



The JOAG Journal

A newsletter by junior officers for junior officers

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Demonstrating Value of the Corps through Leadership

Contributed by LCDRs Heidi Hudson and Elizabeth Garza



Rear Admiral Scott F. Giberson

The JOAG's *Journeyman Speaker Series (JSS)* is a bi-monthly hour-long speaker series hosted by the organization's Professional Development Committee, which provides information on career advancement and officership to Junior Officers. *JSS* topics focus on a variety of areas that promote professional development. During the summer of 2011, RADM Scott Giberson shared his wisdom for successful professional development with junior officers in presentations focusing on officership and leadership.

RADM Scott Giberson

Being a USPHS Commissioned Officer means having responsibility and commitment to the mission, honoring and sustaining tradition and strengthening the "brand" of our service. RADM Scott Giberson, Director of the Division of Commissioned Corp Personnel and Readiness (DCCPR), recently illustrated these points in *JSS* in August 2011 on Officership. RADM Giberson emphasized

that when commissioned, we made a 'promise' through the Oath and commission, to accept the responsibility of an officer in uniform, to advance the public health of the nation and to prepare and respond as requested in times of public health need. Our commitment to the mission is a commitment to multiple, synergistic missions. Each of the Agency missions resonates within the mission of the USPHS Commissioned Corps – to protect, promote, and advance the health and safety of the nation. As we carry out the mission of the Agency in which we serve, we subsequently carry out part of the USPHS Commissioned Corps mission.

How do we honor and sustain our tradition? It is through understanding our history, our responsibility and our active response to public health needs.

As officers, we are visible, uniformed public health leaders. We are expected to be more than just a professional in our fields. We have made a commitment to have more impact on the nation. Historically, there were rigorous standards that officers had to demonstrate to be commissioned.

This expectation transcends time and applies today as our commissioning comes with the responsibility and accountability to perform at the highest level. We have accepted different responsibilities and committed to a unique tradition and service.

RADM Giberson continued to discuss that in the Corps, upholding our uniform tradition and courtesies is an important part of fulfilling the promise we made as officers.

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Junior Officer Spotlight

Contributed by LT Amy Luo

Officer: Thomas Scott Hlebasko

Category: Nurse

Education: AAS, Surgical Technology, 2003, Community College of the Air Force (CCAF); AAS, Instructor of Military Technology, 2005, CCAF; BSN, 2009, Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, TX

Home town: San Bernardino, California

Agency: IHS

Current Assignment and Duties:

I am currently assigned to the IHS facility located in Kayenta, Arizona. I serve as an Emergency Department Staff Nurse at Kayenta Health Center on the Navajo reservation.

Previous Assignment(s):

I was previously a part of the U.S. Air Force and served an Operating Room assignment, eventually being selected as one of four Surgical Tech Instructors Air Force-wide.

How did you find out about the PHS?

The former Air Force *Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist* (CRNA) encouraged me to look into PHS while I was enrolled in nursing school.

What are your goals with the PHS?

I hope to increase my leadership skills and apply disaster preparedness principles learned through my past experiences and training.

What is your most memorable PHS experience so far?

My most memorable experience happened during the snow storm of January 2010. I assisted with the distribution of food and supplies, and provided medical assessments to Native Americans in the local areas.

What advice would you give to prospective PHS applicants (or other Jr. Officers)?

Learn the policies and regulations so you can be the go to person for information; also, take your career into your own hands. Don't wait on others to do it for you.

What factors led you to transition from the Air Force to the PHS?

I felt that the progression to RN was the next logical step after 10 years as an OR Tech. I also enjoyed being in a leadership position where I could take care of the people I



LTJG Thomas Scott Hlebasko

was serving with. I missed the deadline for an Air Force Commissioning program due to a deployment, and I was coming up on 10 years in the service. Therefore, I decided to take a chance and separate to start nursing school and was fortunate to have discovered the PHS.

Why did you pick nursing as your career?

There are so many different facets of nursing, and having a desire to be a "Jack of all trades," I figured this was the perfect avenue. I enjoy helping others, teaching, and being a leader in my respective field.

What are all the ribbons you wear?

Some of the ribbons I wear include: Air Force Commendation and Achievement Medals, Army Commendation and Achievement Medals, Iraq Campaign Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Air Force Good Conduct Medal, and Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon.

If you are interested in appearing in the next Junior Officer Spotlight, please contact LT Amy Luo at amy.luo@ihs.gov.

The Service Khakis: Brown vs. Black

Contributed by LCDR Gene R. Gunn, Jr.

When I first thought about joining the Commissioned Corps of the US Public Health Service, I asked myself if I could wear a uniform every day. I remember clinging to the individualism that comes with the ability to express myself through my choice in attire. I thought “I am not sure that I want to wear the same thing every day and look exactly the same as everyone else in the uniform.” I quickly got over that and once I put on the uniform, it filled me with a sense of pride and belonging to something greater than myself. I hope that you get the same feeling when you are in your uniform. But still, it is nice to change things up now and again so I thought I would take this opportunity to discuss the brown variant of the Service Khakis.

There are six officers here in my office and we all wear black shoes with our Service Khakis. Did you know that the regulations permit us to wear brown shoes as well? It’s true, yet I have never seen any officers wear them. The specifications are the same as for the black oxfords except that when wearing the brown shoes, you must wear khaki socks.



For female officers the handbag must match the shoes as well. It must be plain black, brown or white grain leather or synthetic leather, rectangular in shape and designed with a flap. The handbag must be between 7 ½ to 12 inches in width, 5 ½ to 8 inches in height, and 2 to 3 ½ inches in depth. They may be procured from commercial sources provided that they do not have any visible ornamentation, decorative stitching, embossed designs, or manufacturer’s logos. Good examples are found in the pictures below.



Need a jacket to go with your brown shoes? Go with the short style khaki jacket shown below. It is made of water repellent poly/cotton poplin cloth and has a plain collar, two pockets located on the side fronts, slide fasteners, a button closure and shoulder epaulets for full size pin-on shiny rank insignia.



There are not a lot of options when it comes to wearing a uniform. That is by design as it increases unit cohesiveness and allows for all members to be easily identifiable. Still, in the regulations, there are some subtle ways in which you can change things up such as the brown variation of the Service Khakis mentioned above.

