, initiatives that promote the public health mission of the USPHS Commissioned Corps and the overarching importance of public health for the Nation.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Conduct and fund public health education and training programs for USPHS commissioned officers and other health professionals.

GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Maintain an effective and informed board of trustees and increase the foundation's financial resources in order to provide greater support for public health initiatives that are relevant to the mission of the foundation.

PRESERVATION OF HERITAGE

Support activities and programs that highlight and preserve the historical legacy of the Public Health Service and the USPHS Commissioned Corps.

PROJECT AND RESEARCH SUPPORT

Support and conduct projects and research studies that advance and promote public health and public health leadership nationally and globally.

I have shared our goals with you to let you know what I will focus on over the next year as COF President:

- I want to increase our financial resources by supporting our capital campaign initiative.
- As we grow our resources via the capital campaign - I want to increase the level of educational funding for our USPHS officers for their professional development in public health and leadership.
- I plan to advocate and support the distribution of the PBS documentary – Invisible Corps – that focuses on our heritage.

A brief background on who I am. This is my second stint as President of COF. My first tour was in July 2012 and over the years tremendous progress has been made by my fellow officers driving COF toward excellence. On my second go around – I want to continue to give back and serve.

I began my federal public health professional career in the U.S. Air Force Medical Service as a hospital and health services administrator and then transferred to the USPHS Commissioned Corps in the early 1990s. I served as a health service officer (HSO) in the Federal Bureau of Prisons for several years and then worked at Immigration and Customs Enforcement as the Director of Immigration Health Service. I also had a tour serving as the acting Chief of Staff to U.S. Surgeon General, VADM Richard Carmona. Upon retirement from the USPHS Commissioned Corps in 2007, I was appointed as a member of the federal government's Senior Executive Service (SES) serving as the Director of Federal Occupational Health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and then working on access to care for Veterans as Executive Director for Delivery Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Since 2019, I joined The George Washington University (GW) full-time as an Associate Dean and Professor, and Director of the Doctor of Public Health Program at GW Milken Institute School of Public Health in Washington, DC.

I am committed to serving and advocating for you – our Public Health Service officers!

An Ounce of Prevention for Our Next Generation of Public Health

by CDR Rudolph Francin, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist and LCDR Erica Stoll, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC

CDR Rudolph Francin and LCDR Erica Stoll proudly represented the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps by conducting a Prevention Through Active Community Engagement (PACE) activity on the importance of handwashing on 17 May 2023 at Rosemont Elementary School during their annual Career Day. The PACE event at Rosemont Elementary School increased the visibility of the USPHS Commissioned Corps and promoted health education among kindergarteners, and first and second graders. A total of 285 students and several faculty members were in attendance and their excitement echoed through the halls. The presentation was a timely educational opportunity to reinforce the importance of remaining vigilant with proper handwashing, as the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency recently ended. For more than 176 years, the simple and enduring practice of modern hand hygiene has proven to be effective.

Students were also inquisitive and asked many questions on the different aspects of the presenters' uniforms and the history of the USPHS Commissioned Corps. CDR Francin, Clinical Psychologist, and LCDR

Stoll, Family Nurse Practitioner, were able to speak to the diversity of the USPHS Commissioned Corps, including their robust assignment history. For some, it was their first time learning about the USPHS Commissioned Corps, and it seemed to make a lasting impression. A few students even remarked about their desire to pursue a career in public health and join the USPHS Commissioned Corps in the future.

Additionally, it was a special event for LCDR Stoll, as her son and husband were able to attend the event. The Stoll family recently relocated in support of her job, resulting in a change of school for their son. The PACE event was an opportunity for LCDR Stoll's son to return to his old elementary school, spend time with friends, and participate in the career day. He was also able to learn about his mom's job and the importance of hand washing with his peers while witnessing her engage in service to others, a core family value in the Stoll household. The PACE event was a special moment between mother and son to start passing the value of service onto the next generation. A special thanks to the school counselors, Ms. Stephanie Claybon and Ms. Mary Rzegocki, who assisted with the coordination of the event and even invited the presenters back to next year's Career Day to represent the USPHS Commissioned Corps and PACE.



LCDR Erica Stoll with her family at PACE event.



CDR Erica Stoll and LCDR Rudolph Francin at PACE event.

Collaborative Cookout

by CDR Rudolph Francin, LCDR Jen Eng, and LT Jamla Rizek

On a beautiful sunny May Saturday afternoon, 75 Officers, friends, family, and fur babies attended the inaugural cookout with the Baltimore, District of Columbia, and Montgomery County COA local branches. It took place in the picnic area of Burba Lake on Fort Meade, MD. Multiple activities were available to include: lounging; sports; a bounce-house; and music by DC COA's DJ Javier Muniz.

In addition to boxed lunches from Famous Dave's BBQ restaurant, the local branches had merchandise for sale. Montgomery County COA unveiled and sold their new logo and t-shirt designed by LT Nora Lim. However, anyone in attendance will agree that the best part of the picnic (besides the camaraderie) was the kickball game. Adults and children gathered and were able to connect with some friendly competition, and best of all—no injuries.

Montgomery County COA assisted officers to clean out their closet by taking uniform donations that will be distributed to new USPHS officers in the future at Officer Basic Course (OBC). In total, 22 uniform items were collected for future officers that may have difficulty obtaining them.

If you live in the DMV area and haven't joined a local COA branch, now is the time to do so. Login to www.coausphs.org and choose your branch.



Montgomery County COA local branch seal

Baltimore COA local branch seal



DC COA local branch seal



Board of Directors

Continuously Moving Forward

by CDR Kristie Purdy, MS, RDN/LD, BC-ADM, CDCES

At the end of seven years of service to the COA Board of Directors (BOD), I want to take a moment to share some observations and to thank members of COA, the BOD, and COA staff for your contributions to the success of this association and serving the only organization dedicated to protecting the interests of USPHS Commissioned Corps.

Like many members in COA, I first joined when a senior officer told me it would be a great way to become involved. Upon attending the Officer Basic Course (OBC), I spotted the COA booth at the open house and made my way to sign up for membership. Little did I know the opportunities to come through becoming a member of COA.

As I reflect on the changes and progress made, I am struck by the dedication of our members. The success of COA is a direct result of the selfless contributions made by our members and the COA staff to move the organization forward.

In 2021, the BOD met in Alexandria, VA, and through the help of a professional facilitator, we developed the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan to set the tone of the organization for the next five years. The board chose four goals: grow, engage, serve, and advocate. They have been working toward each of these goals to ensure they are being met.

As you are most likely aware, COA has undergone a rebranding process. Last year, we introduced our new logo. Since this time, COA has rolled out a new website, and developed the tagline “Your Corps. Your Causes.”

We are actively working to increase membership and demonstrate the value of membership. Just as I was introduced to this organization while attending OBC, COA’s Executive Director and Deputy Director continue to attend OBC, where they can introduce themselves to the Call to Active Duty and Ready Reserve officers. The COA Outreach Committee contacts these officers to encourage them to be a part of our association and let them know they have a COA family, ready and willing to provide support.

Our Local Branch Committee actively engages with leadership from the local branches. They host bi-monthly meetings and offer regular office hours to encourage and support local branch structure, encourage viability amongst the branches, and provide a connection for the local branches to national COA.

Over the past year, COA has hosted networking opportunities and virtual gatherings. We’ve held The Incredible Power of Praise

by Linda Bruno, where members discussed the importance of praise and were provided tools to work praise into their everyday lives. COA has hosted financial wellness seminars, to include Advanced Estate Planning Strategies, a presentation called Take Charge of Your Financial Wellness, and another called Roadmap to Retirement. Professional development opportunities were made available, including the Certified in Public Health Certification Program, covering eligibility criteria, examination process, study tips, and benefits for COA members.

