



With Pride & Distinction

With Pride & Distinction

Junior Officer Advisory Group

Vol. 4, December 2011: Avoid Common Cover Faux Pas

History of Women in the USPHS

Contributed by LTJG Samantha Spindel and
LT Chitra Mahadevan

During WWII, women between the ages of 20-50 were recruited to participate in the Armed Forces as well as in the Public Health Service and the Red Cross to assist with the war effort. At that time, women's roles were limited to working with other women and they rarely had an opportunity to supervise men. To address the critical shortage of nurses during WWII, Congress passed the Nurse Training Act of 1943, which created a uniformed Cadet Nurse Corps (formerly the "Victory Nurse Corps") within the PHS. Under this act, 124,000 women between the ages of 17 and 35 received free, expedited nursing education lasting 24 to 30 months. In exchange for their education, they served in the PHS (for pay) for the duration of the war. Upon the insistence of Eleanor Roose-

velt, the Cadet Nurse Corps was amended to prevent racial discrimination. As a result, approximately 3,240 minorities joined the service as nurses.

In 1944, The Public Health Service Act was passed, which reinforced the militarization of the PHS and allowed females who held other scientific professions to join. The PHS awarded more opportunities to women than other service branches did. For example, a woman who was a physician and could fly planes would need to choose one of the two professions in the Armed Forces, but could serve a dual role in the PHS.

Prior to 1944, PHS nurses had their own uniform, which comprised a skirt and belted jacket. Female personnel who were not nurses wore civilian clothes. The first uniforms worn by all females in 1944 were identical to those worn by the Coast Guard, except for the insignia, which was distinctive to PHS.

Uniform Trivia: Which President formalized the Commissioned Corps in 1889 by signing "An Act to Regulate Appointments in the Marine Hospital Service of the United States"?

DID YOU KNOW ?

The **garrison cap** must match khaki material of which your uniform is made. It shall be worn squarely on the head, approximately one inch above the eyebrows. It may be carried on either hip with the opening always facing the rear.

Did you know the miniature metal rank insignia for the garrison cap is the same size that is worn on your collar? Some officers have been seen mistakenly wearing the large metal rank on the garrison cap!



The USPHS **combination cover** is distinct from the Navy combination cover because of the devices and components used. The USPHS combination cover also differs according to rank, and gender.

The complete combination cover for officers will have a detachable white vinyl or khaki cover matching the uniform material, USPHS cap device, USPHS band, the gold and maroon strap, and USPHS gilt buttons. For female officers ranking O-5

and above, the gold and maroon strap is replaced by permagold embroidery and will have a permagold visor.

The combination cap is held in the left hand with the front of the cap facing forward. Did you know that when in dining facilities, you should never place your cover on the table in which you are about to eat? This is not proper.

The USPHS **ball cap** is a conventional style baseball cap with "U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE" embroidered across the top of the front panel. It is worn with the large, bright metal rank device centered under "U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE." The ball cap differs according to rank. For officers ranking O-1 through O-4 the visor is plain; for officers ranking O-5 and above, visor ornamentation is authorized. The ball cap is worn with the Battle Dress Uniform; it may also be worn with service khakis and coveralls, but only as prescribed by the National Uniform Authority. The ball cap may also be worn with civilian clothing with the rank device removed.

Contributed by LCDR Gene Gunn, LCDR Van Tran and
LTJG Katie Burbage