In addition to being the recurring author of the “Uniform Corner”, LCDR Gunn is also JOAG's voting representative on the Uniform Advisory Committee. Please send any ideas for future “Uniform Corner” columns to LCDR Gene Gunn at gene.gunn@fda.hhs.gov.

Visit JOAG at: <http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/joag/>

Admiral's Corner

Contributed by LCDR David Wright

RADM Clara H. Cobb, Assistant Surgeon General, has completed greater than 32 years of service in the U. S. Public Health Service. As Regional Health Administrator, RADM Cobb is the principal federal public health leader for Region IV, the Department's largest region in population and domestic geography. She has the overall responsibility for managing five programs: Office of Minority Health, Office on Women's Health, Office of Population Affairs, HIV/AIDS Regional Resource Network Program and the Medical Reserve Corps.



Rear Admiral Clara H. Cobb

AC: Rear Admiral Cobb, your duties entail an enormous and encompassing responsibility. What is it like managing Region IV and which initiatives are materializing that Corps officers should be aware of?

Rear Admiral Cobb: Leading this region is daunting and challenging, yet exciting with myriad opportunities. We are the region that is most impacted by health disparities; most racial and ethnic diversity; highest illiteracy rate and most poverty; clearly, we are not deficient in opportunities to make a difference in the lives of these constituents. For so many years, Region IV has been disproportionately affected by natural disasters, so much of my time and energy was spent in preparedness, response, and recovery for all hazards events. During the 2004/2005 hurricane disasters, I had the opportunity to meet so many commissioned officers; largest deployments in the history of the Corps.

I have long standing relationships with officers from across the country. In the last couple of years, we have seemingly gotten a reprieve and I have been able to move full speed ahead on some of the most innovative and exciting public health initiatives. We have embraced the Affordable Care Act and its prevention provisions with much attention on the National Prevention Strategy, an initiative that Corps officers should be aware of and engaged in promoting in their various agencies and communities; moving the focus on sickness and disease to wellness and prevention with the expected outcome of increasing the number of Americans who are healthy at every stage of life.

AC: The Corps latest iteration seems to be its most transformative. Do you have insight for officers who are sorting through these changes?

Rear Admiral Cobb: We are ever evolving and ever changing. We suffered some unanticipated bumps in the road when the unprecedented law was passed, *The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act*; when we found ourselves in a "pause." Through the work and efforts of many, the "pause" was lifted and we were able bring those individuals on board who found themselves in limbo.

Other challenges have since occurred with the massive influx of applications of interested and promising emerging public health leaders. With the backlog, there is a plan for processing those applications so that we can resume our recruitment efforts to bring new officers on board to fill crucial positions.

On a very positive front, we were able to be included in one of the greatest benefits to officers and their families in the history of the Corps and that is to be able to participate in the Post 911 GI Bill Transferability. As officers are sorting through some of the uncertainties we face, I would encourage them to continue to make the important contributions to their agencies and their work but find time to commune with other officers through the various organizations that support commissioned officers and network, network, and network and volunteer to participate on Corps committees, while always staying informed.

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Fitness Corner

Contributed by the Inter-Services Collaboration Committee



LT McLellan with family

What do you do to stay fit?

Staying fit is a personal lifestyle choice. Currently, I am running 4-5 times a week, between 30-50 miles a week. Luckily, living in Southern California enables me the ability to train year round. I enjoy running on the beach and trail running. When not running, I have found surfing to be a great "compromise." In addition to cardio,

I will spend at least 2-3 days a week working on my core muscles through abdominal and back strengthening exercises.

Because distance running is done easier with a "buddy," I am running with the San Diego Track Club. Working out with this club has greatly increased my fitness. It is nice to work out with others that keep you motivated to run and run well.

What are your fitness accomplishments?

I was born with a right brachial plexus injury, which causes limited active range of motion in my right shoulder. I have learned to adapt and overcome in many aspects in of my life, but it has not always been easy. I have tried the hardest not to be defined by my disability, nor let it limit my life style in any way. I am convinced that my athletic and academic accomplishments are proof that regardless of the cards you have

been dealt in life, you can still succeed!

While in high school, I ran for Lake Braddock Secondary School in Northern Virginia. During this time, I was lucky enough to be coached by a former marathon runner. With his help and my running ability, I was invited to a 13 Country Track Meet at the Walt Disney World Sports Complex in Orlando, Florida. During this race, I won both the 800M race and 1500M race. Because of my times in these races, I qualified for the 2002 Track and Field Paralympic World Championships in Lille, France.

From 2003-2007, I competed year round in Cross Country, Indoor Track, and Outdoor Track for the NCAA Division I East Carolina University Pirates. After missing the Paralympic World Championships in 2004, my next goal was to re-qualify for the 2006 Track and Field Paralympic World Championships in Assen, Holland. However, approximately 15 months prior to the Games I fractured my left tibia and was unable to train on the track. Through hard work, pool training, and great guidance from my U.S. and Collegiate coaches, I was able to qualify for the 2006 Paralympic World Championships. This time around, I placed 12th in the 800M race and 13th in the 1500M race. Although, I was not impressed with my place in the races, I was honored to represent the United States in International competition.

The U.S. Paralympic Team mirrors the U.S. Olympic Team with the only difference being that our athletes are, and I use this term very loosely, "disabled." Whether we have a leg amputation or arm issue, are blind or are wheelchair-bound, we compete against the best "disabled" athletes from around the world. The U.S. Paralympic Team is a proud supporter of the Wounded Warrior program, and in recent years, we have had a surge of injured Veterans join our team.

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Recruitment & Retention Matters: The Post-9/11 GI Bill

Contributed by LCDR Selena Ready and LT Chinyelum "Chi-Chi" Umejei,
on behalf of the Recruitment and Retention Committee

For recruitment purposes, the Post-9/11 GI Bill is a *free* benefit to the USPHS and is extended to all officers who meet eligibility requirements in the Commissioned Corps. Recently, this benefit was enhanced when the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2010 was passed to allow *transferability* to PHS officer family members. Originally, PHS officers were included in the new GI Bill of 2008. However, they were not included in the transferability provision, which would permit them to transfer their unused educational benefits to immediate family members. Many letters from PHS officers helped raise awareness of the issue on Capitol Hill, and the support of the Commissioned Officers' Association Legislation and Benefits Committee, Senator Daniel Akaka of ---Hawaii, and Representative Carol Shea-Porter of New Hampshire provided the catalyst necessary for legislative change.

