



Commissioned Corps BULLETIN

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Surgeon General's Column

Memorial Day was particularly meaningful to Americans this year, as we not only honored the brave men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice throughout the history of our Nation, we also remembered our soldiers, sailors, and airmen who shed blood and died to protect freedom this year during the war with Iraq.

I know that you join me in remembering those still in harm's way—our colleagues in uniform; including health professionals who are protecting and caring for our warriors and who are assisting the people of Iraq in rebuilding their country.

The Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps has a long and distinguished history working with the military services during times of war. As early as 1898, the Corps was called upon to assist the military in providing healthcare during the Spanish-American War.

Although the Corps is not a military service, it can be militarized during times of war or national emergency by a presidential executive order. This occurred during World Wars I and II.

During World War I, the PHS provided officers to the Navy for the care of wounded military personnel. The PHS was also responsible for extra-cantonment sanitation around military camps in the United States to help prevent and control disease outbreaks among the troops. Following World War I, prior to the creation of the Veterans' Bureau (later renamed the Department of Veterans Affairs), the PHS was responsible for the care of discharged, sick, and disabled veterans.

During World War II, PHS medical, dental, nurse, and engineer officers were assigned to duty with the Coast Guard. A PHS team provided the medical staff for the *U.S.S. Bayfield*, which served as a hospital ship during the D-Day invasion. PHS personnel assigned to the Coast Guard won five purple hearts and three bronze stars.

In other conflicts, officers have worked alongside the other Uniformed Services providing specialized medical services and expertise.

The Corps contributed support to military operations during the Vietnam War, including organizing surgical teams consisting of both Corps and civilian personnel. These teams were involved in efforts to control malaria and other infectious diseases endemic to South Asia.

Ten years ago, on the heels of Desert Storm, PHS nurses served in Kuwait and PHS engineers were stationed in northern Iraq.

This proud history continues to the present day, as commissioned corps officers are now playing a key role in the rebuilding of Iraq, following the toppling of Saddam Hussein's brutal regime by coalition forces.

Under the umbrella of the Agency for International Development's (AID) Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), PHS officers comprise the heart of the health care component of the humanitarian response. These officers have been working in Iraq for more than 2 months. Much of that work has been in hospitals, in direct patient care, and in finding ways to rebuild the health sys-

tem infrastructure since the war. The power vacuum in Baghdad, and consequent looting and vandalism has led to a total crisis in public health: people have no access to medicines, and simple surgical supplies such as oxygen and anesthetic drugs are not available. The PHS is working in chaotic conditions to restore order to clinical administration and patient care.

Elsewhere in Iraq, officers are assessing local health needs, including problems associated with the prevalence of communicable diseases such as cholera, the high rates of diarrheal disease, lack of immunization, and poor maternal and child health facilities and care. Following these assessments, they are collaborating with international relief organizations such as UNICEF and the World Health Organization to help local citizens obtain food, water, and pharmaceuticals.

The work has been very dangerous. From the beginning, DART assessment missions have involved moving into areas where chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive weapons may have been produced or used. Land mines

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Surgeon General's Column

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have been a constant threat. The vehicles these officers travel in are continual targets for vandals. But despite the risks and challenges, our officers are making significant progress in responding to the public health emergencies, and are laying the groundwork for a fully functional medical system in postwar Iraq.

Back home, the Commissioned Corps Readiness Force has deployed officers to assist in the war effort: PHS nurses have served at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, and PHS dentists have served at the Quantico Marine Base in Virginia.

I am very proud of our officers. Like the American soldiers with whom they serve, our PHS Commissioned Corps officers have answered the call to serve to defend freedom and help vulnerable people. They have made sacrifices, including leaving their families and loved ones for extended periods of time. They show in their actions every day the Spirit of America: commitment to freedom; grace under pressure; and sacrificial giving. We are all in their debt.

