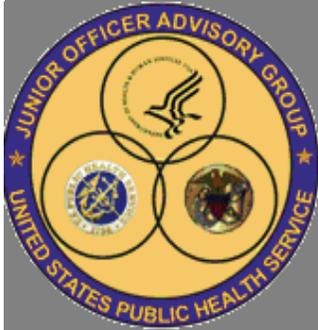


Junior Officer

Advisory Group

A newsletter for junior officers by junior officers



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Volume 6

Spring 2008

A Message from our Chair

Fellow JOs:

We have reached the mid-point of the JOAG operational year, and it has been a busy six months. Planning for the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium in Tucson, AZ, including the preceding Forward Thinking Retreat, is in full swing. At the time I'm writing this, we have 50 junior officers signed up to participate in the retreat. This will certainly be a memorable event, and we look forward to developing ideas for the future of the Corps.

In addition, this is the time of the year when JOAG solicits voting member nominations, and you may have recently seen the Membership Committee's announcement on the JOAG listserv. In the last newsletter, I wrote about the different ways that junior officers can be involved in JOAG. Serving as a voting member is one of the ways to do that. I have received some questions about voting membership, and wanted to take the opportunity to address the role and responsibilities of the JOAG voting members.

As you may know, JOAG's mission is to provide advice and consultation to the Surgeon General, Chief Professional Officers, Professional Advisory Committees (PACs), and other Commissioned Corps groups on issues relating to professional practice and personnel activities affecting Junior Officers in the USPHS Commissioned Corps. One of the ways that JOAG fulfills its mission is through its voting members. The JOAG voting membership is made up of twenty junior officers from each of the eleven professional PHS categories, and voting members serve as liaisons to the professional advisory committees. In addition to providing consultation and guidance to our senior leadership, JOAG provides junior officers with professional, leadership, and career development skills and experiences.

Who are the voting members?

JOAG voting members are motivated and hard-working junior officers that are dedicated to the success of JOAG and all junior officers. Voting members are active duty officers, and there is at least one voting member representing each of the eleven professional categories. JOAG also makes every effort to ensure that voting members are selected from each of the PHS Department of Health and Human Service (HHS) agencies, and from non-HHS agencies and programs to which PHS officers are detailed. Every effort is also made to ensure that JOAG voting membership includes prior military service members.

This year, in addition to five at-large positions that are available to officers in any category, JOAG has category specific openings for the following categories (one each): Dental, Engineer, Health Services, Nurse, and Therapist. The voting members who fill the category specific slots serve as the JOAG liaison to their PACs.

What are the responsibilities of a JOAG voting member?

There is more to being a voting member than just voting. First and foremost, JOAG voting members represent junior officers in the Corps, and, after selection, are appointed to their role by the Office of the Surgeon General. Voting members are required to attend each of the general membership meetings, which are held on the second Friday of



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USPHS Core Values Edition

Junior Officer Spotlight

Officer: LT Elena B. Vaouli

Category: Environmental Health Officer

Education: BS, Biology, The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, 1999. MPH, The Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, MD, 2005.

Home town: Virginia Beach, VA

Agency: American Samoa EPA, on detail from USEPA Region IX, Pacific Islands Office (PIO), San Francisco

Current Assignment/Duties: Water Program Manager, Pago Pago, American Samoa

I oversee a wide range of water quality projects. One of my favorites is our Piggery (small-scale, traditional swine facilities) Compliance Program because it presents the challenge of balancing environmental and public health protection with cultural preservation. Through environmental education, inspections and enforcement, we bring piggeries into compliance with local environmental and health regulations. This eliminates illegal and uncontrolled discharge of pig wastes into local waters, and most importantly, reduces the risk of disease transmission via these contaminated waters.

Previous Assignment:

Before commissioning, I worked at the AS-EPA as the water quality lab supervisor in the Water Program. Our lab collected and analyzed drinking water for microbial contaminants, and conducted routine monitoring of our local beaches and streams.

How did you find out about the PHS?

During my MPH, I remember reading something about it online. I started to seriously consider joining the Corps after attending a career fair presentation given by a PHS Officer at school.

What was the most challenging part of applying for the PHS?

Although the PHS application itself was a challenge to complete, I found the job search to be the most challenging. Although I applied for several different EHO vacancies, my first choice was to be stationed back at the AS-EPA once I was commissioned. AS-EPA and the USEPA PIO offered me a position, but I was warned that it would be difficult to arrange since it was uncommon for new officers to be assigned abroad and with a non-HHS agency like the EPA. With strong support from my PIO Manager Carl Goldstein, he managed to enlist the help of Chief Environmental Health Officer CAPT Shepherd and Chief Engineer Officer RADM Barror! I was floored and humbled to be assisted by such prestigious members of the Corps, and more certain than ever that joining the PHS was one of the best decisions I had ever made.