Similar to the Montgomery GI Bill, the Post-9/11 GI Bill provides financial support for training programs. Such training programs include graduate and undergraduate degrees, vocational/technical training, on-the-job training, correspondence training, licensing and national testing programs, entrepreneurship training, and tutorial assistance.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill pays the full tuition and fees of the approved training program and the money is transferred *directly to the institution* for all public school in-state students. (This process is different from the Montgomery GI Bill, which pays the student directly.) For those attending private or out-of-state schools, tuition and fees are capped at \$17,500 per academic year. However, there are some states that qualify for a higher capped amount. For the PHS officers attending a private school or a public school as an out-of-state student, the "Yellow Ribbon Program" may help to reimburse the difference. (More information regarding the Yellow Ribbon Program can be found via an online search or by visiting the following website: http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/post_911_gibill/yellow_ribbon_program.html)

The Post-9/11 GI Bill also provides a Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) based on the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) for an E-5 with dependents at the location of the school. If the officer is solely enrolled in distance learning (i.e. working full-time concurrently while enrolled), the MHA is equal to half the national average BAH for an E-5 with dependents. The BAH rate is fixed for those attending foreign schools (schools without a main campus in the U.S.).

In addition, the Post-9/11 GI bill pays an annual "books and supplies" stipend of up to \$1,000, which is adjusted based on enrollment.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits may be transferred to family members who are enrolled in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System (DEERS) and who are eligible for benefits at the

time of transfer. Eligible family members include the officer's spouse, one or more of their children (under the age of 26), or any combination of spouse and child. At any time, the officer retains the right to revoke or modify the transfer.

Approved officers can transfer up to the total months of unused Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, or the entire 36 months if the officer has used none. Transfer eligibility requirements of active duty PHS officers include a specific time in service and a commitment to serve 4 additional years from the date of election. Different service commitments apply for officers eligible for retirement, depending on the retirement date.

For retention purposes, it is important for officers enrolled in the Montgomery GI Bill to note the advantages of transferring their benefits to the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Such advantages include: 1) officers who have used their entire Montgomery GI Bill benefit are also eligible for 12 months of benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill 2) officers can transfer to the Montgomery GI Bill at any time despite not depleting all months of benefits 3) officers may be refunded their initial \$1200.00 contribution at separation from active duty and exhaustion of their Post-9/11 Bill benefit and 4) officers can transfer their remaining Post-9/11 benefits to eligible family members. It may be important to note, especially for officers who are within 4 years of their 20 year retirement date, a service commitment applies (from the date of election.) However, for officers who have served 20 years or longer there is no additional service commitment.

For more information regarding the Post-9/11 GI Bill, visit the following websites:

http://dcp.psc.gov/PDF_docs/Transfer%20Response%208-8.pdf
https://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/post_911_gibill/index.html

Further information is detailed in the following PHS Post-9/11 Presentations:

<http://www.coausphs.org/documents/2011.11.02PHSPost911slidespptRevised82011TransferabilityDeptofVA.pdf>

Here in the quarterly segment of Recruitment and Retention Matters we discuss issues to help facilitate recruiting by informing junior officers about new or key information to disseminate recruitment materials accurately and effectively. We also would like to use this segment on occasion to highlight recruitment efforts by fellow junior officers, so if you would like to share your career fair experience with other officers please send it to the address below. If you have any questions, comments, or topics you would like us to cover please contact the JOAG Recruitment and Retention Publications subcommittee at scott.steffen@fda.hhs.gov or cumejei@yahoo.com.

PHS RDF 4 joins Remote Area Medical in Pine Ridge, SD

Contributed by LCDRs Joyce Oberly and Cara Nichols



PHS officers unload medical equipment from RAM truck

In August 2011, forty-five Public Health Service (PHS) officers from Rapid Deployment Force #4 (RDF#4) joined forces with the volunteer based organization, Remote Area Medical (RAM) to stage "Operation Foothold" at Pine Ridge, South Dakota. The service based mission was coordinated to create relationships with the Oglala Sioux Tribe and to assist in developing the local health infrastructure. Objectives of our mission included:

- Increase operational readiness by improving disaster response preparation
- Foster a cross-cultural experience
- Provide a surge in critical healthcare services
- Identify problems and work with community to find local solutions to strengthen health infrastructure

To promote the clinic in the community, PHS Officers worked closely with tribal and community news outlets such as KILI Radio Station and Lakota Country Times. To better understand our mission and community, Mr. Wayne Weston met with us to discuss the

tribal history, belief systems, Oglala spirituality and decision making. Many other tribal members spent time with us at our camp and shared their knowledge and history making for a shared cultural experience.

Working at Pine Ridge was a first for many RDF #4 members. Nevertheless, PHS Officers were ready and able to meet all expectations during the four day clinic, held from August 25th to August 28th. The clinic was held at the SuAnne Big Crow Boys and Girls Club, a facility that stands as a tribute to a young lady who embodied the ideals of cooperation and community.

During the clinic our main objective was to staff and provide free services in dental, vision, and medical, including women's health, sports and youth physical exams and blood glucose screenings. In Pine Ridge where diabetes and heart disease affect a higher percentage of the population than the US average, over approximately 800 patients received nearly 1200 services, with children making up over 40% of that total. With the highest demand, the Optometry clinic served approximately 420 patients and made an equal number of glasses with same day service. PHS Officers and RAM volunteers also provided over 400 dental services and approximately 350 medical services.

At the conclusion of the four day clinic, we felt we made a positive impact on the Pine Ridge community and came away with a greater understanding of health needs within our country and a true appreciation for each other's talents, time and service. The mission could not have been completed without significant collaboration and effort from the Oglala Sioux Tribe, the Indian Health Service, the Remote Area Medical, the SuAnne Big Crow Boys & Girls Club and the Public Health Service.

