

# ONE HEALTH™

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U.S. Army Public Health Command

Summer 2015

## ► ORGANIZATION DAY

PLUS:

- **BSHOP program overview**
- **Army scientists visit high school**



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*(COVER) USAPHC employees enjoy the festivities at the final Organization Day June 26.*



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**USAPHC retired commander returns**

**JANE GERVASONI**  
EDITOR

**R**etired Maj. Gen. Dean G. Sienko, former commander of the U.S. Army Public Health Command, returned to Aberdeen Proving Ground May 18 to share some insights with members of his former command.

Sienko currently serves as the associate dean for preventive medicine and public health at the College of Medicine at Michigan State University. He provided comparisons of Army and civilian public health.

He addressed about 100 USAPHC technical experts along with Brig. Gen. John Poppe, OTSG deputy chief of staff for public health, Col. John V. Teyhen, III, current USAPHC commander, John Resta, director of the Army Institute of Public Health and Dr. Amy Millikan-Bell, USAPHC medical advisor.

“Public health in the civilian sector is very broad,” explained Sienko. “There is a lot that civilian organizations can learn about population health from the Army because of the wide range of studies done on Army populations.”

Sienko continued by quoting Peter F. Drucker, management philosophy leader, and he explained that an organization needs to understand its mission, its customers and their needs, and build a plan that can change and grow with the organization.



“There are many parallels in the public health arena within the Army and civilian worlds,” Sienko said. “It is important that there is value for both parties in developing collaborations between government and civilian organizations.”

Collaboration requires that government entities follow certain regulations.

“Civilian organizations, especially universities, often need funding for collaborative projects,” he explained. “This can make col-



laboration difficult for organizations like the Army Public Health Command, but USAPHC can offer information, data and sometimes internships as part of a joint relationship.”

Sienko also visited other members of the command and said that the Army was ahead of the power curve in the area of corporate wellness.

“Dr. Sienko said that experiences learned from Army Wellness Centers and Army Community Health Promotion Councils could assist the civilian sector in the area of population health,” said Millikan-Bell.

Sienko also emphasized the importance of leadership in building a solid foundation in the public health arena, Millikan-Bell said.

“I was very happy to return to Public Health Command to make a presentation on collaboration between the Army and civilian public health world,” Sienko said. “The Public Health Command is a tremendous national asset whose relevance goes far beyond the confines of military installations.” ▲

*(LEFT) Dr. Dean Sienko, retired major general and former U.S. Army Public Health Command commander, addresses members of the USAPHC May 18 at the Aberdeen Proving Ground–South auditorium.*

*(RIGHT) Col. John Teyhen, commander of the U.S. Army Public Health Command, Brig. Gen. John Poppe, Office of the Surgeon General deputy chief of staff for public health, Dr. Dean Sienko, retired major general and former USAPHC commander, and John Resta, director of the Army Institute of Public Health, met during Sienko’s visit to his former command.*

# Army scientists invade Havre de Grace High School

JANE GERVASONI  
EDITOR

**F**ROM MADAGASCAR HISSING COCKROACHES AND MOSQUITO LARVAE TO FOOD SAFETY AND THE PERFORMANCE TRIAD, STUDENTS IN THE HAVRE DE GRACE HIGH SCHOOL, MARYLAND, BIOMEDICAL PROGRAM GOT A PERSONAL LOOK AT PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE MILITARY DURING NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK.

U.S. Army Public Health Command experts celebrated National Public Health Week by teaching 44 ninth and 10th grade students about a variety of public health-related careers.

As part of the event on April 9, technical experts in ergonomics, health promotion, food safety, entomology, vector-borne disease, recycling and risk communications spoke to the students about how their technical areas supported public health for the Army and the Department of Defense.

Todd Hoover, certified exercise physiologist health education specialist in USAPHC's Health Promotion and Wellness Portfolio, captured the students attention immediately by talking about how electronic devices can help promote health. Students with fitness monitors shared the number of steps they take in a day as they learned about the importance of the Army Surgeon General's Performance Triad, which advocates that sleep, activity and nutrition are vital components of achieving good health.

"The presentation on health and the military was very interesting," said Andrea Cubberley, a ninth-grade student in the program who is interested in joining the Army.

But, as she found out, a career in health education was just one of many health-related professions that promote health in the military. The next speakers talked about a subject all the students could understand—food.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 William Warren, food safety and defense officer, and Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Gill, Veterinary Services senior non-commissioned officer, explained food safety and the ways the veterinary sciences experts ensure safe food for Soldiers and their families.