What are your goals with the PHS?

Joining the PHS was a long-term career choice for me, and I was attracted by the opportunities to work in remote areas of need like American Samoa, and with indigenous communities. As I continue to develop professionally as an EHO and uphold the core values, I hope to make positive, measurable public health impacts in the communities I serve.

What is your most memorable PHS experience so far?

I'll never forget how nervous I was at BOTC. The day of uniform inspection, I inspected and re-inspected myself over and over to make sure every pin, button, and hair was in the right place. After all that fussing, I never realized my shoulder boards were on the wrong sides! Luckily, I had a very kind uniform partner who tactfully pointed out my mistake and helped me fix the boards. Although we laughed it off then, you can bet I won't make that mistake twice!

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

Don't be intimidated by the application process. The application, with the medical and security clearances, and the simultaneous job search may seem taxing and lengthy, but it is all worth it once you get commissioned! There are plenty of other officers who are willing to help, including myself. Email: Elena.vaouli@gmail.com



A Message from our Chair (continued from Front Page)

every other month, as well as voting member planning meetings, held on the second Friday of the off months. Voting members also serve as JOAG liaisons to the eleven PHS categories, and/or chair of one JOAG's ten committees. Once selected, each voting member should be a contributing, active participant of at least one JOAG committee, but may serve on as many committees as they wish. There are also occasions where voting members are solicited for input on draft Corps policies.

What are the criteria to become a voting member?

At the time of appointment, each JOAG member shall be an active duty officer at or below the temporary rank of Lieutenant Commander (O-4), and not be eligible for promotion during the first year of his or her term. All JOAG voting members must meet Basic Readiness standards, as defined by the Office of Force Readiness and Deployment (OFRD), and maintain Basic Readiness throughout their terms. JOAG members may hold a simultaneous membership in their respective PAC, if permitted by the PAC. Previous experience in JOAG, such as attendance at the general membership meetings and participation in one or more of JOAG's committees is valuable.

How long is the voting member term?

Voting members serve for two years. For this cycle, the voting members will serve from October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2010.

Why should I nominate myself for voting membership?

JOAG voting members have an opportunity to represent their fellow junior officers, and receive valuable leadership and professional experience. Junior officers are the future of the Corps, and serving as a voting member provides an opportunity to shape that future. And, as an added bonus, voting members are eligible for a Special Assignment Award at the end of their two year term.

How do I nominate myself for voting membership?

Refer to the announcement on page 5, or send an e-mail to me at alt5@cdc.gov for a nomination packet. Follow the directions on the Call for Nominations document, and be sure to get your nomination in to LCDR Rich Henry, the Membership Committee Chair by May 15, 2008.

Vr,
LCDR Aimee Treffiletti

This Edition of the JOAG Newsletter is intended to give attention to the [Core Values of the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service](#), which were originally announced by then Acting Surgeon General Kenneth P. Moritsugu, USPHS in October 2006.

Leadership

Provides vision and purpose in public health through inspiration, dedication, and loyalty.

Service

Demonstrates a commitment to public health through compassionate actions and stewardship of time, resources, and talents.

Integrity

Exemplifies uncompromising ethical conduct and maintains the highest standards of responsibility and accountability.

Excellence

Exhibits superior performance and continuous improvement in knowledge and expertise.

Junior Officers Assist with Super Saturdays

Contributed by: LCDR Chi-Ann (Ruby) Wu, on behalf of the Recruitment & Retention Committee

On Saturday, January 26, 2008 and Saturday, February 9, 2008, members of the JOAG Recruitment and Retention Committee in the DC area were found filing, photocopying, sorting, compiling, checking, reviewing and mailing documents in the Tower Building at the Office of Commissioned Corps Operations (OCCO). The junior officers donated their personal time to assist members of the Division of Commissioned Corps Recruitment (DCCR) staff in OCCO with processing over 400 Commissioned Corps Officer Student Training and Extern Program (COSTEP) applications. The events, known as "Super Saturdays", were spearheaded by RADM Lawrence Furman, Director of OCCO, and CAPT O'Neal Walker, Director of DCCR.