Membership and benefits from COA do not quit in retirement. COA released a publication, exclusively for our members - a guide to state income tax on USPHS Retirement Pay. Our Retiree Committee hosted a virtual event, where retirees were able to gather in fellowship and learn how COA continues to advocate on their behalf.

COA’s Communication and Public Relations Committee have worked throughout the year to highlight the great work being performed by our members. We are highlighting members via social media, Frontline, and we sponsored the second annual photo contest focusing on USPHS officers engaging in activities that promote and protect the health of the nation at home and at work.

COA continues to advocate on Capitol Hill and work with CCHQ to bring change and work toward the goal of parity of benefits for USPHS that are afforded to members of the Armed Forces. Once again, COA advocated on the issue of expiring leave. On September 30, 2022, the President signed the “Continuing Appropriations and Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act,” authorizing the service to allow USPHS officers to carry over more than 60 days of leave into FY2024. This was followed by a major win for USPHS officer on December 29, 2022, when President Biden signed into law H.R. 2617, a permanent fix to the issue of leave extension. CCHQ may now authorize accumulated annual leave up to 120 days.

Just as we advocate for active duty and retired officers, COA advocates for the Ready Reserve. COA is fighting for the Ready Reserve to receive the same parity with the other reserve components. This includes benefits to the GI Bill and Tricare Reserve Select.

These activities are just a few highlights COA is working towards on behalf of its members. It is with deep gratitude and appreciation to the staff and BOD for your commitment to continually keep this organization moving forward as the ONLY organization solely representing the interests of the Corps!

USPHS Officers Volunteer with the Department of Energy National Science Bowl

by CDR Brian Lefferts, MPH, REHS, DAAS and LT Ana Lauer, PhD.

Biology. Multiple choice. Which of the following is an example of simple squamous epithelium? W) stomach lining, X) intestinal lining, Y) lung lining, or Z) skin? Questions like this were answered by middle school and high school students from across the country in Rockville, MD this past April while competing in the national finals of the U.S. Department of Energy's National Science Bowl® (NSB).

NSB is a nationwide high school and middle school science knowledge competition. Teams are comprised of four students, an alternate, and an advisor or coach. Beginning in January, teams face off in a fast-paced question and answer format on a wide range of science disciplines including biology, chemistry, earth science, physics, energy, and math working their way through sub-regional and regional competitions. Winners of the 65 high school and 50 middle regional competitions are then invited to travel to Washington DC to participate in the national finals.

An endeavor like that requires hundreds of volunteers, including USPHS officers. This spring, two USPHS officers, LT Ana Lauer and CDR Brian Lefferts, shared their passion for science with future scientists by volunteering with NSB. "One of the best ways to serve your community is by donating your time, talent, and expertise to something you are passionate about," shared CDR Lefferts.

The competition ignited LT Ana Lauer's own passion for science when she was younger. "Science Bowl is a great way to show a different side of science, not just sitting in a classroom for a lecture. It's a wide world and there's a lot to discover," said Lauer. As an alum of the national competition, LT Lauer has volunteered since 2005 for regional competitions and the national finals. She also takes time



All 2023 NSB® teams and volunteers eagerly await the start of the championship rounds. Photo by Jack Dempsey, National Science Bowl®, Department of Energy, Office of Science

to mentor students at events in between acting as an event official.

CDR Brian Lefferts also volunteered with NSB this year, but in a different way. Based in the remote Alaskan community of Bethel, 40 miles from the Bering Sea, Lefferts was looking for a way to share his love for science with the community. After learning about the NSB, he contacted his son's middle school about starting a team. "I gain as much from NSB as the students do. Watching their dedication, enthusiasm, and love for science is a real inspiration."

As the only middle school team from Alaska, the Bethel team automatically qualified for this year's NSB finals in DC where he met LT Lauer. "It was wonderful to run into another USPHS officer at the competition," said Lefferts. "NSB is an amazing opportunity for students. Our team made friends from all over the country who share our love for science.

They enjoyed the competition so much that they're already starting to practice for next year, and LT Lauer also had some excellent veteran advice for us to help with practices."

Regardless of your category, the rigorous scientific methods of observation and experimentation are the backbone of the public health services we all provide. NSB provides an enriching platform where science, education, and community service intersect to support the next generation of scientists and public health professionals in the United States. LT Lauer and CDR Lefferts' service through NSB helps strengthen the bond between education and science. "If you're looking for a way to volunteer in your community, I highly recommend volunteering for NSB," said Lefferts. If you'd like to learn more about NSB, please visit <https://science.osti.gov/wdts/nsb>

The answer by the way is Y) lung lining.

2023 Health Services Professional Advisory Committee (HSPAC) Category Day Recap

by CDR Margaret Caulk, MPH, MS, COR II and CDR Neelam Ghiya, MPH

The 2023 HSPAC Category Day was held in person on Wednesday, May 10. Health Services Officers (HSOs) heard presentations from the Chief Professional Officer (CPO) and current HSPAC Chair and members of the Senior Officer Consortium (SOC). In addition to updates on the Corps and the Category, participants listened to Agency Liaisons address commonly asked questions. Approximately 160 HSOs participated in Category Day, which nearly filled one of the largest conference rooms at the Symposium. Thank you to the HSPAC Events Subcommittee, Category Day team, and presenters who helped plan and execute a successful event.

The opening ceremony included the Orb Procession and reaffirmation of the Oath of Office. The 2023 HSPAC Chair, CAPT Rebecca Bunnell, welcomed officers to Category Day and provided high level updates on current and upcoming PAC and Professional Advisory Group (PAG) activities. Next, the CPO, CAPT Diedre Presley, provided opening remarks and highlighted category strengths and challenges, how officers can be agents for change, and resilience and sources of strength. She conveyed how she continues to be proud of all the hard work and dedication of HSOs.

The SOC introduced its members, provided overviews of each facet of the SOC - membership, officer development, Call to Active-Duty Mentorship - and launching of the Health Services



Photo by CDR David Schwab: 2023 USPHS Symposium, Health Services Category Day Room

Leadership Academy. There was also an engaging exercise on leadership and change management. The morning session concluded with the agency liaisons, who covered the most frequently received questions in the liaison role, how they resolve them, and where officers can access resources to the issues that they encounter. The afternoon sessions began with an inspirational presentation on balancing self-care and professional development in the USPHS. The Category Day awards presentation highlighted the accomplishments of 22 HSOs- who were 2023 PAC and PAG award recipients. Highlighting the importance of movement, fitness and creativity, officers then led the afternoon's wellness break. HSOs got up, moved, and sang in a friendly competition while having some fun, to emphasize the

importance of pausing to take time out for yourself. The Tai Chi demonstration by a guest presenter emphasized the importance of self-evaluation, self-awareness and reflection.

HS Category Day 2023 concluded with a powerful presentation on How To Have A Career With Impact, the CPO's final comments, and Orb retreat.

On the other side of the Conference Center, the HSPAC had over 100 visitors to the newly redesigned HSPAC booth in the exhibit hall. Thank you to the 18 volunteers who staffed the booth as the visitors arrived.

The HSPAC Event Subcommittee looks forward to seeing everyone at the 2024 HS Category Day in Jacksonville, Florida.