"You see containers of food in the grocery stores all the time," Gill said. "But do you know how to store food at appropriate temperatures and do you know what happens when food is not kept at the right temperature?"

Warren and Gill produced a food thermometer and showed students how to check food temperature and explained that failure to maintain food above or below the temperature danger zone of 41°F – 135°F can allow bacteria to grow to dangerous levels that could cause

foodborne illnesses like salmonella. They continued by explaining how foodborne illnesses can defeat an Army on the battlefield.

Luke Butler, a 10th grade student in the Biomedical Program, said that he enjoyed learning about food safety and its importance to the military.

"They (Warren and Gill) explained the education they needed to learn to do their jobs which are important for the health of the Soldiers," he said.

Anne Radavich and Kevin Harkins, USAPHC entomologists, shifted the focus from foodborne illness to vector-borne diseases.

"The two most common disease vectors around the home are ticks and mosquitoes," explained the entomologists.

Showing the students a container with mosquito larvae, they explained the life cycle of the insects and how to reduce the numbers of both ticks and mosquitoes around their homes.

Radavich, who is also an officer in the Army Reserve, told the students she became an Army entomologist, and she also explained that historically, insect- and arthropod-borne diseases have changed the outcome of battles, and through those battles, the course of wars.

"When it was time for college, I wanted to pick a major I would enjoy, and hopefully, one I would be good at," Radavich said. "After five years of 4-H Club entomology, the choice to study insects was easy."

Pat Rippey, who has spent 30 years as an environmental scientist at USAPHC, is enthusiastic about the importance and benefits of recycling. She related her specialty to the students' lives by asking them how their families recycle.

From recycling, the topic switched to ergonomics. David Kolson, USAPHC ergono-

mist, described how ergonomics and the musculoskeletal system related to the students' classes on the human body. He then explained how ergonomists work with physical and occupational therapists, industrial hygienists and others professional specialties to protect the health of Soldiers, nurses, office-, construction- and warehouse-workers, dentists, pilots and other personnel.

Andrea Clark, USAPHC health risk communication specialist, rounded out the visit by explaining the importance of communication, especially in the area of public health, and how technical experts are empowered by learning good risk communication skills.

"Risk Communication is a science-based approach for communicating effectively in high-stakes, emotionally charged, controversial situations," Clark said. "People interpret risks differently, and risk communication helps explain the science so the audience understands risks and dangers."

Clark explained that discussing science and scientific knowledge can be difficult in emotionally-charged situations. She uses her communication skills to help scientists present their information simply, openly and honestly to enable people to make good, informed decisions.

Beth Martin and Lyndsey Fisher, Biomedical Science Program teachers, expressed their gratitude to the members of the USAPHC who visited the school.

"It was a great opportunity for the students to hear about career fields and how to prepare for the different careers," said Martin. "We hope that you can come back again with more of your team members and speak to the whole student body." ▲

(TOP) Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Gill, Veterinary Services senior non-commissioned officer, demonstrates the importance of food safety.

(MIDDLE) A student listens as Anne Radavich, USAPHC entomologist, introduces her to Madagascar hissing cockroaches.

(BOTTOM) Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Gill, Chief Warrant Officer 4 William Warren, Andrea Clark, Anne Radavich, Pat Rippey, Todd Hoover, Kevin Harkins and David Kolson provided presentations for the students in the Biomedical Science Program at Havre de Grace High School April 9.



# PHCR–Europe Environmental Health Engineering Division joins Europe professional network

**BETTINA ECKELS**  
PHCR–EUROPE  
ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER

Public Health Command Region–Europe’s Environmental Health Engineering Division recently joined a German professional network.

The “Deutscher Verein des Gas-und Wasserfaches e.v.-Technisch-wissenschaftlicher Verein,” the German technical and scientific association for gas and water, founded in 1859 in Frankfurt, Germany, promotes the gas and water industry in technical and scientific aspects, focusing on safety, environmental protection and sanitation. Its tasks include the cooperation with similar domestic and foreign associations, and exchange of experiences, views and information with politics, authorities, business, science and consumers.

DVGW’s professional relationship with the Public Health Command Region–Europe was established in the beginning of 2013 through Environmental Health Engineering Division participation in DVGW events. The relationship deepened over a DVGW-information event at the EHE office, as well as a visit to the “DVGW-Technologiezentrum Wasser” in Karlsruhe, Germany.

In fiscal year 2015, EHE joined the “DVGW-Family” of authorities, institutes and organizations becoming part of the DVGW network. Stefan Neuschwander, the managing director of the DVGW Regional Office Saarland, visited EHE April 23 to provide a brief introduction of the DVGW and to present the membership certificate. The June 2015 edition of the DVGW journal includes an article introducing PHCR–Europe/EHE as a new member.