The Junior and Senior COSTEP programs offer students interested in a public health career the opportunity to gain valuable work experience. Applications for SRCOSTEP are due December 31st, the year before the student begins the final year of school (Note: SRCOSTEP applications received after December 31st may be processed but will be at a disadvantage for timely selection). Applications for JRCOSTEP are accepted on a rolling basis. Although positions for the COSTEP program are available throughout the year, the majority of the applications are for summer tours, which coincide with official school breaks.

A major influx of applications and supporting documents for JRCOSTEP and SRCOSTEP programs came in not only the last week of December 2007 but also the first three weeks of 2008. The files must be organized, processed, and filed to ensure that they are complete and ready for formal selections and reviews, which usually occur at the end of February and the beginning of

March, in advance of their anticipated Calls to Active Duty in the summer of 2008. During the work week, members of the DCCR staff are inundated with telephone calls, e-mails and written correspondence inquiring about the JRCOSTEP and SRCOSTEP programs. To regain control of the process, junior officers volunteered to assist the DCCR staff with the preparation of the COSTEP packets. We appreciate the junior officers for donating their time and energy and applaud their commitment to the Corps.

Application packets for the JRCOSTEP and SRCOSTEP programs and information on pay, benefits and entry requirements are available on the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps [COSTEP website](#).



Pictured left to right: LCDR Chi-Ann (Ruby) Wu, LCDR Monique Howard, LCDR Ruby Lerner, LT Nicole Vesely, LT Van Tran, LCDR Christina Thompson, LCDR Chauha Pham, LCDR Dianne Paraoan
Not pictured: LCDR Leigh Ann Bradford, LCDR Lynda Lee-Bishop, LT Tara Cozzarelli, and LT Shani Smith

JOAG Voting Membership Call for Nominations

Deadline Date: 15 May 2008

JOAG is seeking motivated, hard-working junior officers to fill positions vacated due to the expiration of term of voting members. JOAG is composed of officers of the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service (Corps) at the rank of Temporary O-4 and below. The mission of JOAG is to provide advice and consultation to the Surgeon General, Chief Professional Officers, Professional Advisory Committees, and other Corps groups on issues of professional practice and personnel activities affecting junior officers in the Corps.

Interested individuals may obtain all relevant nomination materials, as well as additional information, via email to LCDR Richard Henry at: richard.henry@hhs.gov

Applicants should send to the JOAG Membership Chair the following documents:

- (1) membership profile form
- (2) supervisor approval form
- (3) current curriculum vitae
- (4) cover letter stating interest in serving on JOAG and how their experience and abilities will benefit JOAG

All nominations must be submitted
on or before 15 May 2008 to

[LCDR Richard Henry](#), Chair, JOAG Membership Committee

Top 10 Reasons for Junior Officers to Attend USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium

The Early Bird deadline for the 2008 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium is just around the corner (April 21).

Still on the fence about whether to come? Here are 10 excellent reasons to join us in Tucson!

Visit www.phscofevents.org and sign up today!!

1. Great plenary sessions on emerging global health threats; the new National Response Framework; the role of the Indian Health Service; and the meaning of "back to basics" in the new millennium
2. A closing keynote address by Acting U.S. Surgeon General RADM Steven Galson, USPHS
3. More than 40 concurrent track sessions. See details at <http://www.phscofevents.org/agenda/agenda.cfm>
4. A full-day of category-specific sessions featuring timely topics to keep you on the front edge of your profession. See details at <http://www.phscofevents.org/agenda/Tuesday.cfm>
5. A full day of **Critical Needs Training** on Sunday June 8 covering such topics as the fundamentals of leadership; cultural competency in response situations and bio-ethics issues related to pandemic influenza
6. A transformation update by RADM Shekar, USPHS
7. Continuing education credits!
8. Multiple networking opportunities
9. A host of related events including the JOAG Forward Thinking Retreat, the Surgeon General's 5K Run/Walk and Annual Physical Fitness Test; Basic Life Skills Renewal Testing, pharmacy-based immunization training and more!
10. More than 100 vendors displaying the latest and greatest public health products and services

Contributed by the COA/COF Symposium Planning Committee

A Walk through Arlington National Cemetery

Contributed by: LCDR Duane Wagner

Most of us have visited a cemetery to say goodbye to a loved one or to see a grave site of someone that passed on. This event is often difficult, life changing, and may have a large impact on our lives. Surprisingly, the experience that changed my life was by the grave site of someone unknown to me.



One balmy summer afternoon while vacationing in Washington D.C. my family and I decided to visit the Arlington National Cemetery. To say that this national treasure is awe inspiring is an incredible understatement. The highlight of the visit was seeing the Tomb of the Unknowns and the Changing of the Guard ceremony. Certainly the precision and attention of the Guards at the tomb of the unknown is most impressive and we were all moved by the experience.