Usher Volunteers Welcome New Officers and Families at OBC Graduation Ceremony

by LT Jamla Rizek, MBA, MSN, RN, CEN, CPEN, NHDP-BC, NRP and LCDR Theresa Yu, RN, MSN, OCN®

The U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Officer Training Academy (COTA) is led by the Training Branch Chief, CDR Hien Albright. Her team of Instructional Officers works hard to get new Calls to Active Duty (CADs) ready to begin their careers as officers. New CADs go through a 2-week Officer Basic Course (OBC) with a graduation ceremony that occurs on the last day of OBC. New officers and their families share in the celebration of all the work they have done to get to this point and for the excitement that comes along with their future potential.

Supporting these new officers requires a team of volunteers. LCDR Theresa Yu started as a volunteer in 2018 when COTA needed officers to welcome guests at OBC graduation. Being a volunteer is not only a commitment but also highlights the esprit de corps and the ongoing support that new officers will have when they join

*see **OBC** continued on page 17*



LCDR Richard Johnson, LCDR Rudolph Francin, LCDR Theresa Yu, LT Mendoza Wallace, and LT Jamla Rizek served as the usher volunteers at one of the OBC Graduation Ceremonies recently.

We Are Basic Ready, Are You?

by CAPT Robin N. Hunter Buskey and CAPT Jane M. Kreis

Damar Hamlin's cardiac arrest, witnessed on national television January 2, 2023, recharged communities to engage in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training. Individuals from all age groups are seeking to learn what to do if faced with a similar situation. Community organizations are teaching the critical steps to recognize cardiac and respiratory arrest and initiate CPR.

CPR training normally covers the skills used when one person is performing both compressions and breaths. In contrast, the BLS protocol provides extensive training in the use of multi-rescuer teams, as well as the use of tools such as bag-masks and feedback devices. Basic Life Support (BLS) is a higher level of medical care applied to victims of sudden cardiac arrest until advanced care is available.

Whereas CPR is a part of BLS, BLS goes a bit further in the types of assessments, interventions and equipment used to treat sudden cardiac arrest.

The American Heart Association (AHA) BLS Provider courses train for:

- High-quality CPR for all age groups (adults, children, and infants)
- The BLS components of the AHA Chain of Survival
- Early use of an automatic external Defibrillator (AED)
- Effective ventilations using barrier devices

- Importance of teams in multi-rescuer resuscitation and how to be an effective team member
- Relief of foreign-body airway obstruction (choking) for adults and infants

Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) training is for healthcare professionals who either direct or participate in the management of cardiopulmonary arrest or other cardiovascular emergencies and for personnel in emergency response. The AHA's ACLS course builds on the foundation of lifesaving BLS skills, emphasizing the importance of continuous, high-quality CPR.

The AHA ACLS Provider courses train for:

- Recognition and early management of respiratory and cardiac arrest
- Recognition and early management of peri-arrest conditions such as symptomatic bradycardia
- Airway management
- Management of Acute Coronary Syndrome and stroke
- Effective communication as a member and leader of a resuscitation team
- Reading and interpreting Electrocardiograms, understanding ACLS pharmacology; and who regularly lead or participate in emergency assessment and treatment of prearrest, arrest, or post arrest patients

*see **CPR** continued on page 16*

2023 USPHS Symposium Pre-Conference Session Recap on Military Customs, Courtesies, and Culture

by CDR Neelam D. Ghiya, MPH, CDR Allah-Fard Sharrieff, Ph.D., MSCP, and LCDR Janelle Phillip, LICSW

A USPHS Symposium preconference session on Monday, May 8th, 2023, was conducted on Military Customs, Courtesies, and Culture with approximately 30 officers in attendance.

The session was aimed to ensure that USPHS officers maintain and utilize a high level of knowledge on military customs, courtesies, and culture. The session reviewed the US armed forces and USPHS in addition to highlighting the understanding of military culture through an experiential lens. Additionally, a panel of 3 USPHS officers shared their real-life stories of successful and challenging experiences that resonated with officers, prompting many other officers to share their experiences, as well.

Oral, written, and visual lessons were provided to foster proficiency in demonstrating military customs and courtesies in all situations. The objectives of the session were to train on the following:

- Apply the basic principles and concepts related to USPHS Commissioned Corps and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), officership, order and discipline;
- Utilize military customs and courtesies correctly on deployments, in trainings, on military installations, and when engaging with fellow service members (including rankings);
- Demonstrate proper uniformed



USPHS Officers practicing facing movements

appearance and grooming standards, muster, attention, parade rest, saluting, etc. More specifically, participants were able to learn more about the history of USPHS along with other services. Attendees were able to learn how these histories and traditions shape leadership, protocol, and service standards today.

Officers reported leaving the session with an increased level of confidence to interface with service members across all uniformed services. For junior officers that attended the virtual Officer Basic Course (OBC) during the COVID pandemic and did not receive drill demos in person, the hands-on approach of this this course was extremely helpful

CPR from page 15

- Recognize and manage cardiac arrest until termination of resuscitation or transfer of care, including post-cardiac arrest care

USPHS Officers are required to maintain certification in BLS as part of Basic Readiness. Approved certifications:

- AHA Basic Life Support for health care providers
- American Red Cross CPR/AED for the professional rescuer
- American Safety and Health Institute (ASHI) CPR for the professional rescuer (CPR PRO)
- Another basic life support training that is equivalent to the courses listed above and which is reviewed and approved by the Surgeon General

The Commissioned Officer's Foundation (COF) Scientific Symposium's agenda is filled with a variety of educational, training, and networking opportunities. On June 7, 2000, the first formal BLS course during the COF Symposium in Scottsdale, Arizona, was offered to officers to fulfill the Commissioned Corps Readiness Force (CCRF) requirement. The BLS formal classroom training led by LCDR Jane Kreis and CAPT Michael Fitzpatrick (Ret) supported officers' fulfillment of basic readiness.

The popularity for the BLS classes prompted the need for additional instructors and equipment to meet the AHA training

requirements. The next course offerings in Glendale, Arizona, 2013, began the current reign of regularly scheduled pre-conference BLS classes. The planning and logistics became part of each subsequent symposium. Officers appreciated the flexibility to drop in for on-demand BLS testing.

USPHS officers inquired about adding Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) classes. In 2016, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the first pre-conference ACLS class was offered. Since 2022, naloxone training was added with issuance of Narcan kits.

During the May 7, 2023, pre-conference ACLS class a Tulsa, Oklahoma, convention center employee presented with chest pain seeking help. The class turned attention to the employee, gathered information and ensured a secure patient handoff. The prompt attention and professionalism is demonstrative of being prepared. You never know when emergency skills will be needed.

CAPTs Jane Kreis and Robin Hunter Buskey were the officers who coordinated the BLS and ACLS trainings as COF Scientific Symposium preconference classes and secured local support for officers' readiness requirements. These classes offer a flexible and necessary opportunity for officers to remain prepared. Thanks to the COF planners for continued support for officers' readiness requirements. Thanks to the training volunteers over the years to make this possible and all the officers who trusted and attended the classes.

Commissioned Corps Women Seeking Support, Camaraderie, and Friendships

by CDR Neelam Ghiya, MPH & CDR Song Lavalais, PharmD, MHA, BCACP

The 56th Annual USPHS Scientific & Training Symposium, held in Tulsa, Oklahoma at the Cox Business Conference Center, was attended by over 1,200 USPHS officers. The conference exhibit hall showcased business sponsors, federal agencies, and different organizations for officers to engage. Fifteen USPHS Commissioned Corps Women's Issues Advisory Board (CCWIAB) and Women's Leadership Support Group (WLSG) volunteer officers staffed the joint booth on May 9 and 10. Several additional officers coordinated supplies for the CCWIAB/WLSG booth from their various duty stations across the country.