“It is amazing to think that the DVGW has focused on safety, environmental protection, and sanitation in both the water and gas industries for over 150 years,” said Lt. Col. Alick Smith, Chief of Environmental Health Engineering and Health Risk Management at PHCR–Europe.



Stefan Neuschwander, managing director of the Deutscher Verein des Gas-und Wasserfaches e.v.-technisch-wissenschaftlicher Verein Regional Office Saarland, presents Lt. Col. Alick E. Smith, Environmental Health Engineering and Health Risk Management chief, with a certificate of membership.



Members of the Environmental Health Engineering Division at Public Health Command Region–Europe, join together to celebrate receiving the certificate of membership to the Deutscher Verein des Gas-und Wasserfaches e.v.-technisch-wissenschaftlicher Verein.  
Front Row: Staff Sgt. Sharia Leal, Yuliya Shatilova, Spc. Shanice Alexander, Stefan Neuschwander, Bettina Eckels, Lt. Col. Alick Smith, Michael Corry and 1st Lt. Alain Pierre. Back Row: Sgt. Jack Delphia, Nathan Davis, Capt. William Amerson, Pfc. Tyler Paradise, Maj. Richard McNemea, Sgt. Eddy Luengas, Maj. Theodore Wilson, Lindsay Burt, Capt. Stanley Gorzelnik and Capt. Juan Mendez

“Our membership in this international organization, based in our host nation of Germany, will provide us (EHE) with many opportunities to learn and professionally interact with our host nation government and health department officials, scientific associations and subject matter experts on water-related regulations, procedures and research topics,” Smith said.

The Environmental Health Engineering Division of the PHCR–Europe provides environmental health engineering and management support focusing on drinking water and sanitation, water resources, health risk evaluation, solid and medical waste, entomology and pest control supporting the U.S. military community in Europe, Africa and Asia. The

PHCR–Europe Laboratory Sciences Department is an accredited full-service laboratory specializing in biological, environmental, occupational health and public health related analytical laboratory testing.

“What’s really encouraging is that because of our expertise and support to the military community, the DVGW has already invited us to participate in professional excursions and training events organized by the DVGW. We are excited and look forward to participating in and contributing to this professional network,” Smith said. ▲

**“It is amazing to think that the DVGW has focused on safety, environmental protection, and sanitation in both the water and gas industries for over 150 years.”**

— Lt. Col. Alick Smith  
Chief of Environmental Health Engineering and Health Risk Management

## Collaboration leads to success: Industrial Hygiene Field Services Program uses data to protect Soldiers

**JANE GERVASONI**  
EDITOR

When a customer presents the U.S. Army Public Health Command technical experts with a challenge, the USAPHC does everything in its power to provide a rapid and accurate response.

Recently, a request came from the U.S. Army Special Operations Command and its subordinate unit, the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, located at Fort Bragg, N.C., to assess airborne metals generated from small arms ammunition, demolition devices and other pyrotechnic devices used in training performed by Soldiers and Department of the Army civilians within the command. Without hesitation, USAPHC industrial hygienists began to develop a sampling strategy.

“We wanted to use air sampling to identify key exposure sources in order to target recommendations and mitigation strategies specifically for close-quarters battle training activities,” explained Alice Weber, USAPHC industrial hygienist.

According to Weber, various commands on Fort Bragg have adopted the most protective health standards within the Army for Soldiers and DA civilians who are training and instructing on ranges. These standards are based on recommendations by the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine.

Air sampling is a tool that can be used to identify major sources of exposure that can then be removed or controlled so that standards are met and Soldiers’ health is protected.

“Although there has been an ongoing air sampling project at the training area, the range requested a quick turn-around on a specific set of air sample results collected while Soldiers fired new lead-free ammunition,” Weber said.

Weber conveyed the USAOC’s need for a quick turn-around to the other eight members of her USAPHC survey team, the USAPHC analysis laboratory, and data-management professionals.

The data collected by USAPHC would show that progress had been made in preventing exposure during training and would justify the expenditure of the more costly lead-free ammunition.

“This really was a team effort, and a great example of how individuals with different skill sets can work together in a timely fashion to help out a key customer,” Weber said.

Kevin Wisniewski, USAPHC industrial hygienist, explained that the team used a recently developed capability within the Defense Occupational Environmental Health Readiness System Industrial Hygiene module (DOEHRS-IH), which allows electronic files containing sample information to be transferred bi-directionally between DOEHR-IH, and the USAPHC’s Laboratory Sciences Portfolio laboratory information system.