Later, we walked a good distance in the surrounding cemetery and commented how large the grounds seemed. We tired ourselves walking up and down the hills of Arlington and its expansiveness. I distinctly remember noticing the placement of the stones. The headstones were all in perfect alignment like soldiers standing in formation. In any direction one looked, the headstones formed a straight line. In the distance a rifle volley sounded, followed by "Taps".

As we continued to walk, I took a closer look at the headstones. The thought occurred to me that each headstone represented a person and their sacrifice. Some details of each person were engraved on the stones. I noticed that several had different names, dates, ranks, and branches of service on the stones. I remember seeing one headstone that read "USPHS" along with some biographic information of that individual. I thought I was familiar with all the branches of the Military so it struck me as being very unusual because we had no idea what "USPHS" stood for.

After returning home, I researched USPHS and was quite surprised by what I found. I discovered that there are seven branches of "Uniformed Services" in the United States, not just five as I had thought. Being a nurse, I was most intrigued about the USPHS. I spent the next few months reading everything I could find about the PHS (Public Health Service). I read about the history, uniforms, regulations, and policies. This made me realize that I really wanted to be a part of this organization and what it represents. I completed the appropriate applications and, with the assistance of some Offi-

cers, entered the PHS.

In a larger sense, that headstone was symbolic of the PHS and its Officers. Like the stone, the Public Health Service stands proudly with all the other uniformed services regardless of rank, name or branch. The USPHS Officers are selfless and committed to a larger cause, serving in varied capacities and duties with great diversity and talents. The PHS may seem to go unnoticed by many, as easy as overlooking the inscription of a headstone in a vast field of others. Yet, what we do and who we are have an enormous impact. We must never belittle this fact or take it for granted; the contribution that each and every Officer has made to our service and nation is immeasurable.

Like many others, I too was affected by what I saw at Arlington National Cemetery as I walked through the grounds. The thing which influenced me the most was a curious inscription I found on a tombstone. I do not remember the Officer's name on the stone, nor do I recall exactly where the stone was located. In retrospect, it is perhaps more fitting that way because that one stone is symbolic of an entire uniformed service—a service that is selfless, seemingly nameless and frequently unknown, but continually vigilant. The Public Health Service is rich in history, traditions and contributions to the United States. That tombstone represents a uniformed service that was unfamiliar to me most of my life but was always there protecting, serving and supporting the principles of this nation. Fortunately for me, it is now my distinct honor to be a part of this service, all because of an unexpected life changing experience while walking through Arlington National Cemetery.

PHS uniform regulations can be found at:

<http://dcp.psc.gov/eccis/CCISToc.aspx?ShowTOC=N>

Please send ideas for future "Uniform Corner" features to [LT Leslie Cartmill](#)



Appropriate Placement of the Beret
Modeled by LTJG Daveta Bailey

Uniform Corner: Women's Black Beret

- The wear of a beret in the middle of the forehead by some armed forces has occasionally caused confusion over the appropriate wear of the beret by female PHS officers.
- The USPHS has approved the beret for wear by females only. Equivalent to US Navy regulations, it is worn toward the front of the head, approximately ¾ inch from the forehead hairline, and tilted slightly to the right.
- The miniature-sized PHS insignia is aligned above the left eye.

Observations of Leadership

Contributed by: LT Darrell Jones

In September, I was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the United States Public Health Service (USPHS). There was no pomp and circumstance, no ceremonies at all in fact, only the knowledge that I was now expected to be an officer, a leader. Fortunately for me, I knew what good leadership was and wasn't, because of the nearly 12 years of active duty I served in the US Army. Since my USPHS commissioning, I have had the pleasure of observing two junior officers that I believe exemplify outstanding leadership and the future of the PHS as it transforms into what the previous Surgeon General envisioned as, "a world-class organization that provides global public health services."

The USPHS's "officer bible", the *2006 PHS Officer's Guide* has defined leadership as "the ability to influence others by strength of character and personal vision to achieve common goals." The first example of leadership is an officer that embodies the personal vision aspect of the above definition. LCDR Ron Bachorski is an officer that carries that vision and stimulates others to create their own vision. LCDR Bachorski works at an isolated/hardship area of an Indian Health Service (IHS) Hospital as the in-patient head nurse. He exemplifies leadership in how he mentors his nursing staff and other junior officers, including myself. In February 2008, *The Commissioned Corps Isolated Hardship and Hazardous Duty Assignment Support Survey* was published. One significant finding that was raised is that "only 51 percent of Federal Bureau of Prisons and Indian Health Service respondents reported discussing their career plans with a counselor, mentor or supervisor in the past year." In contrast to this finding, LCDR Bachorski encourages his practical nurses to finish their bachelor degrees and takes other junior officers under his wing to offer counseling, career advice, or an opportunity to extend themselves professionally by recruiting with him for the USPHS.