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Junior Officers Stepping Up to Address the Pause

Contributed by LCDR Scott Steffen

Present times bring uncertainty to many individuals and the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) alike. We all have experienced some level of hardship, but we all manage to persevere. The Commissioned Corps is no different. With the passing of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act the USPHS was granted the authority to increase its number of officers. However, with budgeting concerns looming, the Department of Health and Human Services paused the calls-to-duty of new officers. An unintentional consequence of this pause was a huge burden of several hundred pre-board applications that needed to be processed by the Office of Commissioned Corps Operations (OCCO), significantly prolonging the time for officers to get boarded. Hence, when the pause was lifted on 02/02/2011, it was clear that this would be a daunting task. The OCCO staff requested the help of officers and the response was impressive. Thirty-seven Senior and Junior officers took it upon themselves to help out their fellow and “future” fellow officers, exemplifying how the Corps will always be a strong institution and great example of service.

The service of these officers was exemplified by their willingness to volunteer their time to support OCCO for six months after the lifting of the “pause.” Officers from all categories were instrumental in alleviating a backlog of over 400 pre-board application packages. They were critical in the processing of these applications, which involved duties such reviewing PHS 50 applications, verification of degree accreditation, security review, medical review, teleconferences with applicants, and other administrative tasks. As a result, these officers became very accustomed to the application process and donated over 1500 volunteer hours to alleviate the backlog, while continuing to process all new incoming applications. In total, over 900 applications were processed in some capacity during this six-month timeframe. The commitment of these volunteers not only affected present officers, but future officers too. I can also say firsthand that future officers appreciate the efforts of these volunteers as noted in the Officer Basic Course (OBC) Class 46’s motto: “After the pause, ready for the cause OBC 46!” To me, this is what JOAG is all about,

promoting public health by supporting your fellow officers.

I would like to personally recognize the following junior officers* that volunteered a significant portion of their time to alleviate the backlog produced by the “pause:”

LCDR Julia Bryan
 LCDR Carrie Ceresa
 LCDR Nam Chun
 LCDR Candice Clarke
 LCDR Minglei Cui
 LCDR Theodore Garnett
 LCDR Damion Killsback
 LCDR Prabath Malluwa-Wadu
 LCDR Janice Maniwang
 LCDR Duong Nhu
 LCDR Abiola Olagundoye-Alawode
 LCDR Robert Pié
 LCDR Teresa Ramson
 LCDR Kun Shen
 LCDR Diana Solana-Sodeinde
 LCDR Scott Steffen
 LCDR Su-Lin Sun
 LCDR Van Tran
 LCDR Juliette Touré
 LCDR Melissa Walker
 LCDR Demetres Williams
 LT Emily Baker
 LT Jessica Cole
 LT John Diehl
 LT James Dvorsky
 LT Chandra Jolley
 LT Lawrence Momodu
 LT Beth Osterink
 LT Evan Spencer
 LT Pattama Ulrich

I am proud to be part of this group of officers and congratulate them on a job well done!

*Several other senior officers were also instrumental in this endeavor. Hence, I would also like to acknowledge the following: CAPT Patricia Garvey, CDR Elaine Cunningham, CDR Marci Kiestler, CDR Koung Lee, CDR Christine Oliver, CDR Robert Windom, and CDR Hawyee Yan.

'Fall' in Love with Community Service

Contributed by LCDR Jennifer Graf, LT Hussey, LCDR Charlene Majersky, LCDR Gerald Brozyna, LCDR Billy Collins, LCDR Andrea McCollum, and LCDR Kari Harris on behalf of the JOAG Inter-Services Committee, Community Service Workgroup



Left to Right: LT Ashleigh Hussey, LCDR Jennifer Graf, LCDR Wheeler, LCDR Carolyn Volpe ready to attack vines at the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens. Photo: Courtesy of LT Hussey.

The Community Service Subcommittee of the Inter-Services Collaborations Committee is charged with organizing PHS participation in community service projects organized by or for the benefit of the Uniformed Services. PHS officer participation is a great way to benefit local communities and Uniformed Service members. Working alongside volunteers from other services also gives us the opportunity to familiarize those members with our mission and to positively represent the PHS Commissioned Corps. Highlighted below are some of the projects in which PHS officers participated this Fall.

On September 10th, an enthusiastic group of 30 PHS junior officers, friends, and family members joined volunteers from branches of the Armed Forces to beautify the Historic Congressional Cemetery in southeast Washington, DC, an event sponsored by the U.S. Navy. After a straight week of unrelenting rain, we were fortunate to have sunny skies, a beautiful day on which to honor the heroes and victims of 9/11 as part of a "National Day of Service and Remem-

brance". A tone of reverence and camaraderie was set for the day by an opening ceremony reminding us of the strong sense of patriotism felt immediately post-9/11 and inspiring a sense of responsibility to support our fellow Americans.

The Historic Congressional Cemetery was founded in 1807 on the east side of the city. It spans more than 35 acres and is the burial site for over 55,000 people, including vice presidents, members of Congress, military personnel, and private citizens.

There were a multitude of duties from which to choose: weeding, pruning trees, tackling vines, "seeking and destroying" yucca plants, removing old fencing, digging to uncover historic swales, and resetting headstones. No one hesitated to dig in and get their hands dirty. Many of our officers commented about how much they enjoyed their interaction with members of the Armed Services. Some officers received questions from members of other services about the PHS, giving them the opportunity to educate about our mission and organization.

Overall, this was a nice opportunity to pay tribute to those impacted by 9/11 and to interact with our sister services. LCDR Bruce Quisenberry put it best when he said he, "observed patriotism, citizenship, camaraderie, hard work, accomplishment, a sense of resolve and hope for the future." It was inspiring to see members of all services and civilians working together in solemn remembrance of those that perished 10 years ago. The impact of each volunteer was clear and much appreciated by the cemetery staff. Later in the Fall, on October 22, a group of 5 PHS officers and friends woke up early on a chilly Saturday to help the National Park Service winterize the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens as part of "Make a Difference Day", a U.S. Navy-sponsored event.