“Sample results were imported directly into the Defense Occupational and Environmental Health Readiness System-Industrial Hygiene,” explained Wisniewski. “This eliminated errors that could have occurred when data was entered manually, and this process also saved time.”

“We are the first analytical laboratory within the Department of Defense that provides industrial hygiene sample analyses to use this capability,” Wisniewski said. “This is due to the collaboration of Monica Ahuna-Williams, USAPHC information technology specialist, and Curtis Oliver, USAPHC chemist, who developed the programming to allow the data transfer.”

“DOEHRS-IH allows the Department of Defense to manage occupational and environmental health risk data and actively track biological, chemical and physical health hazards,” according to Brenda Jones, DOEHR Program manager. “The system can capture data such as that used by the industrial hygiene team and share that data with the lab.”

“The USAPHC lab provided results for more than 30 air samples collected to compare the lead-free round to traditional ballistic ammunition,” according to Weber. “The results were available faster than the requested turn-around time of three business days. This enabled the team to quickly generate summary data slides for the command.”

Collaboration within the USAPHC laboratory, USAPHC DOEHR-IH Data Science team and Industrial Hygiene Field Services Program made it possible to collect data, transfer it electronically and provide sample analyses accurately and more rapidly than in previous sampling projects.

“This effort was a prime example of how technology, communication and collaboration can ensure high-quality service for our customers,” Weber said.

The air sampling results validated, as expected, that firing lead-free ammunition yields no airborne lead as compared to legacy ammunition. The USAPHC assessment provided the range commander with data that validated a U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School core value of protecting the warfighter while executing mission essential training. ▲

(TOP) Brian Grace and Shih-Houng Young, industrial hygienists and team members at the Army Institute of Public Health, collect surface wipe samples for lead in a shoot house.  
(Photos by Alice Weber, USAPHC)

(BOTTOM) Army Institute of Public Health team members Julia Holden, health technician, and Rachel Seymour, industrial hygienist, prepare pumps for sampling in a shoot house.



**This really was a team effort,  
and a great example of how  
individuals with different  
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help out a key customer.**

— Alice Weber  
USAPHC industrial hygienist

# Public Health Command holds final

# ORGANIZATION DAY

**MONICA BULLOCK**  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

The last Organization Day celebrated as a command for PHC was held Friday, June 26 at the CAPA Field Pavilion on the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. USAPHC employees were able to relax and participate in activities with other people from across the organization, and they felt the day was a resounding success.

“O-Days are so important because it’s such a relief to give the entire organization a day off to relax and see each other. People get to talk about things that normally wouldn’t come up at work,” said Alicia Shiflett, a histotechnician working at PHC whose husband is deployed in the Army.

The day started off early in the morning with a color run and 5k walk, where the runners were donned in white and volunteers along the trail cast clouds of color onto them as they passed by. The rest of the activities were held at CAPA Field or its pavilion, except for the fishing tournament, the bake-off, the golf tournament and open swimming at the bayside pool.

Wholesome, recreational activities such as basketball pickup games, volleyball, Zumba, a softball game, card games, horseshoes and corn hole were offered throughout the morning and afternoon.

“I love O-Day because it’s a place to have a great time with people you don’t see often, and it’s such a relaxed atmosphere —plus the food is good too,” said Ivan Walters, a PHC editor who brought his giant rabbits to O-Day to set up a miniature petting zoo.



