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(COVER) Best warrior Sgt. Mario Leon shows the patient-handling skills that made him USAPHC's top NCO. See page 16 for story including top USAPHC Soldier Spc. Kyle Biggs. (Photo by Christina Graber, Visual Information Division)

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FOCUS

Scientific team collects fish to test for human health risk

JANE GERVASONI
EDITOR

Jennifer Cearfoss, U.S. Army Public Health Command Water Resources Program diving safety officer, sends a speared fish to the surface using a mesh bag connected to a float. (Photos by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

The hunters glide silently

through the warm Pacific waters of Kwajalein Atoll and spear fish that can provide a key to the health of the local environment. The hunters are Dr. Lisa Ruth, aquatic biologist, and Ellyce Bushong and Jennifer Cearfoss, environmental engineers, all from the U.S. Army Public Health Command Water Resources Program at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

Their goal is to determine if consumption of Kwajalein Atoll fish poses an unacceptable health risk to local fishermen.

The U.S. Army Kwajalein Atoll, or USAKA, is a coral reef formation located in the Republic of the Marshall Islands more than 2,000 miles southwest of Hawaii. USAKA consists of more than 100 islets, 11 of which currently serve as a test and evaluation range for ballistic missiles. The USAPHC has conducted surveys and provided environmental consultative services to USAKA for more than 25 years.

In this most recent study, several hundred fish were collected during a multi-week field investigation to assess the accumulation of potential contaminants that might affect the local population.

“A type of spear called a Hawaiian sling was used to collect the target fish species, which ranged from extremely small angelfish to much larger grouper and parrotfish,” explained Ruth, lead project officer.



Ellyce Bushong, environmental engineer with the USAPHC Water Resources Program, displays one of the target species, a grouper.

“We worked in collaboration with a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service diver not only to collect the fish, but to conduct biological surveys of the coral reef communities at each islet. This enabled us to deploy two separate teams of divers each time we entered the water,” said Cearfoss, dive safety officer.

“We all agree having the opportunity to conduct field work on a project like this is a pleasant change from our more traditional engineering projects that often take place in less scenic locations,” said Bushong.

But there were still rules to be followed in this underwater office.

“Guidelines from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee directed the way we treat the fish. We worked with Lt. Col. Dawn Fitzhugh, USAPHC veterinarian, to develop humane methods,” said Ruth.

“Our divers collected tissue samples from 60 different fish species to determine if the fish could be safely consumed by local Marshallese people,” explained William Fifty, USAPHC Water Resources Program manager.

“Contamination in the harbor area from industrial processes, such as sandblasting ships and the use of pesticides, raised concerns about the consumption of fish from the local area,” Ruth added.

“Previous studies indicated that the excellent marine water quality is impaired only in the immediate vicinity of industrial activities near the harbor and local landfill,” said Fifty.

“This project is a prime example of how the three pillars of public health—humans, animals and environment—interact and are dependent upon each other,” explained Lt. Col. William Bettin, director of the Environmental Health Engineering Portfolio at the USAPHC. “Decades of industrial activities have affected the marine environment, including the fish and mollusks consumed by human and animal populations. This project demonstrates the importance of public health.”

This study also brought together many of the important players in the federal environmental community.

“We work with the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, as well as the Republic of the Marshall Islands, to ensure the best possible science is used to protect people and the marine environment,” explained Cearfoss.

“OUR DIVERS COLLECTED TISSUE SAMPLES FROM 60 DIFFERENT FISH SPECIES TO DETERMINE IF THE FISH COULD BE SAFELY CONSUMED BY LOCAL MARSHALLESE PEOPLE”

— William Fifty

Water Resources Program manager

“Ultimately, as members of the scientific dive team, we play an important role in public health,” said Ruth. “Of course we enjoy diving and our project locations, but the most rewarding part is knowing that our work ensures the safety and health of the local population.”

Once fish and other samples have been collected, they are sent to the USAPHC laboratory and additional contract laboratories for analysis.

“Although the final evaluation will take some time to complete, it will include laboratory data, biological surveys of the study area, and a human health risk assessment,” said Ruth. “The final report will also make recommendations for future actions, if they are needed, to ensure safety of the Marshallese people and others who live and work in this paradise.” ▲



Divers Ellyce Bushong, Jennifer Cearfoss and Lisa Ruth, USAPHC Water Resources Program, prepare to enter the water for a day of sample collection.

Portfolio reorganization makes it easier to serve customers

JANE GERVASONI
EDITOR

IN AN EFFORT TO BETTER SERVE ITS CUSTOMERS AND CONSERVE RESOURCES, the U.S. Army Public Health Command Environmental Health Engineering Portfolio reviewed its technical program structure using the portfolio management process.

As a result of the review, the Ground Water and Solid Waste Program was disestablished, and its component sections were realigned under other EHE Portfolio programs.