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‘Fall’ in Love with Community Service

Contributed by LCDR Jennifer Graf, LT Hussey, LCDR Charlene Majersky, LCDR Gerald Brozyna, LCDR Billy Collins, LCDR Andrea McCollum, and LCDR Kari Harris on behalf of the JOAG Inter-Services Committee, Community Service Workgroup

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Some volunteers transferred plants into the green houses or pruned overgrown bushes. Our group spent the morning battling vines that had overtaken the fences. We all put in a lot of hard work and helped to significantly transform the area.

From October 24, 2011 through November 28, 2011, officers in the Atlanta, GA area participated in the first Atlanta Marine Toys for Tots Program, organized by the United States Marine Corps Reserves (USMC-R). The Toys for Tots Program is an annual event to collect new, unwrapped toys that will be distributed to needy children.

The primary goal of the Toys for Tots Program is “to deliver ... a message of hope to youngsters in need that will motivate them to grow into responsible, productive, patriotic citizens and community leaders”

(<http://www.toysfortots.org>).

This year, 10 officers from 4 campuses at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), collected a total of 234 toys. These USPHS volunteers truly modeled the USPHS core values of leadership and service.

“National Family Volunteer Day” was sponsored by the U.S. Navy on November 12, 2011. PHS officers and their family members spent the morning preserving the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Washington, DC, and preparing for the holidays. Volunteers worked in an indoor and outdoor environment centered on the vast and beautiful grounds and participated in a variety of tasks: assembling care packages for residents; making Christmas cards and holiday banners and decorating halls; engaging children in a crafts project; cleaning wheelchairs; landscaping; and setting up for the drama performance. In between activities, many officers visited with the residents who shared wonderful stories about their time in service.

On December 10th, several sites participated in “Wreaths Across America”, a nonprofit organization, founded by Morill Worcester, in 1992, with a mission to Remember, Honor, and Teach. This nationwide event is dedicated to honoring veterans by placing wreaths on the graves of our fallen heroes each December.

At Fort Bragg, NC (the largest Army base in the United States), the North Carolina Civil Air Patrol sponsored the 4th Annual Wreath Ceremony. Air Patrol cadets were on hand to provide colors, as the commander of the air wing provided warm words of encouragement and reflection. Local veterans helped with posting courtesy ensigns, as family and friends of fallen soldiers were present to pay their respects. Service members from each branch of service participated in placing the signature wreath on display. Over 500 hundred wreaths were sponsored. Only one PHS officer participated this year at Fort Bragg, so we are really hoping for more volunteers to participate next year.

Another site for “Wreaths Across America” was the South view Cemetery in Atlanta, Georgia, where volunteers placed wreaths on graves, distributed wreaths to families, and participated in the ceremony honoring individual military services.

In Arlington, VA, four PHS officers plus their families served alongside 10,000 volunteers including members of our sister services, civilians, and veterans to help lay 85,000 wreaths on the graves at Arlington National Cemetery. The officers attended the opening ceremony that showcased the events of the day and participated in laying wreaths on President John F Kennedy’s grave; the USS Marine Mast Memorial; and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers.

LCDR Billy Collins shared that, “The experience was very humbling as family members and veterans paid their respects to those men and women that made the ultimate sacrifice to defend and protect the freedoms of United States of America”.

The sister services and family members of deceased veterans were greatly appreciative of PHS involvement at these sites. This was truly an enlightening experience.

Please consider volunteering for the next project in your area, or joining the Community Service Subcommittee, if you are interested in leading a project. As LCDR Majersky said, “The gift of giving is truly a remarkable and priceless experience! And, to give from one’s heart is an amazing feeling beyond words!”

The Admiral's Corner (Continued from Page 4)

AC: You've served the USPHS with an extensive and varied career. For those who aspire to serve at your level, would you like to share the secret to your longevity with our fellow Corps officers?

Rear Admiral Cobb: I started my career as a LTJG in the National Health Service Corps as a Family Nurse Practitioner in a small southern rural community. When I joined the USPHS Commissioned Corps, it was simply a job for me; career at the time was not something I understood or could appreciate. As I continued to journey through what has now become a career, I gain mentors and colleagues who were interested in my well being and encouraged me along the way. I seized every opportunity that was afforded me. I am naturally a "people" person, so engaging with others come with ease and it has benefitted me over the years to develop and maintain professional and in many cases, personal relationships with other officers and leaders in the Corps. I wholeheartedly believe in the Individual Development Plan. To ensure successful career progression, I would suggest one, employ three simple steps: plan, act and network (PAN). Set written goals to include short-term, mid-term and long-term to cover a span of 5-15 years. Put those goals into action; allowing for adjustments as needed. It is critical to network, network and network within and without your organization. Seize every opportunity for training and advancement. Stretch yourself and accept challenges when you are "unsure" if you are ready. Identify a mentor and serve as a mentor. At the end of the day, know that balance is paramount to your success. Along the career continuum, remember to keep intact your mental, physical and spiritual well being.

AC: How can junior officers uniquely contribute to the USPHS?

Rear Admiral Cobb: I have met so many Junior Officers over the course of many years. I have found Junior Officers to be so bright, eager, and academically

prepared. I would encourage officers to be the best officer they can be.

Take the mission seriously. Always look your best and carry yourself as a professional and as an officer is expected. Select a mentor. Listen to your mentor. I keep a few all of the time. You never know it all and can always learn. You can benefit from the wisdom and experiences of others. If you don't know, ask. Don't get caught up in the crab barrel mentality; don't pull one another down. Learn to celebrate the accomplishments of your fellow officers. Reach out to help someone, to bring them along. Always want the best for others. Avoid those who exude negativism. Be committed and take seriously the responsibility of being an exemplary officer and a leader.

AC: Countless PHS officers continually identify you as a positive influence and an outstanding leader in the Corps. Who are your influences and sources of inspiration?

Rear Admiral Cobb: My influences are many but I must first identify my parents, my mother and father as well as my family as a whole who are extremely supportive and are my cheerleaders. Additionally, solid long time friends since grade school that continue to be embedded in my life and who continue to support me. Each stage of my life, high school, college, grad school and throughout my PHS career, I've gravitated toward positive people who are also positive influences. Believe it or not, I maintain multiple mentors and I gain so much from mentoring. My mentees are inspiring as well and motivate me to do even more. I would be remised if I failed to really say where it all comes from and that is my spiritual connection and commitment. Learning early in my life to be of service and evolve into a servant leader keeps me going.