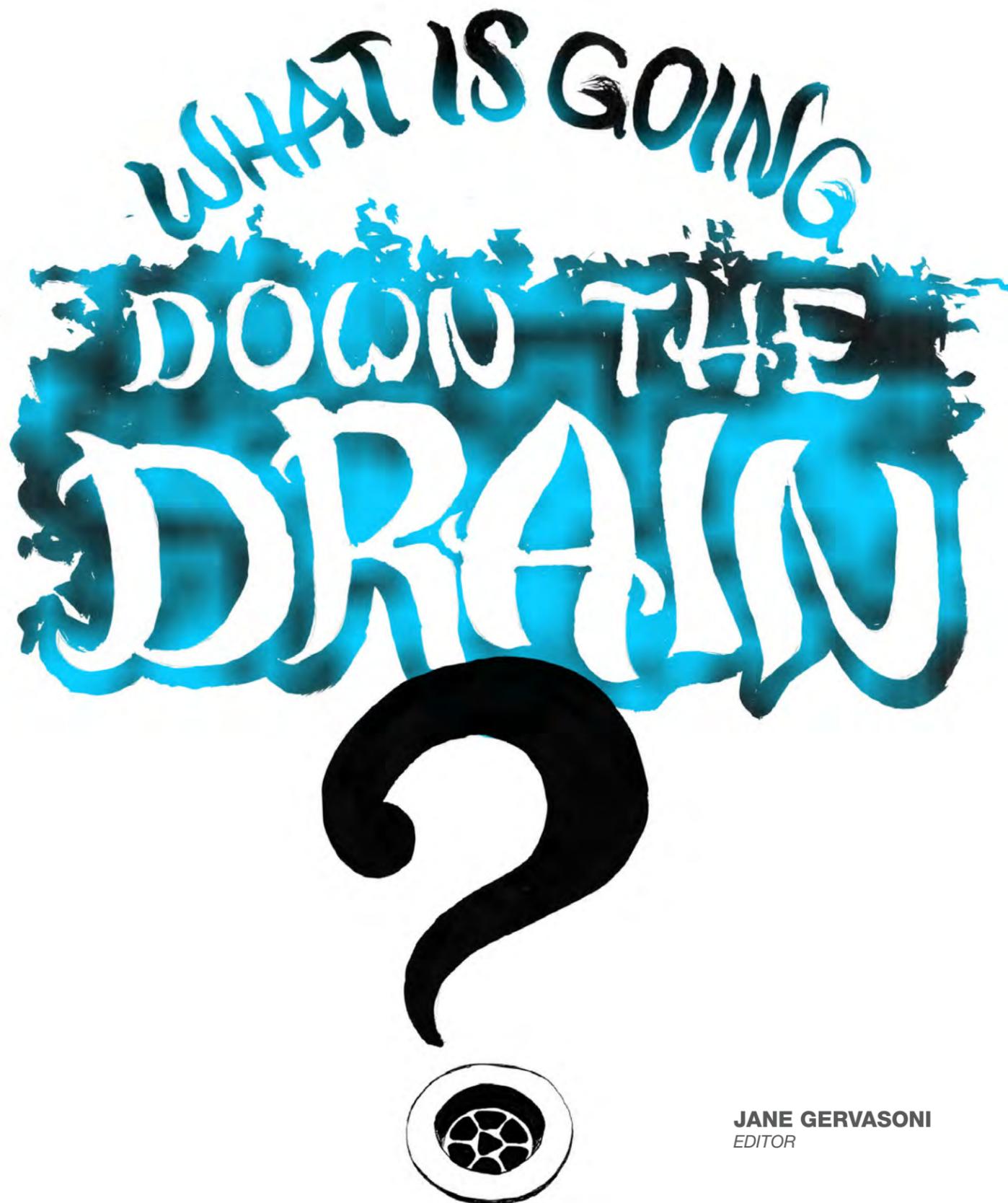
A barbecue lunch was catered by Mission BBQ consisting of pulled pork, chicken and brisket on buns, coleslaw, beans and macaroni and cheese. Cake and ice cream were served for dessert, and many people spoke of the amazing quality of the food.

O-Day featured activities for children as well, providing fun activities for them like board games, face painting, the giant rabbit petting zoo, a playground, hula hoops, jump rope and relay races.

“My favorite part was feeding grass to the bunnies,” said Shiflett’s four-year-old daughter, Alena, whom she brought with her. It was their first O-Day for both of them and they thoroughly enjoyed it. Shiflett mentioned she was grateful that they had so many things for the kids to do as much as the adults.

“Working at PHC is a great job; it’s a flexible work schedule and you get amazing co-workers,” said Walters. “O-Day is a day everyone in the command looks forward to, and this last one held as a command ended on a good note.” ▲





**JANE GERVASONI**  
EDITOR

The U.S. Army Medical Command is at the forefront in identifying and quantifying the pharmaceuticals and personal care products, or PPCPs, that end up in the wastewater discharges from its hospitals, clinics and veterinary facilities—all to help protect the health of Soldiers, their families and the environment.

In the interest of public health, the U.S. Army Public Health Command Water Resources Program is studying what is going down the drain at Army hospitals. They are working to identify and quantify the PPCPs in the wastewater discharged from a major military hospital and determine the ability of the water treatment plant to remove the compounds.

These PPCPs include prescription and over-the-counter drugs used by humans and animals, topical grooming products like shampoos and perfumes, naturally-occurring products such as cholesterol, and hormones, according to Jennifer Cearfoss, an environmental engineer at the USAPHC Water Resources Program.