CCWIAB's mission is to identify and analyze key issues that impact women in the USPHS and to develop action plans to address these issues. WLSG's mission is to support fellow women in a quest to lead well balanced lives, while gaining inspiration in their own lives and upholding the USPHS core values of leadership, service, integrity, and excellence. The volunteer officers shared both organizations' missions and answered any questions regarding the organizations that the attendees had. They spoke to officers about many topics, including advocacy, creating resources such as the Breastfeeding and Fertility Treatment Deployment Waivers, and the WLSG social media page.

An average of 35 women officers visited the booth each hour, with some learning about CCWIAB and WLSG for the first time. The opportunity to have a booth at the symposium allowed members to meet and reunite with fellow officers, share about the two great organizations geared towards women, and listen to the needs and ideas of the attendees. This year, the members of both organizations had the honor to view the premier of the documentary, *The Invisible Corps*, which highlighted many female



Women's Leadership Support Group (WLSG) volunteer officers at their booth during the 56th Annual Scientific and Training Symposium in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

USPHS leaders who helped advance our service and advocate for officers.

Female officers looking for greater work-life balance and support from USPHS women in similar situations can scan the QR codes below to sign up for the WLSG listserv and join a pod. In addition, officers interested in receiving updates on newly released resources and events led or sponsored by CCWIAB can join their listserv below:



WLSG listserv



WLSG pod



CCWIAB listserv

OBC from page 15

the USPHS family. Usher volunteers don't just hand out programs and escort flag officers to their seats, they also cheer on and show their support for the new officers and their commitment of our mission to protect, promote, and advance the health and safety of the nation.

We all know the effect the pandemic had on the world and on officers. In June 2022, OBC resumed its in-person format after being held virtually for more than two years. The OBC graduation ceremony was once again held at the Bolger Center in Potomac, Maryland, and celebrated the class of OBC Active Duty 137/Ready Reserve 10.

"We are always looking for usher volunteers to help at the event. If you have not volunteered before or it has been a few years

since you were at your own graduation, come attend an OBC graduation. It not only builds esprit de corps, but you get to welcome the newly minted officers. The best thing I enjoy most is listening to the class speaker and the guest of honor speeches at graduation. It is reinvigorating and validates the reason I joined USPHS. We have had volunteers who were visiting the area attend. It is a great opportunity to meet and connect with fellow officers" said LCDR Yu.

OBC is held approximately 10 times per year at the Bolger Center. For volunteer opportunities and to get notifications of upcoming events, sign up for the COTA Volunteer Opportunities Listserv at <https://tinyurl.com/ynjs247p> or go to the Training Branch of the CCMIS website (<https://tinyurl.com/bddfpw9f>) for a direct link to the listserv.

USPHS Officers Attend the 140th Interagency Institute for Federal Health Leaders Course

by CDR Elizabeth B. Russell & CAPT Robert A. Windom

On April 17, 2023, USPHS Commissioned Corps officers joined members from the sister services and federal colleagues from the Veterans Health Administration at the 140th Interagency Institute for Federal Health Leaders course (IAI). The Interagency Institute was established over seventy years ago. It is a two-week leadership program that is offered semi-annually in the spring and fall, and open to O5 and O6 officers and senior GS employees. It is sponsored by the Departments of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Veteran Affairs, and USPHS, and falls under the auspices of the Uniformed Services University (USU), Bethesda MD. This year's offering was held at the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health. There were 55 total seats in the Spring 2023 course; CAPT Robert Windom and CDR Elizabeth B. Russell were selected to fill the two allotted seats to represent USPHS.

CAPT Windom is currently assigned as the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR) Senior Advisor and Liaison Officer to U.S. Southern Command. He saw this course as an opportunity to continue his leadership learning continuum and to increase his knowledge and effectiveness as an officer. "Although I've served in multiple leadership roles over thirty years, in and out of uniform, there's always room for growth," Windom stated. After applying and not getting selected in previous years, CAPT Windom was encouraged to apply again by his ASPR colleagues. CAPT Paul Michaud, the ASPR Liaison Officer to U.S. Transportation Command attended the program in the Spring 2019. "I highly encourage officers to submit for the IAI for Federal Health Leaders course. It was one of the best leadership courses attended during my career. The course is well run and gives participants direct access to senior leaders in DoD, USPHS, and the private healthcare sector," said Michaud.

CDR Russell possesses over twenty-three years of leadership experience and currently serves as a Health Services Administrator within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Health Service Corps (IHSC). In this capacity, she oversees the medical unit at one of the largest ICE detention facilities, implementing the agency's mission priorities and ensuring high quality and compassionate health care services are provided to all patients. CDR Russell encourages all her fellow officers to apply to this wonderful program. In her words "attending this training was a true blessing. It provided me with the opportunity, information, and various resources that will help me continue growing and maturing as a leader. It re-ignited my leadership statement of serving is my mission and caring is my goal." Like CAPT Michaud, CDR Russell was able to meet various senior leaders and establish professional collaboration with other participating leaders.



CAPT Robert Windom, CDR Elizabeth Russell, and RADM(Ret) Boris Lushniak

Both CAPT Windom and CDR Russell spoke very highly of the program and enjoyed the contributions and presentations from high level officials and meeting some of the healthcare industry's most senior leaders. They also gave special acknowledgement to Drs. Richard and Janet Southby who are the linchpins of the program. Dr. Richard Southby has been the course director since 1984. He and his wife Janet have made steady improvements to the program over the years. Dr. Janet Southby served in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps for 31 years, culminating as a Colonel and Chief of the Department of Nursing at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. USPHS traditionally has representation from its leadership at the IAI, which was formerly known as the Federal Health Care Executives Institute. RADM (Ret) Boris Lushniak, former Acting Surgeon General and current Dean of the University of Maryland School of Public Health, is a regular presenter and contributor. And USPHS Deputy Surgeon General RADM Denise Hinton gave remarks and answered questions as part of a senior health executive panel presentation.

Federal leaders that complete the course are offered membership into the Federal Health Care Executives Institute Alumni Association (FHCEIAA). FHCEIAA is dedicated to improving the competence of Federal Health Care Executives and fostering communication and cooperation between different agencies. Those interested in learning more about this opportunity are encouraged to contact CAPT Robert Windom at robert.windom@hhs.gov or CDR Elizabeth Russell at elizabeth.b.russell@ice.dhs.gov. For more information, you may also visit <https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/training/InteragencyInstituteCourse.aspx> or www.fhceiaa.org.

Officer Spotlight

LCDR Lee Ryder (they/them)

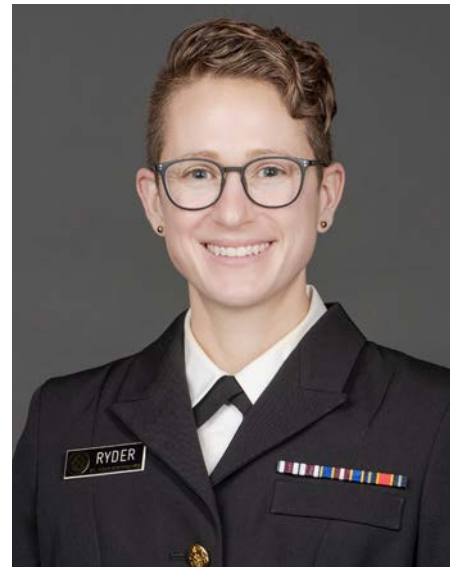
by Nathan Drew, LICSW, LCSW-C, BCD, CCHP

LCDR Lee Ryder (they/them) is thrilled to celebrate PRIDE month with the COA Frontline community! LCDR Ryder joined the USPHS Commissioned Corps through the SRCOSTEP in 2017. Their first duty station was with the Indian Health Service in Whiteriver, AZ, and in 2021 they transferred to Phoenix Indian Medical Center in Phoenix, AZ where they currently serve as a senior physical therapist and neurologic rehabilitation specialist. A highlight of LCDR Ryder's career has been their involvement with the Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity Advisory Group (SOAGDAG), where they are a current voting member and co-chair of the Policy Subcommittee.