AC: Rear Admiral Cobb, thank you for sharing your time and imparting your wisdom to our Corps officers.

Visit JOAG at: <http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/joag/>

Another Successful Race for the USPHS Army Ten Miler Team

Contributed by LTJG Kazuhiro Okumura



The 2011 USPHS Army Ten Miler Team

For the second straight year, 56 officers lead by CAPT Shelley Hoogstraten-Miller and LCDR Evan Shukan raced in the Army Ten Miler (ATM) on October 9th, 2011. We joined 30,000 runners in the 15th year of this event.

In addition to the race, we had other activities going on throughout the weekend. Many officers in the area staffed a PHS recruiting booth at the Army Ten Miler Race Expo. We distributed PHS recruiting materials and answered questions from curious and potential applicants.

There were numerous officers who ran with the PHS flag during the entire race. These pairs of brave souls included LTJG Cody Thornton and LTJG Kazu Okumura, LCDR Shukan and CAPT Jason Woo, and former JOAG voting member LCDR Robin Toblin and CAPT Hoogstraten-Miller. It was an inspiring weekend of events, with runners reconnect from last year and meeting new friends at the Expo and at the race. Our teams did very well, finishing fifth in two categories! What's more, the "Public Health Service Masters," our men's masters team, received a 3rd place trophy which will soon find its place on display in the Office of the Surgeon General. Many of the runners overcame obstacles to run this race

including JOAG member LCDR Janae Price. She gave birth to a baby girl eight months before the race and says, "Although I've always been a runner, I have found it especially difficult to keep up a regular running routine with all of my new responsibilities. I've had to become creative and flexible regarding my running schedule and have had a lot of family support along the way. I thought the ATM event was a great venue to not only promote health and physical fitness across the Corps, but to serve as a social event for PHS members and their families to meet and mingle."

We could not do the race without the help of our cheerers. A lot of runners would agree that hearing the cheers from the crowd can give us the motivation to power through the race. The PHS cheering squad led by LT Erica Wilson and CAPT Sean Altekruze, who showed up at dawn with cowbells, nine foot PHS flags, noisemakers, and a full on clear-a-crowded-movie-theater bullhorn were THE most enthusiastic fans out on the course. It was such an amazing run for all of us as we charged from one PHS cheering group to another.

I encourage all of our junior officers to represent the Commissioned Corps and at the same time achieve your fitness goals. Signing up for a race is definitely a great way to do it. For me, paying for a race and having friends to run with was a great motivator. If you are not a runner, I would suggest starting with a shorter race such as a 5K and slowly work your way up. I did not consider myself a runner until I ran this race last year and now I have been bitten by the running bug. I, along with other officers, will be running a half marathon in the Spring of 2012.

Value of the Corps (Continued from Page 1)

Veterans and current active duty members in the other services are deservedly proud of their uniform heritage. Thus, it is a defined responsibility for us to uphold the same pride and respect, customs and courtesies as one of the seven uniformed services of the United States.

As Commissioned Corps Officers, what is our “brand” of service? RADM Giberson believes that our brand exemplifies a unique combination of the public health mission, uniform camaraderie, tradition and service to those in need. We sustain and strengthen this brand through commitment to our Agency missions, utilization of our collective expertise, and upholding rich uniform tradition.

RADM Giberson indicated that an essential element to demonstrating our value as a Corps is to build successful professional partnerships. He outlined the following skill sets to build successful professional partnerships.

Officership – Skill Sets for Building Successful Professional Partnerships:

- Attitude
- Knowledge
- Performance
- Integrity
- Behavior
 - Diplomacy
 - Collaboration
 - Communication
 - Adaptability

RADM Giberson said, while there are many variables involved in building successful partnerships, the key to having *sustainable* successful partnerships is a heavy dose of sincerity and integrity.

*The presentations covered in this article may be found on the **JOAG Resource Page**, under *Journeyman Speaker Series*. Details and call-in information on *JOAG Journeyman Speaker Series* for future calls will be sent out through the *JOAG Listserv*.*

Fitness Corner (Continued from Page 5)

Being selected to compete for the United States of America was a great accomplishment, and it is one that I will never forget.

What are your fitness goals for the future?

My immediate fitness goals are to continue entering and being a top 10 finisher in local 5Ks, 10Ks and half marathons. While I do not currently put the pressure and stress on myself to win like I used to, getting back into “race” shape is something I am considering for the 2012 Paralympic Games in London.

If it turns out that I am unable to train for London, my next goal will be to compete in the “Tough Mudder” and “Warrior Dash” races. In these events, there is a combination of both running and physical activities. Ultimately, I would like to continue to stay fit and represent the USPHS the best way that I know how.

Tips for Cold Weather Running

With the winter season upon us again across most of the United States, don’t let the falling temperatures and dwindling daylight hours keep you inside. Get outside for some physical activity!

Dress in layers: For your inner layer, wear a thin layer of clothing. For your outer layer, wear a breathable layer, and if it is really cold, a polar fleece middle layer is recommended.

Protect your hands and feet: Mittens are a great choice for your hands, and polar fleece or wool socks are a great choice for your feet.

Check the weather forecast: If the temperature dips below zero or the wind chill is minus 20, stay inside and run on the tread mill.

Make sure your fingers, toes, ears, and nose are protected. Always wear a hat. Lastly, remember that you are at greater risk for a pulled muscle when running in the cold. Don’t forget to stretch and warm up before you start your run.

Have Fun!

For more information, visit: About Running & Jogging. (2011). Retrieved November 16, 2011, from <http://running.about.com/od/safetyweather/tp/coldweathersafety.htm>

Visit JOAG at: <http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/joag/>

JOAG Congratulates all Junior Officers on their recent/upcoming promotions!