“Pharmaceuticals and personal care products have become contaminants of emerging concern due to their extensive use and increasing presence in water resources,” Cearfoss said.

PPCPs make their way into the wastewater system through human or animal use, human or animal excretion, improper disposal, and from waste material used in hospital procedures such as chemotherapy.

“Limited research has been done on the effects of PPCPs on the environment and human health because the concentrations of these compounds tend to be very small, and until recently, detection of low levels of these PPCPs was not possible.

“We sampled for 145 compounds, and our laboratory analyses found that 45 compounds were discharged in the wastewater from the hospital,” Cearfoss said. “Our analysis determined that the military hospital had a very small contribution of PPCPs when compared to the installation as a whole, and the wastewater treatment plant was effective at removing the majority of PPCPs.”

*continued on page 14*



Effective removal of most PPCPs will have a positive effect on the water supply downstream from the wastewater treatment facility. "Drinking water intakes are often downstream of another municipality's wastewater treatment outflow," explained Cearfoss. "As a result, untreated PPCPs can be easily introduced into a drinking water supply."

Even though there were no immediate health concerns, the long-term worries are that PPCPs in wastewater could increase the number of antibiotic resistant bacteria, negatively affect aquatic life, and cause the build up of toxins in the tissues of our aquatic food sources.

"Individuals need to become more health aware when buying personal care products," Cearfoss said. "It is important to read labels and look for items with fewer ingredients. Also, simple soap, water and vinegar may be just as effective or better than some of the newer antimicrobial products for cleaning and disinfecting in the home."

Learning the correct way to dispose of PPCPs is important for human health and the environment.

The USAPHC has designed a pharmaceutical decision wheel that provides regulation and guidance on how to safely and legally dispose of drugs as part of an education process for hospitals and clinics, according to Michael Eck, an environmental engineer with the USAPHC Waste Management Program.

"The Department of Defense also has a pharmaceutical reverse distribution contract that allows vendors to take back pharmaceuticals from hospitals, dispose of them safely and give a credit to the hospital for unused or expired drugs," Eck said. "This is a cost-saving effort for the hospitals as well."

"People need to change their attitude about health and the need for medication. They need to work to prevent disease and injury by following the Performance Triad and its recommendations about sleep, activity and nutrition," said Eck.

Individuals who stay healthy by following the Performance Triad principles use fewer PPCPs so they save money and help the environment. ▲

# UNIQUE PROGRAM

ADDRESSES

# BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL HEALTH ISSUES

ACROSS THE ARMY

**CHANEL S. WEAVER**  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

**Today's Soldiers are held to high standards, and expected to display the Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage.**

Although military service is still regarded as one of the most highly-respected professions, one should remember that these Soldiers are still human. Many of the issues that Soldiers face are similar to those encountered by their civilian counterparts.

The Army Institute of Public Health's Behavioral and Social Health Outcomes Program, or BSHOP, recognizes this truth.

BSHOP was created in 2008 in response to Army leader's concerns about suicide, post-traumatic stress, substance abuse and other potentially harmful behavioral health concerns.

The program identifies trends in behavioral or social concerns such as suicide, homicide, sexual assault, domestic violence and other forms of physical aggression, and examines risk factors that may contribute to these behaviors. This surveillance and analysis is reported to Army leaders and used to prioritize actions to mitigate the factors that contribute to negative behaviors with the goal of preventing them or reducing their occurrence.

Based at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., a team of 35 individuals, including epidemiologists, behavioral health clinicians and sociologists work in the program.

"Our program experts identify and assess psychological and social threats to Soldier health and combat readiness, and suggest strategies the Army can use to prevent or reduce these threats," said Dr. Christine Riordan, BSHOP program manager.

One of the unique capabilities that exists within the program is its ability to perform behavioral health epidemiological consultations. With short notice, experts in this program travel to Army installations or unit locations at the request of commanders to gather data and assess events within a specific community where behavioral health issues occur at unusual levels.

"If there is a significant cluster of violence, suicides, hospitalizations, deaths or other behavioral or social issues that occur within a

unit or installation, our experts can deploy within 48 hours,” said Riordan.

For instance, when a mass shooting occurred at Fort Hood in 2014, BSHOP experts led a large-scale public health response screening effort to identify individuals who may be at risk for behavioral health issues, and to refer these individuals for appropriate follow-up and care as needed.

“Nearly 4,000 individuals participated in the screening, and we received positive feedback from the Fort Hood leadership team about the usefulness of the screening,” said Riordan.

One of the most popular reports that the BSHOP produces is the Surveillance of Suicidal Behavior (SSBP) report, which is released annually.