VADM Richard H. Carmona
Surgeon General



Career Development Seminar at COA

A "Career Development Seminar" is being offered at the Commissioned Officers Association's (COA) 2003 Public Health Professional Conference which will be held June 15-20 in Scottsdale, AZ.

Officers are invited to gain insight into making the most of their careers as commissioned officers, and to learn strategies to improve promotion potential while serving their country.

Please plan on attending one of the following sessions:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>
Sunday, June 15	– 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Monday, June 16	– 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Tuesday, June 17	– 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.



Meet the New Chief Professional Officer

CAPT William S. Stokes was selected by Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona as the Chief Professional Officer for the Veterinary Category effective May 1, 2003. As Chief Veterinary Officer, CAPT Stokes is responsible for providing leadership and coordination of Public Health Service (PHS) veterinary professional affairs for the Office of the Surgeon General and the Department of Health and Human Services. He also provides guidance and advice to the Surgeon General and the Veterinary Professional Advisory Committee (VPAC) on matters such as recruitment, retention, career development, and readiness of PHS veterinarians.

CAPT Stokes is the Director of the National Toxicology Program's Interagency Center for the Evaluation of Alternative Toxicological Methods at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). He is responsible for directing the scientific evaluation of new chemical and product safety assessment methodologies that will support improved protection of human health and improved animal welfare. He also administers the Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods (ICCVAM), which reviews test methods of interagency interest and coordinates related validation, regulatory acceptance, and national and international harmonization issues within the Federal government.

CAPT Stokes earned his Bachelor of Science degree in biomedical engineering from the Speed Scientific School at the University of Louisville in 1975. Upon graduation, he received a U.S. Navy regular corps commission and served on the aircraft carrier *USS Saratoga (CV60)*. In 1979 he was awarded a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from the Ohio State University and entered active duty in the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps with assignment at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases at Fort Detrick, MD. He completed the postdoctoral laboratory animal medicine training program and attained board certification as a Diplomate in the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine in 1983. From 1983-1986 he served as Chief of Veterinary Services for the Department of Clinical Investigation at Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, HI.

In 1986 CAPT Stokes transferred to the PHS Commissioned Corps with as-



CAPT William S. Stokes

signment at NIH as Animal Program Director for the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, where he was responsible for the animal care and use program and the design of several new animal research facilities. He moved to the NIEHS in Research Triangle Park, NC, in 1990 as the Animal Program Director and Chief of the Comparative Medicine Branch. In 1992 he was appointed Associate Director for Animal and Alternative Resources for the Institute's Environmental Toxicology Program, which directs toxicological research and testing for the U.S. National Toxicology Program. CAPT Stokes co-chaired the ad hoc ICCVAM from 1994-1997, where he led efforts to implement legislative directives to establish criteria and processes for the validation and regulatory acceptance of new and alternative toxicological testing methods. From 1997-2001 he co-chaired the permanent ICCVAM and led implementation of the ICCVAM Authorization Act of 2000.

CAPT Stokes is an internationally recognized authority on the humane care and use of laboratory animals for biomedical research and testing, and has authored or co-authored more than 50 publications and reports. He has served on numerous national and international conference-organizing committees and on working groups for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Test Guidelines Program. He was a consultant to the Association for Assessment

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Letter From the Secretary



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

April 17, 2003

TO: Heads of Operating Divisions
Heads of Staff Divisions

SUBJECT: Public Health Service Commissioned Corps Initiatives – INFORMATION

The United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps remains one of the hidden treasures of the Federal government and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

The Commissioned Corps has a long and distinguished history of serving the United States and sometimes the world, albeit often anonymously. The unique series of events beginning with September 11, 2001 have challenged us all. The Commissioned Corps stepped up and responded admirably on this and on other numerous occasions in order to protect the health and safety of all Americans. It is therefore essential that we strengthen the Corps in order to ensure that all of our public health needs both in times of war and peace are able to be addressed in a timely fashion. Several months ago I directed the Surgeon General and his staff to study the Corps, bring forward the best organizational and management practices, and “transform” the Corps to meet the public health needs of the 21st century. The end product will be a visible, physically fit, highly motivated, and expert mobile uniformed service of public health professionals.