Serving as an LGBTQ+ Commissioned Officer has been a unique and rewarding journey throughout LCDR Ryder's career. LCDR Ryder commissioned at a time

where there was a ban on transgender service members from serving in our nation's military. As LCDR Ryder reflects on this time, it brings up difficult feelings of fear and unease, as they wondered what this would mean for their ability to serve in uniform as a transgender officer. While this ban has thankfully since been removed, LCDR Ryder encourages officers to be aware, especially during the month of June when LGBTQ+ issues are spotlighted, of the current widespread legislative attacks that continue to worsen in states throughout the country. LCDR Ryder extends a friendly reminder that PRIDE does not end when the month of June is over, and that efforts to support the LGBTQ+ community should be committed to on a year-round basis.

LCDR Ryder is proud to serve openly as a queer and transgender officer and celebrates this identity along with all LGBTQ+ identities that strengthen



LCDR Lee Ryder (they/them)

our service to our country in the Commissioned Corps. PRIDE is about embracing one's true self despite societal norms and expectations, which are often restrictive. PRIDE is about building community, fostering authenticity, and committing to unrelenting self-acceptance and self-expression. LCDR Ryder looks forward to celebrating the beauty, resilience, and strength of LGBTQ+ officers throughout the month of PRIDE and into the months beyond.



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JOAG and Junior Officers Make their Mark at the 2023 Tulsa Symposium

by LCDR DeAnna Harmon MSN, APRN, CNP, LCDR Peter Hughes MSED, BSN, RN, LCDR Jennifer Jabara DNP, RN, CPN-BC, NE-BC, NPD-BC, LCDR Casimir Ogbonna PharmD; LT Yvesna Blaise, LT Brittany McCracken MLS (ASCP), LT Jazmin Reed PhD, MPH, LT Joshua Satlak PharmD, LT Leah Weiss PharmD, LTJG Catherine Aparente MSN, RN, and LCDR Sandra Carpio, DrPH, MS

Almost 500 junior officers (JOs) travelled to Tulsa, Oklahoma for the 2023 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium. The Junior Officer Advisory Group's (JOAG) Outreach Planning Subcommittee (SC), led by LCDR Peter Hughes and LT Jazmin Reed, planned five JOAG-sponsored activities, and supported a sixth activity led by the uniform SC at symposium this year. The 6-month planning effort resulted in enhanced visibility of JOAG and JOs through networking and knowledge-sharing activities as detailed by each workgroup lead below.

Meet & Greet Dinner

On Monday, LTs Joshua Satlak and Leah Weiss hosted the inaugural JOAG Meet and Greet Dinner at Fassler Hall to build team camaraderie and share in esprit de corps. More than 30 JOs representing nearly all eleven professional categories, from more than seven different agencies, and from locations across the United States and its territories enjoyed spending time together and sharing their career achievements. Many in attendance were in awe of the numerous accolades their fellow JOs had accomplished. Of note, we enjoyed hearing about officers' unique daily tasks including those from JOAG Chair-elect, LCDR Michael Wandersee, and Outreach Committee Chair, LCDR Sandra Carpio, and other officers working for the Coast Guard and the National Park Service.

Community Service Events (2)

On Tuesday, 25 officers led by LCDRs DeAnna Harmon and Jennifer Jabara serviced two Tulsa organizations dedicated to improving outcomes for those experiencing homelessness. At Tulsa Day Center, officers assisted with filing paperwork and sorting clothing so guests can obtain one new outfit weekly, restoring dignity and allowing them freedom to choose clothing reflecting their personal style and the goal of self-sufficiency. At Irongate, officers served meals to hundreds of individuals and assisted in creating nearly 150 grab-and-go meal bags.

Participating officers expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to serve in such a meaningful way. All were reminded that sometimes the best medicine we can offer is a warm meal, a kind smile, a listening ear, and respect for the human experience.

Uniform inspection Booth (UIB)

Led by LCDR Ronan King, 50 JOs rose to the occasion to support the UIB at the 56th annual symposium. Ahead of symposium, the UIB workgroup held monthly planning meetings and executed training to ensure volunteers were aware and knowledgeable of



LT Whitney Moseley assists LT Derek Lieser with a uniform check at the uniform inspection booth.

the correct uniform protocols. Two virtual and one on-site training session were held that included the 2023 JOAG Proper Uniform Wear presentation followed by a Q&A. On Monday, over 42 officers visited the UIB to get squared away for the Anchor and Caduceus Dinner. Throughout the week, approximately 155 additional officers visited the UIB including the Assistant Secretary for Health (ASH), Deputy Surgeon General (DSG), many of the Chief Professional Officers (CPOs), other Corps leadership, and newly commissioned officers.

Junior Officer Career Enhancement Booth (JOCEB)

Twenty officers, led by LT Brittany McCracken and LTJG Catherine Aparente, supported JOCEB operations. Pre-symposium training was conducted to equip volunteers with the knowledge to champion JOAG tools regarding promotion and career advancement.

The booth received 139 visitors; a 60% increase compared to 2022 due to new officer engagement strategies. Sixty-eight officers tested their YSPHS and JOAG knowledge for a chance to win a commemorative symposium coin. Countless officers took selfies at the personalized photo booth and were encouraged to post them on social media. Even USPHS senior leaders, RADM Denise Hinton and RDML Richard Schobitz, visited providing words of wisdom

see JOAG continued on page 21

OBITUARIES



CAPT James Banta

Metairie, Louisiana - Dr. James E. Banta, age 95, passed away on Monday, April 10, 2023. James was born on July 1, 1927 in Tucumcari, NM.

Dr. Banta served in the U.S. Navy from 1944 to 1946 before earning his MD from Marquette University in 1950. He then went on to serve

as a Medical Officer in the United States Navy from 1950 to 1960, earning his MPH from Johns Hopkins University in 1954 during this time. He served as a Captain Medical Officer in the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) from 1960 to 1969 before retiring from the USPHS.

Dr. Banta later became the Dean of the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine at Tulane University from 1975 to 1987 and continued a long career of higher education teaching. The last position Dr. Banta held was as a Visiting Professor in the School of Public Health and Health Services at the George Washington University Medical Center in Washington, DC from 1992 to 2006.

He is survived by his loving wife of 34 years, Gladys Alva Banta.

JOAG from page 20

and snapping a few selfies minutes before delivering remarks at the JOAG Breakfast and Awards Ceremony.

JOAG Breakfast and Awards Ceremony

Over 60 JOs enjoyed the early morning breakfast on Thursday. An additional 79 JOs joined virtually to hear from senior leadership — RADM Hinton, RDML Schobitz, and CAPT David Lau, Senior JOAG Advisor, witness the passing of the gavel to LCDR Michael Wandersee, and to celebrate this year's award recipients.

Additional attendees included nine CPOs and CAPT Jen Vedder, recipient of this year's VADM Carmona Inspiration Award, who led round-table discussions with JOs from their respective categories.

Thank You JOs!

Planning SC Co-leads, who are based out of the DC-area, could not have done this without the 10 local JOs stationed near Tulsa, Oklahoma and the additional 80 JOs stationed nationwide who volunteered or led a workgroup and the support of JOAG leadership with planning and logistical efforts. These efforts created another opportunity for JOs to enrich and exhibit their exceptional leadership and officership skills. We encourage all interested officers to join the fun and volunteer with JOAG for the 2024 Symposium in Jacksonville, Florida.