The report gives the most up-to-date statistics surrounding Army suicides for a particular year, as well as other related risk factors. The first SSBP was produced in 2012, but BSHOP has been providing an annual suicide surveillance report since 2008.

In addition, BSHOP routinely produces fact sheets for recognizing the signs of suicide and reducing suicides in the ranks.

“Suicides can be prevented by recognizing and acting on signs of suicide risk,” said Dr. Kelly Forsys-Donahue, a psychologist in the BSHOP.

Another report produced by the BSHOP includes the Behavioral Health Risk Assessment Data Report, which summarizes self-reported behavioral health screening data and characterizes risk for behavioral health outcomes for those Soldiers returning from deployment.

Other reports authored by the BSHOP program include an annual mortality report. ▲

For more information on BSHOP, visit this website:

U.S. Army Public Health Command  
<http://phc.amedd.army.mil/organization/institute/deds/Pages/BSHOP.aspx>

One of the most popular reports that the BSHOP produces is the Surveillance of Suicidal Behavior (SSBP) fact sheet, which is released annually. The report gives the most up-to-date statistics surrounding Army suicides for a particular year, as well as other related risk factors.

## Army Institute of Public Health employee leads American Board of Toxicology



**CHANEL S. WEAVER**  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

Dr. Mark Johnson serves as a prime example of how hard work, initiative and dedication to duty can eventually cause one to reap huge dividends.

He started working for the U.S. Army Environmental Hygiene Agency 20 years ago as a post graduate intern following successful completion of his graduate degree from the University of Delaware. He completed his doctoral degree in environmental toxicology at the Veterinary School at Virginia Tech while working as an intern and then as a civilian with the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine.

After many years of study and experience, and filling positions of increasing responsibility, Johnson serves as the toxicology portfolio director for the Army Institute of Public Health.

In this capacity, Johnson is responsible for serving as the operational and technical arm for the Army Surgeon General and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for toxicological matters. He is also responsible for serving as the technical authority on toxicology and the public health toxicology program worldwide.

Because of his contributions to the field of toxicology and his productivity while serving as a board member, Johnson was also recently elected to serve as president of the American Board of Toxicology. He has been a member of the ABT Board of Directors since 2012 and certified as a Diplomate of the ABT since 2002. He serves on the board with others from industry, government, academia and other non-governmental organizations.

## Dr. Mark Johnson

Toxicology portfolio director for the Army Institute of Public Health

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### Founded in 1979, the purpose of the ABT is:

- to encourage the study of the science of toxicology;
- to stimulate its advancement by establishing standards for professional practice;
- to prepare and administer procedures including tests for the implementation of such standards; and
- to confer recognition by certificates or otherwise upon those members of the profession who, measured against such standards, demonstrate competence.

Members of the ABT must possess certain credentials, have and maintain experience working in the field of toxicology and pass a rigorous exam to be certified by the group.

Although his term as ABT president only began in April, Johnson already has plans for helping the ABT grow.

"We want to establish a code of ethics for our professionals, and also expand our membership to Europe, Korea, India and Africa," said Johnson.

An advocate for the use of technology, he is also interested in working to develop a smart phone application to help potential members study for the certification exam.

Those individuals who work with Johnson at the AIPH are not surprised that the ABT elected him to a leadership role.

"We are delighted that Mark will play a critical role in helping to establish professional standards for toxicologists in today's global environment," said John Resta, director of the AIPH. "His election represents an ongoing commitment to pursue continual professional learning and growth. Professional certification and licensure is a foundation of the AIPH's high-reliability organizational strategy."

Johnson credits his experience at the AIPH for helping him to become the leader that he is today.

"I am fortunate to work with highly-trained, incredibly smart people, who help us perform our mission of promoting health and preventing disease, injury and disability in our Soldiers, their families, retirees and Army civilians," said Johnson.

Although his dual roles at the AIPH and the American Board of Toxicology keep him busy, Johnson also finds time to pursue volunteer assignments in his local community.

He recently served as the president of the Maryland Ornithological Society, and is currently an associate editor of *Maryland Birdlife*, a technical journal dedicated to advances in avian science in the Mid-Atlantic region. He also serves as a member of the Eden Mill Nature Center, and plays the guitar for his local church.

He is married, and the father of two college students who are pursuing careers in physics and mathematics.

Johnson said a love for learning is a value passed down from generation to generation in his family. He credits his mother for motivating him to be a scientist.