“As we looked at the legacy portfolio programs, we saw redundancies and opportunities for better structure,” explained Kent Prinn, EHE Portfolio executive officer. “In addition, links to public health from the newly-aligned programs were clearer.

“We wanted our customers to understand the importance of our technical programs within the public health arena,” Prinn said. “Also, our technical skills and unique abilities needed to be consolidated and our programs restructured to meet future mission needs.”

After evaluating several options by scoring criteria of mission effectiveness, efficiency, structure and career program for employees, the scores indicated that reassigning sections within other programs in the portfolio would provide the best results for restructuring the portfolio.

Some employees didn’t like splitting up the Ground Water and Solid Waste Program because of its rich history of mission success, and their strong sense of identity with it, according to Lt. Col. William Bettin, EHE Portfolio director.

In addition, more than 20 people had to move offices to be in proximity to their new program areas.

“Individuals were moved to be closer to their new programs and to foster collabora-

tion among these newly formed groups,” said Bettin. “Our employees are important, and so we listened to them. Our final evaluation of the available options indicated that there was a better chance of long-term viability by realigning the programs.”

Program names within the portfolio have changed to reflect the realigned missions.

The Water Supply Management Program is now the Drinking Water and Sanitation Program, and a geohydrologist was added to the program.

The Surface Water and Wastewater Program is now the Water Resources Program. The WRP gained geologists, geohydrologists and engineering technicians.

The Hazardous and Medical Waste Program, which had worked closely in the past with the physical scientists in the Compliance and Pollution Prevention Section, gained those scientists and changed its name to the Waste Management Program.

“The names of the new programs more accurately reflect their missions,” explained John Resta, director of the Army Institute of Public Health. “By realigning these programs, our scientists are better able to collaborate and serve the public health needs of our customers.”

“Portfolio management has changed the way the USAPHC does business by analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats affecting an issue and using the information gathered to refine a business plan of action,” explained Bill Monk, manager of the Command Project Management Office.

The EHE reorganization reflects an annual process described in the Portfolio Management Handbook, available in the USAPHC intranet’s Command Project Management Office section. ▲

“Our employees are important, and so we listened to them. Our final evaluation of the available options indicated that there was a better chance of long-term viability by realigning the programs.”

—Lt. Col. William Bettin
EHE Portfolio director

NEWS AND NOTES FROM AROUND THE COMMAND

The Disease Epidemiology Program’s monthly epidemiology training sessions are conducted via Defense Connect Online and target community and public health nurses, epidemiology technicians, environmental science officers and preventive medicine officers across the Army. Three 30-minute training sessions are held to accommodate personnel from multiple time zones. During the May training event, 62 attendees from each of the public health services hubs shared how they used reportable medical event data to illustrate the impact of accurate and timely data entry in case reporting. The June session, attended by 82 people, addressed 10 steps in investigating of Norovirus outbreaks. Monthly sessions are planned. Contact John Ambrose, john.f.ambrose4.civ@mail.mil for more information.

The Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance Portfolio Disease Epidemiology Program has released Volume 1 of the U.S. Army Zoonotic Disease Report for the first quarter of 2013. The purpose of the ZDR is to provide collated information on current, emerging and re-emerging zoonoses to the medical support staff of the U.S. Army Public Health Command regions and regional medical commands. This initial report covers the first quarter of 2013 and compiles current human, animal and entomological information that affects military members and other beneficiaries on Army installations. It also describes significant emerging diseases worldwide. For questions about contents, comments or suggestions, contact usarmy.apg.medcom-phc.mbx.disease-epidemiologyprogram13@mail.mil. The full report is located at <http://phc.amedd.army.mil/whatsnew/Pages/PublicationDetails.aspx?type=Zoonotic%20Disease%20Report>.

Public Health Command Region–Europe hosted a German/American public health officer’s working group meeting in collaboration with the U.S. armed forces liaison officer for the German state of Rheinland-Pfalz. The event, held June 11, was attended by Department of Defense public health and force health protection leaders in Germany, and host-nation state public health officers from southwest Germany. The next meeting is planned for November, and the group expects to meet regularly. The group is primarily focused on response during an infectious disease outbreak, but the intent is to develop communication procedures and protocols that will work equally well in response to a natural disaster or a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or explosive incident.

A joint venture between the USAPHC and the Veterinary Corps, the First-Year Graduate Veterinary Education Program is in its fourth year. It is a one-year internship that reinforces critical veterinary food protection, public health, clinical veterinary medicine, and leadership skills and knowledge. Fort Belvoir, Va., was the beta site, graduating five interns in FY11. In FY12, Fort Bragg, N.C., and Joint Base Lewis–McChord, Wash., sites were added, and 15 interns graduated. This June, 22 Veterinary Corps captains graduated from FYGVE internship programs at Fort Belvoir, Fort Bragg, Fort Carson, Colo., Fort Hood, Texas, and JBLM. During their internship training, FY13 interns performed commercial facility sanitation audits and surgeries, as well as other curriculum items supporting the 151 critical tasks for Veterinary Corps officers. In FY14, two additional FYGVE sites are opening at Forts Benning, Ga., and Campbell, Ky. Twenty-five interns are expected to enter the FY14 class. The program is expected to reach full operational capacity with a FY16 class of 42–48 interns.