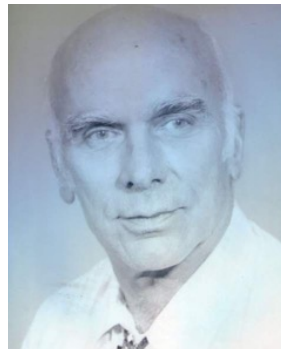
CAPT Arthur Jarvis

Tigard, Oregon - Arthur Nelson Jarvis, 97, passed away March 9, 2023. He was born in Pittsburgh, PA. Art enlisted in the Navy immediately after graduating from high school in 1943, and served in WWII in the Pacific Theater as an Electronic Technician's Mate.

Art then pursued a science and mathematics teaching degree at Edinboro State Teacher's College, where he met the love of his life Patricia.

In 1970 he accepted a position as a commissioned officer with the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS), assigned to the Radiological Health Laboratory of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Las Vegas, Nevada. He was chief of the Radiation Quality branch, served as a training officer, developed national laboratory quality assurance standards, and provided support for the Nevada Test Site.

When not working, Art loved spending time with his wife and family. He enjoyed reading, woodcarving, and all things "nautical," having built several small wood boats over the years. Art is survived by his children Robert, Karen, Richard, and James, and three grandchildren.



CAPT Will Nash – Life Member

Sylva, NC – Dr. Will Light Nash, 92, passed away peacefully at his home from natural causes on December 25, 2022, with his loving wife, Besan, by his side.

After graduating high school, Will joined the Army in 1947 and served four years. He then attended undergrad and medical school. Will then commissioned in the US Public Health Service (USPHS) and served on the Pima Indian Reservation, Sitka, AK, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

Will retired from the Public Health Service in 1975 and from family practice in 2009. Dr. Nash truly enjoyed practicing medicine, caring for the whole family, and serving the residents of western North Carolina. He was a faithful member of First Presbyterian Church of Sylva. His hobbies included spending time with this family, gardening, woodworking, camping, hiking, and enjoying the outdoors.

Will was preceded in death by his parents. He is survived by his wife, Besan Nash; sons, David Nash (Virginia); Charles Nash; Will Nash, Jr (Debbie); Paul Nyctea; and daughter, Laura Brooke Nash Rochester (Joseph).

Mental Healthcare Through the Lens of a Friend and Professional



by LT Tessa Fletcher, DNP, APRN,
PMHNP, WCC

The suicide of a friend was a watershed moment in my understanding of the importance of mental health. This event

served as a wake-up call that, while I knew how to manage mental health concerns, I required the assistance of others to keep myself from acquiring severe symptoms. Following this experience, I became more proactive in pursuing preventative measures and engaging in activities that keeps me grounded, and I urge others to do the same.

As someone who has direct experience with mental health issues, I have witnessed the necessity of preventative actions in mental health management. I developed these treatments after relocating, losing a friend to suicide, and having trouble accessing healthcare resources for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA) people.

After I had moved and settled into my new job, I quickly realized that accessing competent and sensitive healthcare services for LGBTQIA people can be quite challenging. I'd like to emphasize the significance of self-help groups and other community-based therapies. Through these interventions, LGBTQIA people can receive support and connect with others who are going through similar experiences.

To manage mental health, preventative steps must be implemented. My experiences have taught me the value of practicing mindfulness, taking walks, meditating, journaling, engaging in self-help groups, and prioritizing activities that bring purpose. These approaches have assisted me in managing my mental health and helping others do the same.

see **MENTAL HEALTHCARE** continued on page 23

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Navajo Area COA Branch Resumes and Reconnects to Make a Positive Impact

by LT Ngoc Brookfield, PharmD, BCPS and LT Catherine Bobea, PharmD, BCPS

The Navajo Area COA local branch, which had previously been an active part of COA, halted its operations due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Officers in the region who had a strong desire to participate no longer had this ability due to being deemed mission critical and deployed frequently to provide critical patient care. As years passed and the outbreak ameliorated, it was time to reignite our presence within the COA, the region, and community. In 2022, LT Catherine Bobea had the opportunity to attend the COA Symposium in Glendale, Arizona, where she was inspired by the many activities and presentations conducted by other COA branches. She returned with a renewed motivation and championed the initiative to re-establish the Navajo Area COA local branch.

The first general body meeting took place in November 2022. The first event was held in support of The Community Pantry in Gallup, NM, an organization providing food for 3,200 families and 7,000 individuals per month in Northwestern New Mexico. LT Ngoc T. Brookfield led 17 officers and one civilian over a two-week period, collecting 400 non-perishable items to serve families in need. This event was a huge success and all members were excited to participate in more events, asking “What is coming next?” As winter approached, the Navajo Area COA participated in Wreaths Across America, contributing to the placement of over 800 remembrance wreaths on the graves of our fallen heroes at five cemeteries across the Gallup Area. This event promoted visibility for the Navajo Area COA and USPHS and allowed us to build rapport with veterans, friends, and family of those who served our country. Everyone agreed that this event was a memorable way to end 2022.

Heading into 2023, one of goals of the Navajo Area COA was to continue increasing our presence within the community while embracing officership by collaborating with officers stationed at



Members of the Navajo Area COA local branch.

nearby service units. The first event of 2023 was an award writing workshop, facilitated by LCDR Nicholas Stauffer. Attendance included eight officers, from the nursing and pharmacy categories, stationed with FDA and IHS. Of note, IHS attendees included officers from three different IHS areas: Albuquerque, Navajo, and Phoenix. The Navajo Area COA was grateful for having LCDR Stauffer host this workshop to help other junior officers familiarize themselves with the award writing process.

There are more events planned for 2023, including a healthy meal cooking demonstration, a community hike to promote physical wellness, and a screening of the new PBS documentary about USPHS called Invisible Corps. The Navajo Area COA welcomes all officers to join in-person or virtually. Thanks to all officers in the Navajo area for participating in these impactful events and making the Navajo Area COA possible again.

MENTAL HEALTHCARE from page 22

However, it is critical to understand that these approaches do not replace seeking professional help. Mental health issues can be complicated and may necessitate the services of a healthcare expert. However, implementing these preventative steps can lower the likelihood of acquiring a mental health problem and assist individuals with difficulties. As a psychiatric nurse practitioner, the most significant outcomes for treating mental health are a multidisciplinary approach of self-care intervention and behavioral health practitioners delivering psychotherapy that addresses ideas, feelings, behaviors, and medication management. Furthermore,

these interventions promote health by promoting decompression, mind involvement, sleep hygiene, and improved cerebral functioning through increased neurotransmission

Finally, proactive measures, engaging activities, and support personnel can help develop mental fitness. Seeking professional help, mindfulness practices, journaling, talk therapy, walks, meditation, self-help group involvement, and participation in meaningful activities, on the other hand, are critical to assisting individuals in managing their mental health and reducing the likelihood of developing severe mental health conditions.

Remembering the Lavender Scare: Diversity and Resilience



by LT Nathan Drew, LICSW, LCSW-C, BCD, CCHP, LCDR Lee Ryder, P.T., DPT., LCDR Madalene Mandap, PharmD, BCPS, AAHIVE, and CDR Jennifer Cockrill, MS, MPH, CPH, REHS

The United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps proudly serves as home to a diverse group of public health professionals, including individuals in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ+) community. However, celebration of sexual and gender minorities within federal government and uniformed service was not always the case. On April 27, 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower signed Executive Order 10450, which banned gay and lesbian Americans from working in federal government. This order became known as The Lavender Scare. Dr. Frank Kameny, one of the 5,000 federal employees who lost their jobs, organized collective resistance against this discriminatory policy in support of LGBTQ+ rights. These efforts were supported by other queer leaders, which catalyzed the queer liberation movement that we continue today.

In commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the event, the USPHS Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity Advisory Group (SOAGDAG) joined HHS leadership on April 24, 2023, to reflect and celebrate the progress made in federal government for LGBTQ+ individuals. Assistant Secretary for Health ADM Rachel Levine, Deputy Surgeon General RADM Denise Hinton, and Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ) Director RDML Richard Schobitz shared remarks on the importance of remembering events like the Lavender Scare so that we can avoid repeating harmful history.

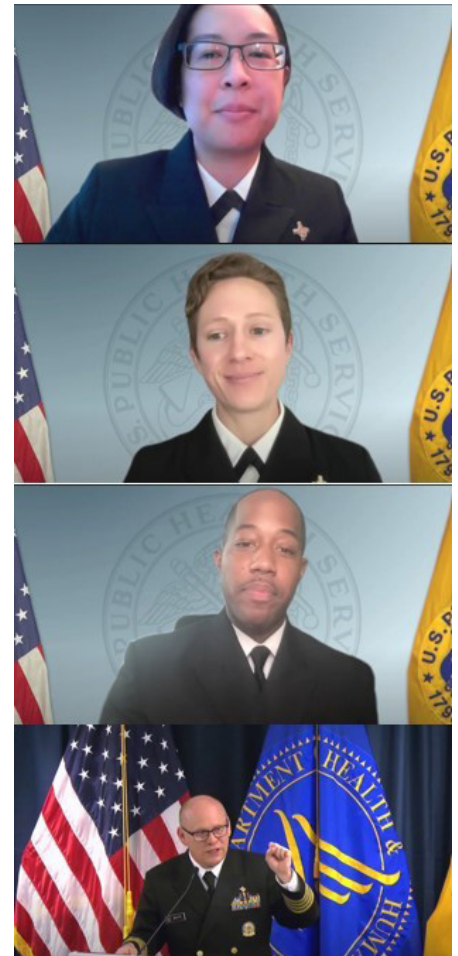
SOAGDAG Chair LCDR Madalene Mandap recalled some of the barriers encountered under “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” such as lack of benefits for same-sex couples. SOAGDAG Policy Committee Co-Chair LCDR Lee Ryder shared their remarks on commissioning during the ban on transgender individuals serving in the military and the fear they felt navigating the medical system as a transgender officer. They recognized the work still to be done, as LGBTQ+ individuals remain under attack from legislation across nearly all 50 states. SOAGDAG Communications Committee

Co-Chair LT Nathan Drew recounted his experience holding intersecting identities as a black, gay officer that place him at higher risk for marginalization and discrimination. He celebrated the representation of LGBTQ+ officers in uniformed services and shared the hope that our efforts will continue to open minds, expand viewpoints, and unify humanity.

SOAGDAG Senior Advisor CAPT Jonathan White served as the emcee of the event and concluded with a powerful message. CAPT White acknowledged the progress made, as well as the threat from current legislative attacks on LGBTQ+ youth, and ended with a call to action for USPHS officers and Americans at-large to continue to support the LGBTQ+ community.

SOAGDAG leaders spoke about the sense of belonging the group has provided throughout their USPHS careers. SOAGDAG was created in 2012 when a new LT recognized a need for an LGBTQ+ advisory group to the Surgeon General. The group’s mission would be three-fold: To support LGBTQ+ officers in navigating evolving systems and policies, to advocate for the unique needs of LGBTQ+ officers, and to educate officers in clinically competent LGBTQ+ care. A small group of officers saw this through to fruition and on June 30, 2015, VADM Vivek Murthy signed our charter. SOAGDAG has since completed educational outreaches such as a Symposium Pre-Conference on LGBTQ+ Cultural Competence and Humility, collaborated with PAGs on minority initiatives, advocated for: removing HIV as a disqualifying condition in medical accession standards, updating FDA guidance to remove restrictions on blood donations from men who have sex with men to an individual risk-based guidance, and making parental leave policies more inclusive of LGBTQ+ families.

SOAGDAG serves to: foster an environment supporting LGBTQ+ officers; create a platform for advocacy; and provide visibility and representation. SOAGDAG is honored to have the engagement of LGBTQ+ officers, the lifeline of this group. Also powerful is the overwhelming affirmation from our fellow



LCDR Mandap, LCDR Ryder, LT Drew, and CAPT White speak at the Lavender Scare Event.

servicemembers who stand with us as allies. Our impact is far greater because of you. Likewise, we would be remiss not to articulate our endless gratitude towards CCHQ and the OASH for their unconditional, positive regard for our mission. SOAGDAG would not exist as it is without those who have made room for us.

This June, we celebrate the anniversary of our charter. We also celebrate LGBTQ+ Pride Month to honor the 1969 Stonewall Uprising, when a police raid of a gay establishment resulted in a riot and protests, catalyzing the gay and transgender rights movement. We remember Marsha P. Johnson, a transgender woman of color on the frontlines who spoke against sexual, gender, and racial discrimination. We reflect on the importance of diversity, allyship, and cultivating a culture of connection to improve the wellbeing and resilience of LGBTQ+ officers and families. We invite you to join us.

SOAGDAG listserv (government/official work email only): <http://go.usa.gov/xkSv9>

Spiritual Wellness

by LCDR Katrina Redman, MT, SPOC, M.Div., Chaplain (BGCT)

Spiritual Victories

Have you ever found yourself in a crisis or a time when you couldn't see how things could ever work out, and you prayed for supernatural assistance or supernatural empowerment? You know like healing, removal of an obstacle, an opportunity, forgiveness from a loved one, etc.? There have been many times in my life when I have been at this point. Yet, when I look back on all those times, no matter how they turned out, I grew spiritually. Each and every one of those times had a purpose in making me into the person that I am today.

Victory can be defined as overcoming or winning in a competition or struggle over an opponent, or a difficult problem. Spiritual victories occur when we successfully apply our spirituality (our sense of purpose, meaning, and value) to our daily lives and challenges. For many, this is accomplished through religious practice and discipline.

Facing a crisis or a dilemma spiritually means that we devote our energy, that would normally be spent worrying over the crisis, into a spiritual discipline such as prayer, fasting, journaling, or worship instead. We trust that these actions draw us closer to our higher power and grow our faith. Even if things do not turn out the way that we ask or the crisis gets worse, when we set our hearts to focus on that which is good, we can still find peace, growth, and greater understanding.

As an officer in the Commissioned Corps, we often encounter difficult problems, we struggle with various crises both professionally and personally, and we compete against each other for promotions. Overcoming in these areas and gaining victories is a regular and sometimes a long-term challenge, but when we do, the joy is helpful in sustaining us for the next challenge. Our spiritual walk is very much the same. Our spiritual victories grow us both during the challenge and at the completion of the challenge, and this growth is what we need to push ourselves even further.

I just experienced this recently. Something that I have prayed for, and worked for, has finally been accomplished and as I am basking in the joy of this spiritual victory, I am looking back over all the time and effort that it took to get here. I see the growth in myself during this process, and I am filled with not only joy, but deep gratitude for the journey. I pray that your spiritual victories fill you with the same joy and gratitude today.

Education: Day of Ashura

Ashura is an Islamic holiday commemorating the day Noah left the ark and the day Allah saved Moses from the Egyptians. It is observed August 18-19 (sundown to sundown).