"My mother was certainly a role model for me," said Johnson. "From a young age, she encouraged me to be a critical thinker, and that skill has helped me in my Army career." ▲

For more information, visit these webpages:

U.S. Army Public Health Command

<http://phc.amedd.army.mil/topics/labsciences/tox/Pages/default.aspx>

American Board of Toxicology

<http://www.abtox.org/HomePage.aspx>

**"I am fortunate to work with highly-trained, incredibly smart people, who help us perform our mission of promoting health and preventing disease, injury and disability in our Soldiers, their families, retirees and Army civilians."**

## in memoriam

### Soldier, scientist, mentor, friend— the Public Health Command mourns

JANE GERVASONI

EDITOR

**M**aj. (retired) David P. Alberth passed away peacefully in Harford Memorial Hospital in Havre de Grace, Maryland, on May 3, surrounded by family and friends.

His career as a nuclear medical science officer and Department of the Army civilian in the Army Medical Department spanned more than 40 years.

"There was no other Army health physicist with more extraordinary dedication and consistent contribution to health physics while supporting the Uniformed Services and the AMEDD," said Col. John C. Cuellar, U.S. Army Public Health Command Health Physics Program manager. "Nearly every nuclear medical science officer commissioned since 1980 was mentored by Mr. Alberth. His guidance, mentorship, and teaching positively helped develop these officers."

"Dave was a teacher and always willing to share his knowledge and interests," said Fran Szrom, retired USAPHC health physicist.

As the Army subject matter expert on depleted uranium exposure, he was a participant in the Presidential Special Oversight Board and the Pentagon's Office of the Special Assistant for Gulf War Illnesses, Medical Readiness, and Military Deployments.

"His vision and determination led to the Capstone Depleted Uranium Aerosol Characterization and Risk Assessment Study which culminated with the publication of the March 2009 issue of the Health Physics Journal," Szrom said. "The planning for this study had begun 10 years earlier, and I had the privilege of working with him during the entire project."

He was also a significant contributor to the textbook *Military Medicine* and the senior author for the ionizing radiation chapter. As the senior health physicist in the USAPHC, he was consistently the go-to scientist for radiation safety related issues, according to Cuellar.

"Working with Dave was unforgettable. No matter what the issue, his dedication to going beyond simply answering a question was remarkable," explained Gerald Faló, USAPHC health physicist. "He wanted to respond to the actual concerns brought to him, not just the surface concerns."



A man of culture as well as science, Alberth was fluent in French and German and taught himself music theory and zither as a child.

"He was also dedicated to his sister who had mobility issues of her own, and he was always thinking of others," Faló said.

His technical expertise and gentle personality will be missed.

"I knew Dave for 21 years and will miss my mentor, colleague and friend, as will many from the Army's HP community," Szrom said.

Alberth was buried at Arlington National Cemetery. ▲

# COMMENTARY:

**JANE GERVASONI**  
EDITOR

As the editor of the Command's magazine, *One Health*, I have been privileged to work with some of the most impressive individuals in the areas of military preventive medicine and public health. Many of the members of the U.S. Army Public Health Command have contributed to this publication since its first edition in the fall of 2010. Thanks to the contributions, guidance and suggestion from members of this Command, the USAPHC *One Health* magazine has become a prize-winning publication in the field of Army journalism.

As I look back on my more than 26 years as a public affairs specialist at the Army Environmental Hygiene Agency, the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine and the USAPHC, I am most grateful for the opportunity to work with such an impressive and caring group of military personnel and civilians.

Change has been the only constant during my time at this Command. Now we embark on another series of changes, and John Resta is correct when he says this Command is "going back to the future." (I've learned a lot from Mr. Resta.) It looks like the new organization will be similar to the old AEHA in many ways, and if we take time to learn from history, the new Army Public Health Center will be a true center of excellence.

Historically, teamwork has made this Command

an important asset for the Army and the Department of Defense. This Command is often characterized as the "Army's Center for Disease Control," and it has proven its worth and effectiveness on many occasions. Collaboration within the command and with others outside the Command is an important part of its success.

Working as the deputy director of the Force Health Protection Conference was one of the most fulfilling opportunities of my career. The challenge of establishing a multidisciplinary team of technical and administrative personnel to coordinate presentations of interest to a wide range of attendees was a personal highlight. The conference also served to confirm the excellence of this

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Command. I hope that one day, the Command may restart this highly successful method of sharing information.

I have learned that the Army is an amazing family. As a civilian, I was privileged to work with these skilled and talented professionals who exemplify the Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage. It has been an honor to be part of the Army team. Thanks to everyone, past and present, for the opportunity to work with you in service to our country and our Soldiers. It has been an honor and an amazing experience. ▲