I am pleased with the potential for our Corps to further serve the President and the American public. In order to be successful, I am personally requesting that all of our leaders in DHHS assist the Surgeon General with accomplishing my directives for the Corps transformation and building our Commissioned Corps Readiness Force (CCRF).

This endeavor will require a commitment from all of you since our Commissioned Officers serve so admirably within all of our DHHS organizations, as well as serving in some other Federal agencies and international organizations. Working together to meet our nation’s public health needs by strengthening our Corps is an outstanding example of our “one department” philosophy.

Thank you for your support.

Tommy G. Thompson

Meet the New Chief Professional Officer

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and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International for 15 years. He currently serves as a Council member for the Institute for Laboratory Animal Research at the National Research Council, where he is a member of the International Committee and the Committee on Regulatory Issues in Animal Care and Use.

CAPT Stokes’ memberships in professional organizations include the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science, the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine, the American Society of Laboratory Animal Practitioners, the Society of Toxicology, and the American Veterinary Medical Association. He is a member of the Commissioned Corps Readiness Force, and has served as a PHS Associate Recruiter,

member of the VPAC Recruiting and Mentoring Subcommittees, and Preceptor for the Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program.

CAPT Stokes is a Regular Corps officer and has received numerous awards, including the Army and PHS Meritorious Service Medals, the Army and PHS Commendation Medals, PHS Citation, PHS Outstanding Unit Citation, PHS Unit Commendation, two Army Achievement Medals, and the Army Expert Field Medical Badge. He is a recipient of the NIH Director’s Award, the Russell and Burch Recognition Award from the Humane Society of the United States, and the 1999 Outstanding Veterinarian of the Year Award from the Massachusetts SPCA.

ATTENTION ALL ACTIVE-DUTY OFFICERS!

2003 ANNUAL COMMISSIONED OFFICERS’ EFFECTIVENESS REPORTS WILL BE ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED THIS YEAR!

Effective June 2003, the annual Commissioned Officers’ Effectiveness Reports (COERs) will be completed via a Web-based electronic workflow process (i.e., paperless submission).

Officers will be required to logon to the Division of Commissioned Personnel’s (DCP) Web site using their Logon ID and password. A Manual Circular with detailed instructions will be available on the DCP Web site—<http://dcp.psc.gov>.

If you do not know your Logon ID and password, contact the DCP Help Desk at 301-594-0961 (or toll-free at 1-877-INFO DCP, listen to the prompts, select option #1, and dial the last 5 digits of the phone number—40961). Also, you may e-mail the DCP Help Desk at dcpelpdesk@psc.gov. If you do not have Internet access, contact your Commissioned Corps Liaison for guidance.

The following summary of established deadlines is provided as a convenient reminder:

COERS due:

- to officer’s Supervisor by *July 11, 2003*;
- to Reviewing Official by *August 8, 2003*; and
- to DCP by *September 2, 2003*.

If an officer’s COER is not received on time, personnel actions will be affected to the officer’s detriment. In October 2003, DCP will notify the appropriate Commissioned Corps Liaison if our records reveal that an officer’s COER has not been received.

Any questions concerning the status of an officer’s COER will be directed to the appropriate Commissioned Corps Liaison.

A list of Agency/Operating Division/Program Commissioned Corps Liaisons is available in the Manual Circular and on the DCP Web site—<http://dcp.psc.gov/contacts.asp>.

Public Health Service Expands Formal Partnership with the Department of Agriculture

On April 17, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and the Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that significantly expands the number of PHS officers detailed to FSIS. Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona, Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Elsa Murano, and FSIS Administrator Dr. Garry L. McKee met for the ceremonial signing of the agreement at USDA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. This agreement will incorporate up to 30 additional PHS officers to FSIS this fiscal year alone, helping USDA meet increased demands for food safety and food security.