(Promotion Cycles Jan-Mar 2012)

<i>To Commander (O-5)</i>	
<u>Dental</u>	
Mahyar Mofidi	03/01/2012
<u>Dietician</u>	
Jacqueline Chan Sram	01/01/2012
<u>Engineer</u>	
Gregory Tyron Ault	01/01/2012
David Arthur Farley	01/01/2012
<u>Environmental Health</u>	
Jennifer A. Freed	01/01/2012
Sarah E. Unthank	01/01/2012
<u>Health Services</u>	
Ivonne Arena	01/01/2012
*Trista Kim Eggers	01/01/2012
Lynda L Lee-Bishop	01/01/2012
Wendy Denise Pettit	02/01/2012
<u>Medical</u>	
Jeffrey William Sherman	01/01/2012
<u>Nurse</u>	
Wayne Keith Grant	01/01/2012
Dana Rene Hayworth	03/01/2012
Ann Marie Matlock	02/01/2012
Brian Arthur Molloy	03/01/2012
Quentin E. Moore	01/01/2012
Eliezer Requinton Pangan	01/01/2012
Amy Ann Parker	01/01/2012
Daniel Patrick Stlaurent	01/01/2012
Arthur S. Taich	01/01/2012
<u>Pharmacist</u>	
Kristen Louise Maves	01/01/2012
Maryjo Zunic	01/01/2012
*= <i>EPP</i>	

<i>To Commander (O-5)</i>	
<u>Scientist</u>	
Jacqueline Chan Sram	01/01/2012
<i>To Lieutenant Commander (O-4)</i>	
<u>Dental</u>	
Mahyar Mofidi	03/01/2012
<u>Engineer</u>	
Jason Charles Crownholm	01/01/2012
Brandon Anthony Groh	01/01/2012
Michel David Janda	01/01/2012
Westen Roy Knudsen	01/01/2012
<u>Environmental Health</u>	
Leslie A. Cartmill	01/01/2012
Isabel Yu Espinosa	01/01/2012
Colleen Lynn Geib	01/01/2012
Danielle S. Mills	01/01/2012
Charity M. Webb	01/01/2012
Kyle Kenneth Wright	01/01/2012
<u>Health Services</u>	
Kari Anne Belin	01/01/2012
Billy St. John Collins	01/01/2012
Amy D. Eden	01/01/2012
Elizabeth Pilar Garza	01/01/2012
Kelly Manchi Leong	01/01/2012
Melinda L Lyles	01/01/2012
Matthew J. Morrison	01/01/2012
Skip Alan Payne	01/01/2012
Erica Jo Sison	01/01/2012
Chen-Tin Tsai	01/01/2012
Leatrice Mae Tsosie	01/01/2012
Maudella Renee Whitebead	01/01/2012
Sara Danielle Woody	01/01/2012

To Lieutenant Commander (O-4)**Nurse**

Ho S. Chun	01/01/2012
Angela Bernadette Fallon	01/01/2012
Mark L. Kimmerling	01/01/2012
Richard Lee Mittelstedt	01/01/2012
Manuel S Pablo Jr.	01/01/2012
Valisha Diane Price	01/01/2012
Michie E Stradford	01/01/2012
Jennifer L. Tomlinson	01/01/2012
Dianna Devol Wardlow-Dotter	01/01/2012
Edward W. Wroblewski III	01/01/2012

Pharmacist

Rebecca Emiko Geiger	01/01/2012
Elizabeth Anh Hoang	01/01/2012
Joshua Paul Wireman	01/01/2012

Scientist

Laura Bettencourt Gieraltowski	01/01/2012
Ashleigh Lamira May	01/01/2012

JOAG's mission is to provide advice and consultation to the Surgeon General, Chief Professional Officers, Professional Advisory Committees, & other Commissioned Corps groups on issues relating to professional practice and personnel activities

Where are all the junior officers in my area?

Are you the only Commissioned Corps officer at your job? Or maybe you're surrounded by senior officers? Just joined the Corps and want to network/socialize with your peers? Need a place to discuss Corps issues with fellow officers?

The JOAG Membership Committee's Meet and Greet Program has just the answer for you!

What is a Meet and Greet?

A Meet and Greet (M&G) is a medium through which junior officers in a city/region can be introduced to JOAG, learn about JOAG service opportunities, network, discuss issues relating to the Commissioned Corps, and be provided with professional support and advice by fellow junior officers.

What to expect at a Meet and Greet

A M&G lasts about one hour with the first half devoted to learning about JOAG and other relevant Corps topics such as COERs, deployments, promotion, etc. The second half is for networking with your fellow officers and simply to getting to know each other. In some regions, refreshments are provided, but you can feel free to bring your own food.

How to find out if a Meet and Greet is in your region

Join the JOAG listserv and you will receive emails about upcoming M&Gs and information about other JOAG related events. Also, each Regional Lead will send out emails to all junior officers in their region informing them about upcoming M&Gs starting one month in advance of the event. You can also reach out to your Regional Lead to learn more about upcoming M&G events and how you can get involved.

To find out who your Regional Lead is or to start a M&G in your area:

For more information, please contact the Meet and Greet Subcommittee Co-Leads, LT Tina Walther (301-796-5086 or tina.walther@fda.hhs.gov), LTJG Kazu Okumura (202-720-4923 or kazuhiro.okumura@fsis.usda.gov) or the Membership Committee Co-Chair, LCDR Kit Burnham (kburnham@bop.gov).

Visit JOAG at: <http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/joag/>

JOAG Welcomes 134 Newly Commissioned Officers!

(Apr. – Aug. 2011)

Contributed by the JOAG Welcoming Committee

BOP

LCDR Michael Bronislowski
 LCDR Noel Trusal
 LT Byungyong Choi
 LT Katrina Goan
 LT Jeremie Gregory
 LT Kristi Henaghan
 LT Carl Hill
 LT Amanda Huston
 LT Michaela Montecalvo
 LT Gabriela Ramirez-Leon
 LT Kristina Serby
 LT Bridget Baker
 LT Alisha Holmes
 LTJG Willis Steortz
 ENS Adedoyin Adepoju
 ENS Sheena Bailey
 ENS Odun Balogun
 ENS Dustin Bowden
 ENS Carin Busch
 ENS Chawntel Cartee
 ENS Christopher Davis
 ENS Kathryn Faford
 ENS Alyssa Givens
 ENS Crystal Harris
 ENS Richard Kreutz
 ENS Sandra Mathoslah
 ENS Rachael Mead
 ENS Carolyn Noyes
 ENS Letisha Secret
 ENS Anthony Shelton
 ENS Jason Stevens
 ENS Katie Watson
 ENS Caitlin Weskamp
 ENS Erica Williams
 ENS Sarah Youngbauer

