

# The Signal Newsletter

Atlanta Branch, Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service  
(representing members assigned to Atlanta area federal agencies)

Vol 15 Issue 5

July/August 2004

## Calendar of Events

There are other calendar events—see our webpage at [www.atlantacoa.com](http://www.atlantacoa.com).

### July 30 (Friday)

#### **CCRF Training Modules Self-Study Session**

Koger Center/Stanford Bldg., Sencer Computer Room.  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Contact: CAPT Arnold Manangan (770) 488-1869 or [AManangan@cdc.gov](mailto:AManangan@cdc.gov)

### August 21 (Saturday)

#### **ACOA "Crunch and Run" (CCRF Annual Physical Fitness Test)**

St. Pius High School Track. 9 a.m.

Contact: LCDR Tina Lankford (770) 488-5171 or [TLankford@cdc.gov](mailto:TLankford@cdc.gov) or CAPT Arnold Manangan (770) 488-1869 or [AManangan@cdc.gov](mailto:AManangan@cdc.gov)

### August 11 (Wednesday)

#### **Associate Recruiter Program -Lunch and Learn**

Columbia Building, Room 1064.

11:30 am – 12:30 pm

Contact: CDR Linda West (770) 488-5923 or [LWEST@cdc.gov](mailto:LWEST@cdc.gov)

### August 27 (Friday)

#### **CCRF Training Modules Self-Study Session**

Koger Center/Stanford Bldg., Sencer Computer Room.  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Contact: CAPT Arnold Manangan (770) 488-1869 or [AManangan@cdc.gov](mailto:AManangan@cdc.gov)

### August 28. (Saturday)

#### **ACOA Adopt-A-Highway**

Roadside Clean-up. 9:30 a.m. Contact: CAPT Ralph O'Connor (404) 498-0322 or [ROConnor@cdc.gov](mailto:ROConnor@cdc.gov) or CAPT (Ret) Lester Sharpton (770) 531-0815

### September 11. (Saturday)

#### **ACOA Family Picnic**

Mountain Park, Gwinnett County 11 – 4pm

## National COA selects Branch of the Year 2004.

The Atlanta Branch was recognized as the winner of the 2004 COA Branch of the Year at this year's conference. The Atlanta Branch was the overwhelming front runner for this year's award due to their extensive work in the Atlanta community in which they promoted the mission and the drive of all the PHS officers throughout the Nation.

Positive exposure to the PHS Commissioned Corps is an area upon which COA is constantly trying to improve and expand. The Atlanta Branch's willingness to proactively pursue this goal, and spotlight the Commissioned Corps in a manner that delivers the Corps mission directly to the ears and eyes of the public, should be used as a model for all COA Branches.  
From COA FRONTLINE, June 2004

## Donate your Old Uniforms!

The Uniform Store is in need of gently-used uniforms, especially female items and senior rank devices (O-5 and O-6). Please contact LCDR Tina Lankford for donations or send to her attention at MS K-46.

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## A Members Volunteer Their Time to Serve Our Fellow Uniformed Service Members and Families.

By LCDR Bruce Tierney

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport - As part of the ongoing effort of the Atlanta Commissioned Officers Association to assist our fellow Uniformed Service Members several ACOA members volunteered their time on Saturday afternoon, June 19, 2004 at the USO Center in the airport. CAPT Pamela Ching, NIP, CAPT Robert Johnson, ATSDR and LCDR Bruce Tierney, NCID provided both food supplies and their time to make available a little refreshment for service members and their families as they traveled through the airport on their way to destinations to and from Iraq and around the country. In addition to providing food and a break from the hectic rush of traveling to fulfill mission requirements or to get home for some well deserved "R&R" we also took the time to learn a little bit about the people who were passing through the Atlanta airport as well as to tell them about the role of the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service.



Lt to rt CAPT R. Johnson, LCDR B. Tierney, and CAPT P. Ching

Few service members were even aware of the presence of the Commissioned Corps and so it provided a great opportunity to talk about the mission of our service to our fellow uniformed service members. It also gave us a great opportunity to learn a little about what some of our fellow service members have been doing recently. Several soldiers passing through the USO Center were on their way home from Iraq and were pleased to have a comfortable and quiet place to take a break in the long trip home. Several families also took advantage of the services of the USO as they traveled across the country from one duty assignment to the next. There was also a group of new Army recruits on their way to Fort Jackson, S.C. to begin basic training. No doubt their experience will be a little different from the BOTC that we are all working hard to complete. And how young they all looked!