Other examples of leadership that LCDR Bachorski exemplifies are a commitment to competency, excellence and life

long learning. In 2006, LCDR Bachorski completed a Masters in Public Health while working full time for the USPHS and raising a family. He maintained a 3.9 grade point average and graduated at the top of his class. LCDR Bachorski has chosen in the past to nominate fellow officers over himself for his Area's Self Development Achievement Award. This award is designed to highlight an employee's commitment to excellence, and shows a spotlight on someone's willingness "to do whatever it takes to excel." LCDR Bachorski certainly is an outstanding example of what this award seeks to accentuate and fortunately has been nominated this year for the award.

The second example of leadership comes in the form of an officer that is assigned to fill an O-5 billet for her hospital laboratory. LT Trista Eggers is a Medical Technologist that has a Masters degree in Health Education as well as a Bachelor Degree in Medical Technology. LT Eggers exemplifies leadership by her willingness to take on a great deal of responsibility to accomplish the mission of her hospital. From the definition cited earlier, LT Eggers "influences others by her strength of character." Her selfless service to the Commissioned Corps is evident in that she has assumed the responsibilities of a billet two grades higher than her pay grade. In this billet, she occasionally manages up to 11 civil servants with a high level of technical expertise. Concurrently, she serves as a leader for her Commissioned Officer Association (COA). LT Eggers encourages junior officers to "step up to the plate," by joining her on committees that she leads COA. This fine officer is an outstanding reflection of what the *2006 PHS Officer's Guide* encourages officers to become as it exhorts officers to "assume responsibility for their behavior within and outside the uniformed service." In this vein, LT Eggers works between 40-50 hours per week and serves in an isolated/hardship area within the IHS. The required travel to and from her duty station adds an additional 15 hours to her work week. LT Eggers took the initiative to purchase an elliptical trainer with her own money, which she uses at home, to ensure she meets the fitness standards required of all USPHS officers.

Have you heard about the JOAG Publications Resource ?

This Publications Resource is a compilation of several prominent professional organization's publications, categorized by each USPHS category, that would be likely options for Officers wishing to have their work published within their specialty or others. Each entry of this resource lists the names of the professional organization's publications (journals, magazines, and/or newsletters) and contact information to use if interested in submitting content to these publications.

You can request a copy of this resource by emailing [LT Elaine Wolff](mailto:LT.Elaine.Wolff).
It will also be accessible on the JOAG website in the near future.

Applying Core Values to One's Personal Life

Contributed by: LCDR Allen Magtibay

The core values of the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service are Leadership, Service, Integrity, and Excellence. Commissioned Corps officers are expected to live their lives following these core values both on and off duty. I would like to share an example of how I have applied these core values to my personal life.

In regard to these core values, *Service* is defined as "demonstrating a commitment to public health through compassionate actions and stewardship of time, resources, and talents." I feel that I've demonstrated this core value by participating in the non-for-profit group "Team in Training" often referred to as TNT. TNT is the largest endurance sports training program in the world. The organization provides training for volunteers to run or walk a marathon or half marathon, complete a triathlon, or complete a century bike ride. In return, these volunteers fund-raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The mission of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society is to cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and myeloma, and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. Since the start of the program in 1988, Team in Training has trained more than 360,000 volunteers to complete one of the specified endurance events and at the same time raised more than \$850 million dollars for the society.

I first signed up as a volunteer with the Washington DC National Region Team of TNT in January 2005. I worked as a first time volunteer/participant to run the Bank of Montreal Vancouver Marathon, which was held later that year in May. For the next four months, I volunteered my personal time to not only train for the marathon but also to fund-raise money. All the hard work and dedication paid off. I successfully completed the Vancouver Marathon, my first marathon ever. More importantly, I raised over \$5300 dollars for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. This surpassed the minimum fund-raising goal of the event by over \$1100 dollars.

Since then, I have stayed active with the DC National TNT Team by serving as a recruiter. I speak to potential volunteers about my experience with TNT. As a team captain, I participate in the program as well as serve as a mentor to new volunteers. Team captains are vital to the Team in Training program. Without this group of extremely dedicated volunteers, TNT would have a hard time reaching the level of success that they achieve. In my role as Team Captain, I am currently mentoring five new volunteers to run the 2008 Rock and Roll Marathon in San Diego, California. In addition, I was a team captain for the 2007 PF Chang's Rock and Roll Marathon in Phoenix, Arizona, in which I mentored six volunteers to complete this race.