Spiritual Exercises

1. Journal Article: The Spiritual and Religious Meaning of Victory and Might by Isaiah Leibowitz and Isaac Gottlieb. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23256334>
2. Website: <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/5-ways-to-recognize-small-victories-in-your-faith-journey.html>
3. Website: <https://ministry127.com/christian-living/the-ugly-truth-about-spiritual-victory>

Questions? Comments? Contact me at khredman@hotmail.com.



MEMORIAL from page 1

during his speech, "Every year, we remember. And every year, it never gets easier."

As a non-military uniformed service, officers of the USPHS Commissioned Corps sacrifice in a different way. Our battles yield scars that most often are unseen, but nevertheless can last a lifetime. Our officers are affected by mental health challenges that may be initiated or exacerbated by deployments to the US/Mexico border, hurricane-ravaged communities, nursing homes and prisons affected by COVID-19, and countless other arenas where our wars are fought. For us, Memorial Day is an opportunity to acknowledge those from our service who have fallen during their fight, particularly those who were unable to get back up.

Memorial Day is also our time to remember the many sacrifices made by our families, friends, and those who love and support us. As with our sister services, we do not fight alone. We are supported by many who never enlisted or commissioned, but nonetheless battle and sacrifice at our side. We stand with them, as we stand with and honor those from our sister services who gave all for our country.

That is why my fellow officers - CAPT Juliette Taylor, LCDR Oyebola Oladeinde, and LT Jennie Eng - and I and were honored to play a small role in our nation's remembrance activities at Arlington National Cemetery. Our service's role in protecting and promoting the public health and safety of the nation is unique, but part of a larger family of those who have volunteered to serve and sacrifice for the betterment of our fellow citizens and country. Together we stand, and together we remember.

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service members with a valid ID, no fee is charged for additional pieces of baggage, and they are exempt from the two-piece baggage limit. Additional details regarding these benefits may be found on Southwest's website: <https://www.southwest.com/html/air/military-travel.html>." Since their website does not specifically list the branches of service covered by this policy, I have asked them to update their website, which they have agreed to do. To date, we have received no response from American, United, or Delta Airlines but will not stop advocating on your behalf. I am pleased to see that Frontier Airlines is reviewing their policy, along with Jet Blue Airways and Hawaiian Airlines. We appreciate the law offices of Shannon James for their assistance with this prominent issue.

BURN PIT REGISTRY

Last week, I received a note from a retired officer who was attempting to register for the Veterans Administration (VA) Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry due to their service in Afghanistan in 2009. During the sign-up process, the officer noted that USPHS was not in the 'drop-down' menu of Service Branches. Further, the eligibility criteria states "You must have deployed as an Active Duty Servicemember of the U.S. military or Coast Guard." I reached out to my point of contact, an Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary at the VA, who assured me that they will

"... talk with our internal experts and find the right person to put you in touch with for this important issue." The VA has always been exceptionally responsive to our inquiries, and I look forward to following up with you and this officer on this important topic.

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION (VA) VET CENTERS

During a VA Communicators meeting several weeks ago, a brief was presented on Vet Centers. Have you heard of the VA's Vet Centers? Likely not, because USPHSCC officers are not eligible for their services. We do not think that is right and have asked the VA to explain. Vet Centers are community-based counseling centers that provide a wide range of social and psychological services, including professional counseling, to eligible veterans, service members, and their families. Counseling is offered to make a successful transition from military to civilian life or after a traumatic event. Individual, group, marriage, and family counseling services are offered in addition to referral and connection to other VA or community benefits. Vet Center counselors and outreach staff, many of whom are veterans themselves, are experienced and prepared to discuss the tragedies of loss, grief, and transition after trauma. While USPHSCC officers do not fight wars, many are exposed to traumatic events during their active-duty service. Examples of qualifying traumatic

events that qualify for Vet Center care include military sexual trauma, providing mortuary services, or responding to a national emergency or major disaster. I have asked Jennifer Schiefer, Vet Center Readjustment Counseling Service Communications Officer, to explore why USPHSCC officers are excluded, and hope to have an update for you soon.

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

For nearly a decade, COA has attempted to influence Liberty University, a Yellow Ribbon School, to grant their active-duty military tuition rates to USPHS officers. They will not budge. Knowing that Liberty University has a new President, Air Force veteran Retired Major General Dondi Costin, COA has requested a meeting with him to further discuss this inequity.

HELPING A VIETNAM ERA FORMER OFFICER

As you have heard me say, hearing from members is the most enjoyable part of my day. On the Friday afternoon preceding the 4th of July holiday, I received a call from a vibrant former officer, 98-year-old LCDR Ester Grimsley, who asked COA to help her obtain a copy of her PHS1867. Ester served on active duty as a member of the USPHS Reserves from 1965 and 1966. Following her commissioning, she received orders to Vietnam where she served as the Operating Room Supervisor

*see **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** continued on page 27*

PHS Commissioned Officers Foundation

Donations Received, April 21, 2023 to June 30, 2023

Platinum (\$1,000+)

Mr. George Wildeboor

Gold (\$500)

CAPT Steve Morin
RADM Kenneth Moritsugu
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Platinum. \$1,000
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We Welcome New Members of COA, April 1 - June 30, 2023

LT Rose Adamson, CT
LCDR Hayley Ashbaugh, MD
LTJG Ben Barnard, TX
LT Christina Beach-Baumgartner, TX
LTJG Gladys Birech, TX
CAPT Alejo Borrero Hernandez, AL
LT Jamiko Cooper, GA
LT Jonathan Correia, MD
LT Andrew Dominguez, OK
LT Jordan Drelich, TX
LT Rashelle English, FL
LTJG Jeanherold Eugene, TX
LCDR Veronica Handeland, SD

LT Christian Henson, OK
Dr. Rachael Hogan, WA
LCDR Crystal Irwin-Warrem, CA
LT Brian Jarrell, WV
LT Bryce Kelley, OK
LT Donna Kim, CA
LTJG Benjamin Kleskovic, MD
LT Zachary Lange, SD
LT Tiffany Marable, AK
CAPT Moira McGuire, MD
LT Daanish Memon, MD
LT Crystal Miller, AK
LT Sneha Nair, TX

LTJG Dominic Nathan, MD
ENS Ethel Ngene, PA
LT Arlyn Ogden Vallejo, TX
LCDR Shemil Oglivie, MD
LT Marissa Pena, MD
CDR Allah-FARD Sharrieff, FL
LT Mengli Shi, CA
LT Brandon Shipley, OK
LTJG Brady Stidham, MN
LT Jonathan Tran, NY
Mr. Marvin Weber, OR
LTJG Julius Yemofio, AZ
CAPT Cathy Zehrung, OR

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR from page 26
at the Da Nang Province Hospital.
Esther needed proof of her service to
seek care for Agent Orange exposure
through the Green Valley, Arizona
Veterans Administration clinic. On a
Friday afternoon, I quickly assisted by
completing her SF-180. Per her request,
I faxed the form to the front office of the
retirement complex where she resides.
Esther hopped into her golf cart with her
Cocker Spaniel and retrieved, signed,
and returned the form. I urgently sent

the request to CCHQ late on a Friday
afternoon, outlining the pressing nature
of this unique situation. CCHQ staff
rapidly tackled the problem and provided
LCDR Grimsley with proof of her service
by the following Monday afternoon, a
24-hour workday turnaround. Bravo Zulu
to CCHQ staff for so efficiently meeting
the needs of this former officer. (This
story was shared with permission).

Please enjoy this picture of LCDR
Grimsley, taken during her time on active
duty. Until next month!



LCDR Esther Grimsley when serving as a nurse in the
USPHS Reserves

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