Everyone that we had the opportunity to come in contact with seemed to truly appreciate the efforts made by Commissioned Corps officers on their behalf and it was certainly a rewarding experience for each of us. Many officers may be aware that the ACOA has provided assistance to the USO during the holiday season but this new program of providing volunteer staff to the USO at least one weekend a month is a reflection of the increased mission requirements that all of us wearing the uniform have experienced. Officers interested in volunteering for this program are encouraged to contact LCDR Ross Spears at 404-498-2255 or [RSpears@cdc.gov](mailto:RSpears@cdc.gov) to find out more about the program and dates available to volunteer.



### Volunteers Needed for ESF-8 Coverage at FEMA Regional Operational Center (ROC) during Hurricane Season

The Department of Health and Human Services maintains the lead for ESF#8 (Emergency Support Function); Public Health and Medical, under the National Response Plan. The Office of the Regional Health Administrator/Region IV, Atlanta, is seeking volunteers to provide coverage at the FEMA ROC; located at 3003 Chamblee Tucker Road during 2004 Hurricane Season (May 31 – December 1, 2004).

ESF-8 is responsible for overall public health response in the event of a disaster. Three teams have been established to rotate on an on-call schedule every third week and provide coverage should the ROC be activated. Region IV is in need of additional volunteers to strengthen the numbers of members on each team. Individuals who are deployed during hurricane season will receive CCRF credit for duty at the FEMA ROC if they have met the basic requirements for CCRF readiness.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact CAPT Clara Cobb, Acting Regional Health Administrator, at (404) 562-7894 or e-mail at [ccobb@osophs.dhhs.gov](mailto:ccobb@osophs.dhhs.gov)



## SERT/LNO Training Takes Place in Washington, DC

Advanced CCRF training was offered in Washington, DC, 28-Jun through 02-Jul. The course was a combination of Liaison Officer Training and SERT (Secretary's Emergency Response Team) training. SERT's are coordination teams which are deployed on the ground to coordinate response efforts by the Department. Liaison officers will serve on the team to work with state and local agencies to determine their needs, and provide information on what HHS support is available. The liaison officers will then provide, through the SERT team leader, situation reports and action requests to be sent to the Secretary's Command Center (SCC) for further deployment of HHS assets.

Attending the training from CDC Atlanta were CAPT Bo Kimsey, CDR Mehran Massoudi, CDR Carol Friedman, LCDR Jay Walmsley, LCDR Tina Lankford, and LCDR Ross Spears. In addition, CCRF officers from other CDC locations and other DHH agencies were present. Also attending were a number of non-Corps personnel, primarily a number of Regional Health Administrators and their deputies.

The training was coordinated by CDR Renee' Joskow of OFRD. The course provides 28 hours of Advanced CCRF Training, and all attending officers were given Advanced level deployment status. Training consisted of such items as the role of SERT teams and the liaison officers, use of key equipment including radios and satellite phones, and software training for software packages used in reporting to the SCC. A tour of FEMA's National Emergency Operations Center and the SCC were given. The final day of the training was an exercise which simulated a SERT response to a mock Pacific typhoon. The revisions are ongoing to meet the needs and expectations of the participants and is valuable to all officers wishing to deploy as liaison officers.

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### T-Shirts for Sale!

**100% cotton short-sleeved t-shirts have the COA seal on the front and Atlanta skyline on the back. Cost is \$8.00 each. To purchase, contact Tina Lankford at: [tlinkford@cdc.gov](mailto:tlinkford@cdc.gov) or 770-488-1886.**

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## ACOA Roadside Cleanup August 28, 2004

It is that time again for our quarterly roadside cleanup. For those wishing to participate, we will be meeting at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (1450 Ponce De Leon Ave NE) at 0930. ([Directions/map available on website \[www.atlantacoa.com\]\(http://www.atlantacoa.com\)](#) )

The Chapter will supply garbage bags and orange safety vests for all volunteers. ACOA will supply light refreshments. Please do not forget your gloves (glass and sharp objects). We ask that all officers wear a COA, PHS, CDC, ATSDR, or other DHHS t-shirt. Family members are also invited we believe, the more the merrier...

Thank you for your dedication and support of our community and the COA.