"The Bush Administration is committed to investing in our food safety and food security programs to protect public health," said Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman. "This agreement is just one of the many ways we are enhancing our systems at USDA." FSIS Administrator Dr. Garry L. McKee, himself a PHS Inactive Reserve Corps officer, stated "PHS Commissioned Corps officers will enhance the capacity of FSIS to protect public health. We want to become a world-class public health agency and the opportunity to utilize the talents of additional PHS officers will bring us closer to our goal."

Although PHS officers have been detailed to FSIS since January 1998, they have been limited to the agency's Office of Public Health and Science. These have included medical officers, nurses, and scientists. The new agreement will assign additional officers agency-wide to program areas including: field operations; enforcement, compliance, and investigations; food security and emergency preparedness; and occupational safety and health. This will provide significant opportunities for veterinarians, environmental health officers, and dietitians.

"Every day uniformed PHS officers provide care and services to thousands of people across the country and around the world," Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona said. "This important collaboration with FSIS will continue our commitment to protect the health of our Nation in a meaningful and sustained way."

Many agencies outside of the Department of Health and Human Services call on the unique talents, abilities, flexibility, and experience of commissioned corps officers to help them achieve their program mission. In addition to the FSIS, these agencies include: U.S. Coast Guard; Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement in the Department of Home-

land Security (formerly part of the Immigration and Naturalization Service); Federal Bureau of Prisons; U.S. Marshals Service; Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; National Park Service; and others.

An MOA is a mechanism that agencies use to officially detail large numbers of PHS Commissioned Corps officers to their organizations and programs. CAPT D.W. Chen, FSIS's Deputy Assistant Administrator for Food Security and Emergency Preparedness and USDA's Representative to the Surgeon General's Policy Advisory Council, helped coordinate the efforts of developing and signing the new MOA. Officers interested in potential long-term details to FSIS should contact CAPT Chen at dw.chen@fsis.usda.gov. □

Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual

As announced in last month's issue of the *Commissioned Corps Bulletin*, the Division of Commissioned Personnel (DCP) no longer distributes paper copies of Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual (CCPM) INSTRUCTIONS and Manual Circulars. The entire CCPM is available on DCP's Web site—<http://dcp.psc.gov>—click on 'Publications,' 'Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual.'



New Release –

**MANUAL CIRCULAR PHS NO. 372,
DATED APRIL 21, 2003**

Subject: Revision of Subchapters CC26.3, INSTRUCTION 3, "Wearing of Medals and Ribbons," CC26.3, INSTRUCTION 7, "Special Uniform Situations," and CC27.9, INSTRUCTION 1, "Authorization to Wear Non-PHS Awards," of the Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual.

The entire Manual Circular PHS No. 372 can be accessed on DCP's Web site—<http://dcp.psc.gov>—click on 'Publications,' 'Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual.' □



(Back row - left to right) CAPT D.W. Chen, Deputy Surgeon General Kenneth Moritsugu, LCDR Fred Ramsey, LCDR David Goldman, CDR Matthew Powers, and LCDR Jenny Doan. (Front row - left to right) Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Elsa Murano, Food Safety and Inspection Service Administrator Dr. Garry L. McKee, and Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona.

FDA to Hold Annual Promotion Ceremony on July 1, 2003

Everyone is invited to attend the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) 8th Annual FDA Promotion Ceremony for the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. This event will be held on Tuesday, July 1, 2003, from 1:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Bethesda Marriott Hotel, 5151 Pooks Hill Road, Bethesda, MD. The ceremony will honor officers who are being recognized for their accomplishments by promotion in rank during the 2003 Promotion Year. The uni-

form of the day will be Summer Blue ('Salt and Pepper').

This year, FDA Commissioner Mark McClellan, M.D., Ph.D., will officiate as the individual placing the new rank on the shoulders of the deserving officers. RADM Marlene Haffner will serve as master of ceremonies. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP by **June 6, 2003**, by e-mail to LCDR Amy Anderson at Amy.Anderson@oc.fda.gov. □

Call for Nominations – Veterinary PAC Membership

The Veterinary Professional Advisory Committee (VPAC) is seeking motivated commissioned corps and civil service veterinarians who are interested in serving as members for a 2-year term beginning January 1, 2004.