To learn more about Team in Training and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society visit their websites at <http://www.teamintraining.org> and <http://www.lls.org>. I am proud to represent myself, the USPHS, and other junior officers through my dedication and participation in Team in Training.



Continued from Page 8

Pictured on opposite page:
LCDR Magtibay celebrating after completing the 2005 Vancouver Marathon.

Pictured Right:
LCDR Magtibay receiving his medal for completing the 2005 Vancouver Marathon.

To learn more about LCDR Magtibay's commitment to Team in Training and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society please visit his [fundraising website](#).



**ANNOUNCING THE NEW
"Journeyman Speaker Series:
Junior Officers moving toward mastering their trade"**
coordinated by the Professional Development Committee

This series will take place via conference call on the second Friday of the months that we do not have our regularly scheduled general membership meetings. A schedule is below, so be sure to mark your calendars! Our goal for this series is to provide speakers on topics that are of interest to our JOs and that will enhance officership development.

UPCOMING JOAG MEETING SCHEDULE, 2008

April 11: JOAG General Membership Meeting, 1300-1500 EDT

May 9: Speaker Series, 1300-1400 EDT

June 13: JOAG General Membership Meeting, 1300-1500 EDT

July 11: Speaker Series, 1300-1400 EDT

August 8: JOAG General Membership Meeting, 1300-1500 EDT

Upcoming Events that will Frame our Future:

2008 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium and the JOAG Forward Thinking Retreat

Contributed by: LCDR Jonathan Rash, COA/COF liaison

The USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium will be taking place in Tucson, AZ, June 9-12. The theme for this year's conference is "Public Health Strategies for the New Millennium." Whether you attend regularly, rarely, or have never attended before, you are encouraged to come and take part. There are too many activities going on to list them all – read all about them on the [conference website](#).

You are encouraged to book your hotel room as soon as possible. The first hotel lined up for the conference, the Riverpark Inn, sold out over two months ago. As of press time, the other recommended hotels (Hotel Arizona and InnSuites Tucson City Center) were nearly sold out as well. COF had no other hotels listed, but promises to list other hotel options on its website soon. Information on booking a hotel room at the special group rate can be found here: <http://www.phscofevents.org/location/location.cfm>.

For those of you at the temporary grade rank of O-3 and below who are members of COA, junior officer scholarships are available to defray the cost of conference registration fees. Applications for these scholarships and information on how to apply can be found here: <http://www.phscofevents.org/registration.cfm>

Finally, if you are thinking you might attend the Conference, here is an exciting opportunity to keep in mind: the Forward Thinking Retreat for junior officers. Forward Thinking is a concept of future planning for the Corps over the next 20-30 years. During the retreat, junior officers will share their collective voices in developing a vision for the future of the Corps. In addition, at the conclusion of the retreat, we will have the opportunity to present our ideas to RADM Galson, the Acting Surgeon General.

The retreat will be held Saturday, June 7th (afternoon) and Sunday, June 8th (all day), at the Tucson Convention Center (just before the COF Conference). The Commissioned Officers Foundation will be providing the conference room for this retreat, and it will be facilitated by officers from BOP as well as JOAG voting members. There is no fee to attend this retreat; however, junior officers will have to provide their own travel and lodging if they do not receive funding from their own agency to attend.

This is a unique opportunity for junior officers to advance the mission of the Corps, and direct the next generation of leaders to keep the Corps growing and getting stronger. In addition, it is an excellent professional, leadership, and career development activity for individual officers, and the participants will develop an invaluable skill set that will benefit them throughout their careers.

Don't miss out on either of these exciting events, which combine to make one large reason to be in Tucson in June. See you there!

The JOAG Executive Committee and COA/COF Planning Committee also contributed to this announcement.



Miss a JOAG Meeting?

Don't despair! JOAG meetings are now being recorded.

Audio recordings are available "on demand"

by emailing [LCDR Sonny Saini](#).

Two Weeks of Officer Basic Course: My Fondest Memories

Contributed by: LCDR John Beltrami, on behalf of the Professional Development Committee

"Quite an experience." I have to admit, before I left Atlanta I was concerned that my two weeks at the training might be filled with rigidity, excessive pride, and push-ups. This was not the case. Except for the push-ups I did for the fitness test, I only experienced flexibility and an appropriate amount of pride. What follows are my fondest memories.