For additional information, contact CAPT Ralph O'Connor ([rao1@cdc.gov](mailto:rao1@cdc.gov)) (404) 498-0322 or "CAPT Lester" (770) 531-0815.



Photo of March 2004 Clean-up participants...

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To submit information, articles, and op/ed pieces to the ACOA newsletter, please contact the Editor, CDR Amy Collins, at [ACollins@cdc.gov](mailto:ACollins@cdc.gov) or 770-488-5808 or CDR Larry Cseh at [loc3@cdc.gov](mailto:loc3@cdc.gov) or 770-488-3335.

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## Health Care News; By CDR Dan Cline



Many officers are familiar with TRICARE's website [www.tricare.osd.mil](http://www.tricare.osd.mil). However, have you taken the initiative to look at Humana Military Healthcare Services' (HMHS) website - [www.humana-military.com](http://www.humana-military.com)? With Humana's Beneficiary Resource section you are a click away from valuable TRICARE program information and beneficiary services.

One such resource is Humana's Online Beneficiary Service. This site has been designed to help you get information quickly and securely. If you are a TRICARE Prime Beneficiary or a TRICARE Standard/Extra Beneficiary you can sign up for access to the Secured Member Services. It is quick, easy and secure. See below for details about the services available from this site:

- **Enrollment Verification Print-Out** – Allows you to print a temporary Prime Enrollment Verification card.
- **Prime Enrollment Card Request** – Allows you to request a new Prime Enrollment Card mailed to your address on file. An e-mail will be sent to you acknowledging the request.
- **Quick Eligibility Check** – Allows you to see if you or your dependent family member(s) is eligible for the TRICARE program.
- **Referral/Authorization Inquiry** – Allows you to check the status of Referrals/Authorizations, or view a history of prior Referrals/Authorizations.
- **Claims Status Check** – Allows you to check the status of a claim submitted within the last 18 months for you and your dependents under the age of 18. Summary claim information will be presented, with detail information available by clicking on a link.
- **Requests a Primary Care Manager (PCM) Change** – Allows you to fill out and submit an online request to change the Primary Care Manager (PCM) for the current beneficiary being viewed in *Online Beneficiary Services*. You will be able to use the HMHS Provider Locator to find a PCM or verify that your choice is in the HMHS Network. The change request will be processed by the HMHS Enrollment Department.
- **Requests an Address Change** – Allows you to fill out and submit an online request to change the address for the current beneficiary being viewed in *Online Beneficiary Services*. The change request will be processed by the HMHS Enrollment Department.

Please note that effective August 1<sup>st</sup> 2004 Region 3 will come under the umbrella of TRICARE South, as TRICARE transitions from 11 Regions and 7 contracts to 3 regions

and 3 contracts. Humana Military Healthcare Services was awarded the TRICARE South contract, therefore the transition should be fairly seamless to us here in Atlanta. However, as part of the transition, Humana is centrally locating most of their operations to San Antonio, Texas. TRICARE benefits, costs and the enrollment process remain the same under the new regional contract. However because of the move personnel will be changing and there are bound to be growing pains that is associated with any type of move (think of your last PCS move). If you run into any problems/difficulties or have any questions related to your health care entitlements please call CDC's Health Benefits Advisor CDR Dan Cline at (770) 488-1883. As we press on through the steamy days of an Atlanta summer please keep this bit of advice in mind "Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint". [Mark Twain](#) (1835-1910)

## Associate Recruiter Program Lunch and Learn

On August 11, 2004, CDR Alan Parham will be giving a presentation from 11:30 am – 12:30 pm on the Associate Recruiter Program (ARP). The presentation will be in the Koger Campus, Columbia Building, Room 1064.

As leadership roles have become more important in promotion success rates, the ACOA felt this would be an important session to offer to the membership. In addition, this Program allows us to reach out to new recruits and tell them about the opportunities that the USPHS offers.

The presentation will provide an overview of the ARP to include: a brief overview of the ARP program and it's history, how to sign-up, and what the current requirements for becoming part of this program. Also, CDR Parham will provide participants with examples of the available recruitment materials (hand-outs and giveaway items like PHS staplers, luggage tags, leather writing tablets, etc.), bring one of the PHS recruitment displays and demonstrate how to set it up, discuss awards associated with the ARP program, and go over the do's and don'ts of recruiting trips.