VPAC membership is open to all veterinarians who are employed in the Department's Agencies/Operating Divisions (OPDIVs) as well as commissioned corps officers in the veterinary category working in any of the major programs that employ Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps officers.

The VPAC is a cadre of experienced veterinarians that provides input concerning public health and veterinary category-specific issues to the Chief Veterinary Officer, who in turn advises the Surgeon General. The VPAC membership includes officers from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Food and Drug Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as well as a veterinarian from the civil service sector. Geographic location, cultural diversity, and professional seniority are also taken into consideration when electing members.

Five positions will be available as of January 1, 2004. Vacancies include representatives from NIH, CDC, EPA, and the civil service sector. Additionally, there is a requirement that the membership include two Corps officers who are stationed at least 75 miles from the Washington, D.C. area, and that one officer has not had more than 5 years of professional experience.

The VPAC currently meets quarterly in the Washington, D.C. area, and members can attend in person or participate

by teleconference. Regular attendance at the quarterly meetings is required throughout the term of membership which is currently 2 years, and VPAC members are expected to actively participate in the activities of at least one subcommittee during the term of service.

The VPAC will recommend successful candidates to the Surgeon General for appointment, with the concurrence of line supervisors and Agency/OPDIV representatives. Corps officers or civil service veterinarians who are interested are encouraged to self-nominate. Individuals should submit a curriculum vitae (a condensed version is acceptable) that includes the name and phone number of their immediate supervisor along with a one-page cover letter describing their interest in being a VPAC member. This document should be sent as a Word® or WordPerfect® attachment to an e-mail message by **August 15, 2003**, to:

CDR Dusty Rhodes
Chair, PHS Veterinary Professional
Advisory Committee
E-mail: rhodesl@mail.nih.gov

The veterinary category is going through an exciting time. The recent signing of the Memorandum of Agreement with the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has opened the door to bring many veterinarians into the PHS Commissioned Corps, and the VPAC has a lot to offer these new officers. Transformation of the Corps, Commissioned Corps Readiness Force initiatives, deployment opportunities, and many other exciting issues require the attention of dedicated veterinary officers. Help make a difference—send in your nomination for VPAC membership by **August 15, 2003**! □

Call for Nominations — Nursing PAC

The Nursing Professional Advisory Committee (Nursing PAC) is seeking new members. The Nursing PAC is composed of both Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps nurse officers and civil service nurses working in the Operating Divisions (OPDIVs) of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The Nursing PAC serves as an active link between the Office of the Surgeon General and the nurses working in the various HHS and non-HHS programs. The Nursing PAC is seeking dedicated, hardworking individuals for membership. You must be willing to actively participate for the duration of your term. The PAC encourages Nurse Specialists to apply. Additionally, the Nursing PAC encourages those with less than 5 years of PHS experience to apply. To be eligible for membership you must currently be a full-time nurse employee in one of the following Agencies/OPDIVs/Programs where vacancies exist on the Nursing PAC:

- AGENCY FOR HEALTHCARE RESEARCH AND QUALITY (1 representative)
- BUREAU OF PRISONS (2 representatives – 1 local and 1 field)
- CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (1 representative)
- FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION (2 representatives – 1 local and 1 field)
- CENTERS FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID (2 representatives – 1 local and 1 field)
- BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (formerly part of the Immigration and Naturalization Service) (1 representative)
- INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE (1 representative – field)
- U.S. MARSHALS SERVICE (1 representative)

Interested individuals should complete the Nursing PAC nomination form (which was distributed via the Nursing PAC Listserv), have their supervisor sign, and submit it with a copy of their current curriculum vitae by **June 30, 2003**, to the address below. Submissions sent by facsimile machine or e-mail will also be accepted.