The course started with an instructor citing one of my favorite authors, [Joseph Campbell](#), so I knew this was going to be a special time. Much of his work was based on the journey myth of the hero. The trainees and myself were about to learn that we were on the threshold of a career-long journey that would take us through exciting times, career development, challenges to overcome, and satisfaction in the service to our country. We were each on the path of becoming a hero to help others, whether we realized it or not!

The first morning we participated in the daily ceremony of raising the national flag (referred to as "morning colors"). Despite the cold weather, I was warmed by memories of my childhood when my family had a flag pole in front of our home and I would watch my father treat the flag with reverence. While our Unit was in formation, I noticed two pedestrians, who stopped and paid their respects to the flag. Participating in this ritual as other Uniformed Services do, reflecting on my childhood, and observing these

two citizens gave me a heightened experience of the Corps and appreciation of the importance of working with other Uniformed Services if ever deployed together (interoperability they call it).

The camaraderie was wonderful, and I hope to cross paths in the future with the other trainees, who were from several Public Health Service agencies. Some of the trainees had previously been in the military (known as "priors"), which provided a bonus to the class for the wealth of knowledge and experience they shared. Their saluting skills, formation precision, and proper uniform wear were impressive. During one of the classes, I received a leather coaster with the PHS insignia for correctly answering a question about uniforms. (Thank you LT Jasen Kunz for your initial uniform guidance and preparation!)

Finally, I want to acknowledge the instructors. In a self-sacrificing manner, two of the OCCO staff, having overcome their own recent respiratory illnesses, tended to one of the trainees who fell ill by providing transportation to the hospital and giving nutritional and emotional support. I most remember the readiness and deployment staff for their informative, relevant module exercises and non-stop high energy. All of the instructors routinely gave superb lectures, guidance, and inspiration. Their dedication and inspiration provided us a sound foundation of Corps history, culture, deployment preparation, and a greater appreciation of how the Corps relates to the other Uniformed Services, all of which will help us become successful officers— both as individuals and team members.

Junior Officer part of global research team to implement the first ever evidenced-based nursing website

Contributed by: LCDR Faisal Aboul-Enein

Over the past two years, I have been collaborating with a team of nurse researchers, nurse clinicians, and staff nurses to help design and implement the first ever evidenced-based nursing website. This website was an effort to compile and grade the quality of nursing research produced by nurses for nurses. Currently, no other website or database exists that strictly compiles a nursing body of research that is then graded for clinical utility and currency by fellow nurses. My specific contribution entailed acting as a research advisor and reviewer for this international project which was in conjunction with McMaster University in Canada. Other countries involved in the project were United Kingdom, Korea, United States and Australia. I would like to encourage fellow nursing officers to visit the website¹ and be a peer-reviewer to help strengthen nursing science.

¹ <http://plus.mcmaster.ca/benplus/Default.aspx>

LCDR Aboul-Enein commissioned directly to the US Public Health Service Inactive Reserve Corp (IRC) and is currently completing an intermittent tour of duty with Department of Immigration Health Service (DIHS) Houston facility as a Nurse Practitioner. In addition, he is a nursing professor at Texas Woman's University, College of Nursing in Houston Texas.

Excellence in Officership

Contributed by: LT Steven Scherling

"Hit the deckplates running!" With this often-heard phrase, new sailors and junior officers (JOs) in the Navy are encouraged to show enthusiasm to get the job done when they first step foot on the deckplates (floor) of a new ship. It takes certain characteristics of excellence in an officer to actually carry this out, since most personnel are not eager to pursue greatness early in their careers.

I met one of those excellent officers two years ago when I first started working as an engineer for the Indian Health Service (IHS). Before my arrival, LT Mark Baker (pictured, right) had begun his career with the IHS as a newly commissioned officer. He was an adept manager who carefully prioritized his time and resources early in his career to meet his needs at work and at home. Within the first few years of his profession he found himself advancing in billets and responsibilities due to a large turnover of staff in the office. At one point, he was filling five positions including acting in his supervisor's position. He could not have done this without being an excellent manager of his priorities, personnel, and projects.

LT Baker has also been an example of excellent technical competence. Other junior officers (including me) and even senior officers frequently come to him with questions about engineering, design, and construction management. He maintains his expertise in his field by diligently studying standards, procedures, and new technologies.

What really stands out as one of LT Baker's most excellent qualities is his undying motivation. Despite his busy schedule, he is always eager to take on additional responsibilities, even those duties normally reserved for officers of higher rank. He is never satisfied with average performance in his work. He is even committed to excellence in his personal physical fitness schedule. According to the President's Challenge website, he was the first junior officer to earn the prestigious Platinum Award.