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LCDR Denise Duran
 LCDR Karen Forbes
 LCDR Alice Guh
 LT Melissa Briggs
 LT Neelam Ghiya
 LTJG Melanie Moore
 ENS Roberto Garza

CMS

LT Solita Cuthrell

DHS

LCDR Brooks Horan
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 LT Justin Erickson
 LT Jason Lewis

LT Uruaku Obasi
 LT Cara Schriener
 LT Norma Sharpe
 LTJG Jacqueline Bogardus
 LTJG Shara Kennedy
 LTJG Rebecca Kibel
 LTJG Mathew Madrid
 LTJG Herbert Partsch
 LTJG Sudhir Perakathu
 LTJG Marquita Robinson

DOC

LT Christian Rathke

DOD TMA

LCDR Heather Boyce-James
 LCDR Jill Breitbach
 LCDR Kent Bui
 LCDR Vicky Dowdy
 LCDR Ramon Font
 LCDR Laura Hudson
 LCDR Tangeneare Singh
 LT Mark Durham
 LT Vickie Ellis
 LT Tracy Glascoe
 LT Kenneth Green
 LT Kimberley Jones
 LT Michael Kluk
 LT Justin Peglowski
 LT Nguyet Ton
 LT James Tyson
 LT Sara Wright

EPA

LCDR David Gwisdalla
 LT Tara Houda
 LT Nancy Tian

FDA

LCDR Eleni Anagnostiadis
 LCDR Qiao Bobo
 LCDR Donald Ertel
 LCDR Judy Park
 LCDR Omayra Rodriguez
 LCDR Lana Rossiter
 LCDR Raghu Samy
 LT Oluyemisi Akinneye
 LT Alexa Deptola
 LT David Eng
 LT Stanley Eugene
 LT Andrew Fine
 LT Andrew Kim
 LT Neil Mafnas
 LT Samantha Pinizzotto

LT Thomas Radman
 LT Ayana Rowley
 LT Sharonjit Sagoo
 LT Matthew Walters
 LT Niketta Womack
 LTJG Christie Menna

FDA

LTJG Christopher Sheehan

HRSA

LT Margaret Brewinski Isaacs

IHS

LCDR Maria Antonucci
 LCDR Jeffrey Bullock
 LT Bryan Anderson
 LT Jori Bailey
 LT Marsophia Crossly
 LT Melanee Davis
 LT Sayward Fehrman
 LT Brian Gilson
 LT Maxwell Goggin-Kehm
 LT Janet Hayes
 LT Johannes Hutaurok
 LT Sara Lout
 LT Shealyn Lucero
 LT Thelma Lucero
 LT Matthew Mcclung
 LT Grant Mcelwee
 LT Hannah McMillan
 LT Sonya McNeil
 LT Matthew Miller
 LT Tanya Noble
 LT Sandra Olson
 LTJG Michael Bakker
 LTJG Michael Bakker
 LTJG Laura Gould
 LTJG Jessica Harvey
 LTJG Crystal Howard
 LTJG Jonathan Ireland
 LTJG Jessica Sharpe
 ENS Brittany English
 ENS Sharla Roth

NIH

LCDR Eric Zhou
 LT Tameika Kastner

SAMHSA

LT Holly Berilla
 LT Anderson Tesfazion

Merchandise



PHS Core Values Coin

The PHS Core Values Coin serves to remind all officers of the four Commissioned Corps Values of Leadership, Service, Integrity, and Excellence.

\$10 per coin plus \$1 shipping and handling

JOAG Medallion

The JOAG Medallion serves as a constant reminder that we are officers in the Commissioned Corps. It also serves to remind us of certain characteristics an officer must have: generosity, elevation of mind, goodness, nobility, camaraderie, and the continuity of these ideals through time.

\$10 per coin plus \$1 shipping and handling



USPHS Coin Rack

This solid pacific coast maple coin rack measures 7"x9" and has five rows that can hold military and USPHS coins. It has the USPHS seal and mission laser engraved on the front.

Now available for pre-order for \$26/rack plus \$5 shipping and handling



****T-shirts are sold-out and will be available in Spring 2012****

Interested in pre-ordering? Visit the Merchandise section of the JOAG website to view the order form and instructions:

http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/JOAG/index_files/Merchandise.htm

For questions related to purchasing items please or contact LCDR Glendolynn Johnson, JOAG Financial Liaison at Glendolynn.Johnson@fda.hhs.gov.

Visit JOAG at: <http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/joag/>

JOIN OUR MEETINGS

JOAG General Meeting and Journeyman Series 2011-2012

March 9, 2012: Journeyman Speaker Series, 1300– 1400 EDT

April 13, 2012: JOAG General Membership Meeting, 1300-1500 EDT

May 11, 2012: Journeyman Speaker Series, 1300– 1400 EDT

June 19-21, 2012 (COF Symposium): JOAG General Membership Meeting, 1300-1500 EDT

July 13, 2012: Journeyman Speaker Series, 1300– 1400 EDT

August 10, 2012: JOAG General Membership Meeting, 1300-1500 EDT

September 9, 2012: Journeyman Speaker Series, 1300– 1400 EDT

Join us for JOAG’s monthly meetings via teleconference or in person on the second Friday of each month.

By Conference Call: (218) 936-4700

Passcode: 791-9605#

In Person: Parklawn Building
5600 Fishers Lane
Room 12A-55
Rockville, MD 20857

Miss a JOAG Meeting? Don't despair! JOAG meetings are recorded. Audio recordings are available "on demand" by e-mailing LCDR Hiren Patel at Hiren.Patel@fda.hhs.gov

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This newsletter has been provided by the JOAG Communications & Publications Committee. For more information on how to contribute to future editions, please contact Committee Chair LCDR Janice Arceneaux at Janice.Arceneaux@cms.hhs.gov or LCDR David Wright, JOAG Editing Subcommittee Lead at David.Wright2@fema.dhs.gov

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