CDR Doris Ravenell-Brown
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 6A-55
Rockville, MD 20857-0001
Phone: 301-827-5571
Fax: 301-827-6731
E-mail: dravenell-brown@oc.fda.gov □

Call for Nominations – Junior Officer Advisory Group

The Junior Officer Advisory Group (JOAG) is seeking motivated, hard-working junior officers to fill open positions vacated due to the expiration of term of voting members. JOAG is composed of Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps officers 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 (CPOs), Professional Advisory Committees, and other PHS Commissioned Corps groups on issues relating to professional practice and personnel activities affecting junior officers in the Corps.

JOAG meets monthly via teleconferencing, and travel is not required for membership. You must be willing to actively participate in the various subcommittees, and regular attendance at the meetings is required throughout the term of membership.

All new appointments will be made for a 2-year term and self-nominations are

encouraged. JOAG will recommend successful candidates for appointment to the Surgeon General and the appropriate CPO, with concurrence from the Agency/Operating Division/Program administrators and/or line supervisors.

Interested individuals may request a 'membership profile' form from LCDR Ann Staten. Interested individuals should submit the membership profile form along with a current curriculum vitae that includes the name and phone number of their supervisor, and a cover letter stating interest in serving on JOAG, by **June 30, 2003**, to the following address:

LCDR Ann Staten
 Chair, Membership Subcommittee
 Junior Officer Advisory Group
 5600 Fishers Lane, HFD-150
 Rockville, MD 20857-0001
 Phone: 301-594-0490
 Fax: 301-827-4590
 E-mail: statena@cder.fda.gov

Recent Calls to Active Duty

Title/Name Agency/OPDIV/Program

NURSE

LIEUTENANT

Anthony W. Ferreebe Coleman, FL BOP
 Leslie Y. Leonard Atlanta, GA BOP

PHARMACY

LIEUTENANT

Tia M. Harper-Velazquez Rockville, MD FDA

THERAPY

LIEUTENANT

Justin R. Feola Springfield, MO BOP

HEALTH SERVICES

LIEUTENANT

Rory L. Shalla Springfield, MO BOP

LIEUTENANT J.G.

Yonette R. Hercules Brooklyn, NY BOP
 Anuja M. Patel Rockville, MD FDA

Recent Deaths

Recent Deaths

Note: To report the death of a retired officer or an annuitant to the Division of Commissioned Personnel (DCP), please phone 1-800-638-8744.

The deaths of the following retired officers were recently reported to DCP:

<i>Title/Name</i>	<i>Date</i>
MEDICAL	
<i>CAPTAIN</i>	
Bohdan G. Giel	05/02/03
Martin D. Hicklin	04/10/03
Harry W. Weller	04/12/03
NURSE	
<i>CAPTAIN</i>	
Helen L. Roberts	04/29/03
COMMANDER	
Vernon L. Wilkie	04/28/03
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	
<i>CAPTAIN</i>	
David D. Haworth	05/03/03

Pharmacy School Point of Contact Initiative is Requesting Volunteers

The Pharmacist Professional Advisory Committee (PharmPAC) is currently seeking self-nominations to serve as the Primary Point of Contact (POC) for the following schools of pharmacy:

- Texas Southern University
- South University
- University of Mississippi
- University of the Pacific
- University of Puerto Rico
- University of Utah

The Primary POC's responsibilities include:

- Periodic visits to the school (at least one per year)
- Presentation of student awards, if applicable
- Attendance/participation at graduation ceremonies, if applicable
- Periodic e-mail/telephone contact with the school contact person (at least quarterly)

- Review school's Web site and encourage prominent linkage with the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps site
- Maintain current knowledge of the Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program (COSTEP), externships, student awards program, commissioned corps and civil service benefits, pay, etc.
- Serve as a resource to pharmacy schools to assist in finding qualified Department of Health and Human Services speakers
- Other duties or ideas the officer develops

If you are interested in becoming a Primary POC for any of the pharmacy schools listed above, please e-mail the following information—name, rank, agency, duty station address, e-mail address, office phone number, and college of pharmacy—to LCDR Beth Fritsch at fritschb@cder.fda.gov.