Please contact LCDR Linda West at (770) 488-5923, if you have questions.



## PAC Corner: Engineer Category

The vision of the PHS engineers is to provide national and international leadership in public health engineering. This

certainly is true for the engineers assigned in the Atlanta area. Of the approximate 37 engineers that are assigned to CDC and ATSDR, almost half of them are assigned in the Atlanta area. Our engineers are involved in various areas that include research, public health risk assessments, facility operations, construction activities, and safety oversight.

The Engineers Professional Advisory Council (EPAC) consists of approximately 20 members representing the various engineering disciplines and engineer-supported agencies. EPAC's Charter is to provide advice and consultation to the Chief Engineer, whom, in-turn, advises the Surgeon General on matters relating professional activities and personnel issues affecting engineers in the PHS. These issues include engineer staffing issues, engineers' career development, and the use of the awards/recognition systems. With the PHS transformation, one of the areas that the EPAC has been working on is the development of various readiness deployment roles that may be supported by engineers.

The EPAC meets the fourth Thursday of each month. Local representatives that are members of the EPAC include LCDR Dave Ausdemore from CDC and CDR Sue Neurath from ATSDR. Feel free to contact either one of these officers for additional information or check out the PHS engineers' web site at [www.usphsengineers.org](http://www.usphsengineers.org).

### **ACOA Crunch and Run Events- June 03- June 04(Seven down, many to go and One Year Complete!)**

ACOA has sponsored the commissioned corps annual fitness test at St Pius High School track on the third Saturday of each month. During the last 7 events, **101** officers have completed the fitness test! Also, we've consistently had help from a volunteer pool of **10** officers ready to demonstrate and proctor. We owe a great "Thanks" to the following: **Leaders: CAPT Arnold Manangan, CAPT Ralph O'Connor and LCDR Tina Lankford** **Volunteers: LCDR Joe Little, LCDR Dana Jones, CDR Sue Neurath, LCDR Nelson Adekoya, CDR Susanne Pickering, LT Jennifer DiPietra and LT Miguel Cruz.**

Although officers may complete this requirement in the company of one other officer serving as proctor, those officers that come to the Saturday test find that it is a lot of fun and usually do better than expected due to proper techniques and coaching and of course from the cheering on of their fellow comrades.

***"It's great to get to meet other officers in Atlanta and gets the weekend off to a good start."***



### **GOV Perdue Proclaims PHS Day in Georgia.**

On July 2, 2004, Atlanta Area PHS Commissioned Officers were on hand when Governor Sonny Perdue signed a proclamation making July 16, 2004 as Public Health Service Day in Georgia. This date corresponds with the 206<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Public Health Service. Those present for the signing ceremony represented CDC, Region 4 Health Administrator, ATSDR, FDA, and one retired PHS Officer.

The Proclamation can be viewed at the Commissioned Corps Display Case at CDC located in Building 1, Roybal Campus.



## 206<sup>th</sup> PHS Anniversary a hit with Participants

On July 16<sup>th</sup>, the ACOA sponsored a lecture commemorating the 206<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Public Health Service. Guest speakers included RADM Dixie Snider, RADM Henry Falk (ret), CAPT Charles Schable, and RADM Kenneth Moritsugu from the Office of the Surgeon General.



RADM Kenneth Moritsugu



RADM Dixie Snider



RADM Henry Falk (ret)



CAPT Charles Schable      CAPT Sven Rodenbeck

CAPT Sven Rodenbeck representing CDC's Commissioned Corps Professional Advisory Committee

introduced those members present and re emphasized the lines of communication between officers and the CDC Director. CAPT Austin Hayes moderated the morning and introduced the honored guests.



CAPT Austin Hayes



The Atlanta Area Honor Cadre opened the event by posting the colors. The Honor Cadre was comprised of CDR Knowles, CDR Wilkins, CDR Mott, and CDR McDuffie.



The USPHS Choir Ensemble also preformed: The Ensemble was directed by Dr Shaun Amos, and accompanied on piano by CAPT Robert Mullan (ret USPHS). The Ensemble performers included: CAPT Rodriguez, LCDR West, CDR Lester, CDR Sanders, CDR Mainzer, CDR Brown-Kiefer, LCDR Sood, and LCDR Spears.

A very special thanks goes out to the ACOA Special Project Committee for the outstanding job they did in preparing the PHS Anniversary.