LT Baker is an excellent manager, expert, and motivator. He is an example to all the other junior officers in the office. Because of officers like him, the level of excellence increases throughout the office. I especially appreciate this because I had an opposite experience when I arrived at my first assignment in the Navy. As a JO in the Navy, I demonstrated my lack of responsibility by avoiding unexpected duties, training, and opportunities for excellence which conflicted with my personal schedule. I chose not to pursue excellence in management and competence, and my contribution to the mission of the organization suffered. I regret many of those decisions and the effect they had on the entire ship. I should have chosen a path of excellence instead of mediocrity.

I am thankful that I have had the opportunity to learn from an officer like LT Mark Baker. I encourage you to find an example of excellence around you to follow and to be an example of excellence for others to follow. It might not always be easy, especially when you are the new one on board, but remember to "hit the deckplates running!"



*"Because of officers like him,
the level of excellence
increases throughout
the office."*

JOAG Welcomes 89 Newly Commissioned Officers!

BOP:

LCDR John R. Lockhart
 LT Shawn D. Armes
 LCDR Cubie T. Beasley
 LT Christine M. Fallon
 LT Valisha D. Price
 LT David A. Zimbrick
 LT Stanley W. Bennett
 LTJG Rochelle L. Ford
 LCDR John L. Manuel
 LT Trevor B. Lidge
 LTJG Daniel L. Wagoner
 LCDR Velma L. Colbert
 LT Glenn E. Hamilton
 LTJG Clare E. Blakeslee
 LT Lee J. Witter

CDC:

LCDR Felicia M. Lewis
 LCDR Yoon K. Miller

CMS:

LT Gerald A. Brozyna, Jr.
 LT Maya D. Gripper

DHS:

LT David J. Norberg
 LTJG Nidia Kraft
 LT Yonette R. Hercules
 LTJG Justin H. Belk
 LT Trellis E. Adams
 LT David J. Norberg
 LT Kelly A. Royce
 LT Jill R. Hammond

LCDR Lorena Crowley
 LT Anthony B. Benjamin
 LT Mario T. Paul
 LTJG Davide A. Kekeocha

FDA:

LCDR Minglei Cui
 LT James L. Kenney
 LT Naveed Khan
 LTJG Mark A. Gray
 LT Danielle Pearson-Jackson
 LT Dianna D. Richards
 LT Carroll D. Wyble
 LTJG Stephen R. Souza
 LTJG Andrew Yang
 LT Lundy H. Patrick
 LT Skip A. Payne
 LTJG David R. Schwab
 LTJG Patric C. Klotzbuecher
 LTJG Anna E. Fain
 LT Myoshi M. Francis
 LTJG Melanie L. Drayton

HRSA:

LT Ulgen S. Fideli
 LT William P. Tonkins
 LT Deidre M. Washington
 LT Kevin A. Bates

IHS:

LCDR Tawanda S. Martin
 LT Amanda J. Heard
 LT Dangel G. Merrell
 LT Sherry R. Wall

LTJG Shalonda L. Gates
 LTJG Dawn M. Stam
 LTJG Matthew H. Hunt
 LTJG Zachary D. Grinnell
 LCDR Shelo J. Mutz
 LT Erica M. Niiha
 LT Narcisso Soliz, Jr.
 LTJG Kari R. Clark
 LTJG Lisa L. Amaya
 LT Matthew J. Katics
 LCDR Wendy L. Monrad
 LTJG Sarah-Jean T. Snyder
 LT Jolene A. Bilbee
 LT Ashley R. Mehaffie
 LCDR Ann M. Arnett
 LCDR Ava Hacopian
 LT Veronica T. Granger
 LTJG Cynthia L. Johnson
 LTJG Solveig F. Johnson
 LTJG Jenna M. Meyer
 LCDR Clyde G. Darrah

LT Keri A. Gorman
 LTJG Emily D. Adams

NIH:

LT Lindia A. Engram

NPS:

LT Travis H. Monson

OS:

LTJG Olin E. Bakke
 LT Joseph M. Ndifor
 LTJG Jeffrey R. Strich

PSC:

LT Sarah K. Anderson
 LTJG Kristen J. Hardin
 LCDR Carlos R. Castillo
 LTJG Jose R. Finn, Jr.

SAMHSA:

LTJG Jaclyn Rubio

USDA:

LTJG Nisha O. Antoine

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This newsletter has be provided by the
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 contribute to future editions,
 please contact [LCDR Lori Hall](#), committee chair

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