Commissioned Corps Readiness Force

Quantico Marine Base

In April, a request from the National Naval Dental Center (NNDC) in Bethesda, MD, was extended to the Office of the Surgeon General, asking the Commissioned Corps Readiness Force (CCRF) to support the Quantico Marine Base Dental Clinic. The Quantico dental staff was reduced to a single dental officer because a large number of their active-duty staff members were deployed on board the *USNS Comfort* in the Persian Gulf. As such, the dental staff was unable to meet the daily demands to care for military personnel and their dependents. The CCRF has been providing two dentists for 2-week rotating assignments. This deployment began in April and is scheduled to end in June. Deployed dentists have been from agencies such as the Bureau of Prisons, Indian Health Service, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), U.S. Coast Guard, and CCRF staff. Seven of the dentists participating are HRSA's National Health Service Corps Ready Responders. CCRF would like to thank these officers, their supervisors, and their co-workers for their support of this mission. CCRF is again honored to be a part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Top Officials 2 (TOPOFF 2)

From May 12 through 16, the Secretaries of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Department of State, and many others participated in the Top Officials 2 (TOPOFF 2) exercise. TOPOFF 2 was a Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)-oriented exercise that follows the original TOPOFF held in May 2000. TOPOFF 2 took place in two venues—in Seattle and in Chicago—and assessed our Nation's capabilities to appropriately respond to WMD attacks. A second goal was to observe and to evaluate the new interaction between DHS and HHS in the area of health and medical responsibilities during a disaster. This presented an excellent opportunity for officers to be involved in an event that has far-reaching implications for our Nation's readiness.

CCRF officers were deployed to three venues. In Seattle, officers functioned as controller or data collectors on a regional

level and were members of the HHS Secretary's Emergency Response Team (SERT). In Washington, DC, officers who had previously taken CCRF Liaison training were deployed to the HHS Secretary's Command Center, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Support Team, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Strategic Information and Operations Center. In Chicago, pharmacists deployed to five separate dispensing sites as resources for the local jurisdiction, while other officers were members of the SERT in that venue.

Still other commissioned officers represented DHS in their capacity of Regional Emergency Coordinators. Other officers deployed with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration to support Chicago and Seattle local governments.

CCRF Offers BLS Instructor Course

CCRF offered a 2-day 'Basic Life Support Instructors Class' on May 5 and 7 in CCRF's Rockville, MD, office. At this course, seven CCRF members became instructors. This training provides an excellent opportunity for members who are not typically deployed to take an active role in CCRF. These new instructors must teach at least four (4) courses in 2 years in accordance with the American Heart Association (AHA) guidelines. Because CCRF sponsored this training, it is required that four (4) courses be taught within the CCRF's training program, thereby training fellow CCRF members. CCRF is a member of the Military Training Network (MTN). The MTN is designated as the Department of Defense affiliate for the AHA and the American College of Surgeons for resuscitative/trauma medicine programs. CCRF officers may receive BLS training with MTN members throughout the United States at no charge. For more information, see http://oep.osophs.dhhs.gov/ccrf/bls_training.htm

New CCRF Training

Scheduled future CCRF training for 2003:

- CCRF Basic Course: August 4-8, September 15-19.

- CD-ROMs containing all 61 CCRF training modules have been mailed to all PHS Commissioned Corps officers. This will provide much easier access to the training program, and will only require that officers logon to the CCRF training Web site after viewing a training module, in order to test out for that session.
- CCRF owes a special thanks to 22 officers who volunteered to help us label, package, and mail 5,888 CD-ROMs to each officer in the commissioned corps. A special treat for them was a late evening visit by VADM Richard H. Carmona, who dropped by to express his thanks for their willingness to support this program.

□

Retirements - May

Title/Name Agency/OPDIV/Program

MEDICAL

REAR ADMIRAL (UPPER)

Michael H. Trujillo IHS

CAPTAIN

Charles R. Vergona IHS

Reuben P. Siraganian NIH

DENTAL

CAPTAIN

Kenneth T. Jones BOP

Robert A. Best IHS

NURSE

CAPTAIN

Kathryn L. Bates IHS

PHARMACY

CAPTAIN

Virginia A. Tibbetts CMS

COMMANDER

Lois Konzak Hitz IHS

DIETETICS

CAPTAIN

Selena G. Rodgers SAMHSA

HEALTH SERVICES

CAPTAIN

Paul Hewett CDC

Gayland M. Erikson IHS

Nancy A. Hazleton NIH

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Commissioned Officer Personnel and Payroll System

The Commissioned Officer Personnel and Payroll System has been generating personnel orders and paying officers, retirees, and annuitants accurately and efficiently for nearly a quarter century. The system began with the first Federal purchase of a Wang mini-computer in the mid-1970s. A team of COBOL programmers, system analysts, and military pay specialists were formed to design and implement the first integrated military personnel and payroll system. Over the years it has been modified and enhanced innumerable times as legislation was enacted but the core product, both hardware and software, have remained fairly constant.

In the 1990s, a modernization effort transferred many of the auxiliary processes such as recruitment, promotion boards, licensure tracking, and training tracking to an Oracle-based client-server architecture that eventually migrated to Web-based solutions. New applications were created to allow officers to self-report contact information, training, skills, foreign language proficiency, and job preference information. Additional applications now available include leave tracking, online Official Personnel Folder, vacancy tracking, and reporting on billets, applicants, and officers. This year, COERS Online will be added to this suite of applications on the Division of Commissioned Personnel's (DCP) Web site. These applications and reporting tools are used extensively by officers, Commissioned Corps Liaisons, category representatives, and personnel specialists. There is a commitment by DCP and its IT support organization, the Commissioned Corps Systems Branch, to expand and

improve this state-of-the-art infrastructure and applications.

DCP recently began a concerted effort to reduce the risk associated with the continued operation of the legacy payroll system. While the system continues to be the most efficient and cost-effective in existence, there are two factors that argue against its continued use:

- The equipment is old, parts are scarce, and the continued availability of qualified repair technicians is becoming problematic.
- And even more urgent, the number of capable programmer/analysts who understand the Wang system architecture and the Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps personnel and pay system is rapidly approaching zero.

An exhaustive examination of alternatives came to the following conclusions:

- There were no commercial packages that could handle the complexities of Uniformed Services payroll.
- It would be too expensive and take too long to develop our own custom-built solution.
- The Department's new civilian personnel solution, EHRP, would require extensive modification to support the requirements of the PHS Commissioned Corps.

Therefore, the only viable choice is to outsource to another Uniformed Service. After examining the alternatives, we determined that the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard offer the best alternatives. Their systems not only process pay in an

efficient, accurate, and timely manner, but they are also user-friendly and offer excellent customer support. DCP is currently evaluating these products and will enter into a formal Memorandum of Understanding with one of these organizations in the near future. It is our goal to complete the transition to the new system by January 1, 2005.

Whichever way DCP decides to go, officers and support staff can expect significant changes in personnel and payroll activities:

- Active-duty officers will get paid twice a month; no change for retirees or annuitants.
- Leave management will be integrated into the personnel system and each month active-duty officers will receive (or retrieve from a Web site) a Leave and Earnings Statement.
- Retirees and annuitants will be allowed discretionary allotments.
- Retirees and annuitants will receive an earnings statement only when it is different from the previous month (COLA, tax change, allotment change, etc.).
- Many payroll functions such as address change, State tax election (W-4), discretionary allotments, etc., will be available as a self-service option via a secure Web site.

We will be working with Commissioned Corps Liaisons and personnel support staff throughout the Department to ensure a smooth and successful transition. Additional articles will be written for the *Commissioned Corps Bulletin* to keep you posted as to our progress.



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