Mosquito pools are being tested at all three continental USAPHC regional commands for West Nile virus. Last year WNV was responsible for more than 5,600 cases of human illness and 286 deaths nationally, making 2012 the deadliest year for WNV since 2002. As of July 5, PHCR-North Entomological Sciences Branch and Laboratory Science Division received and tested 1,999 mosquitoes contained within 159 pools from the National Capital Region for WNV. A mosquito “pool” is a single sample in which mosquitoes of the same species, collected from the same trap on the same day have been combined. Evidence of WNV was detected and confirmed in one pool collected on May 28 and submitted to PHCR-N on June 14. This is the first positive detection in 2013 for WNV in mosquitoes on any Army installation, and an indicator that the agent of WNV is circulating in the mosquito population in the National Capital Region. In response to this positive result, installation personnel intensified mosquito trapping, breeding site inspections and elimination and have begun educating the community on how to protect themselves from mosquitoes. Currently, the PCHR-N WNV Surveillance Program consists of 12 participating Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine surveillance sites from Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia.

Maj. Robert R. Paul, public health veterinarian, and Lt. Col. William Flournoy, regional clinical consultant at PHCR-North, conducted the first quarterly Veterinary Grand Rounds video teleconference with 27 veterinary clinical officers and clinic non-commissioned officers in charge from 11 different locations throughout the region. The June 27 rounds were established to improve communication, assist networking and provide education within the region. This new professional development initiative consists of rare clinical cases review, sharing of lessons learned, and hot topic discussion. A second session is scheduled for Sept. 26. Contact Robert.r.paul.mil@mail.mil for additional information.

The Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center is holding a series of meetings to discuss expanded uses and types of specimens in the DOD Serum Repository. Initial meetings

addressed operational issues and needs and gaps that the serum repository might potentially fill, as well as supporting technologies. Representatives from the Institute of Medicine, academia, and military services attended. Coleen Baird, physician and manager of the Occupational and Environmental Medicine Portfolio Environmental Medicine Program, attended the first meeting and served as chair of the second.

Deanna Harkins, physician, and Jessica Sharkey, epidemiologist, in the Occupational and Environmental Medicine Portfolio Environmental Medicine Program, participated in multiple teleconferences over the last two months with the Veterans Administration working group. The group is developing a VA-operated registry of those exposed to burn pits and airborne hazards. The DOD is not going to create a separate registry, but coordinate with the VA to enroll service members in the VA’s registry.

Environmental Medicine Program staff also partnered with the VA’s offices of Public Health and Employee Education to sponsor the second annual Joint VA/DOD Airborne Hazards Symposium. The symposium, held Aug. 13 at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., brought together representatives from both organizations, DOD and the other military services, academia, and veteran advocacy groups. Attendees were updated on VA and DOD research and exchanged ideas about the VA burn pit registry, improving medical and epidemiological surveillance, and effective communication with provider and service member audiences.

Representatives of the Occupational and Environmental Medicine Portfolio Tri-Service Vision Conservation and Readiness Program participated in a teleconference June 24–25 with members of the Optical Fabrication Advisory Board and tri-service optometry consultants. Discussions included updates to the Joint Service Ophthalmic Regulation and its routing progress, deficiencies in M50 gas mask prescription inserts that have delayed Army mask deployment, decisions regarding eyeglass frames, and discussions of the new Web-based Spectacle Request Transmission System.

Sharon Beamer, Occupational and Environmental Medicine Portfolio Army Hearing Program hearing conservation consultant, along with members of the Fellows in the Excellence in Government Program, conducted hearing health education surveys of approximately 50 members of the U.S. Air Force Band in late June. The surveys addressed knowledge of hearing protection and the effects of noise on hearing. In addition to the survey, participants reviewed a revised Technical Guide 250, “Readiness thru Hearing Conservation,” as a part of the USAPHC/EIG quality improvement project that examines the effectiveness of hearing health education materials provided to active-duty personnel. The Air Force Band members were fitted with custom musician’s hearing protection by an Air Force audiologist.

Kristy Broska, Dave Whiteford, Sharon Woods and Craig Booher, Environmental Health Engineering Portfolio Operational Noise Program, with the support of the Maryland Army National Guard, measured noise levels of the UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters during run-ups July 2. The measurements were taken on Aberdeen Proving Ground–South at the Weide Army heliport. The data will allow military services to evaluate potential impacts when developing sites for new noise-sensitive facilities such as family housing or child care centers on military installations.

Art Asaki, Jason Anderson and Melissa Jones, Environmental Health Engineering Water Resources Program, evaluated and inventoried existing storm water system assets during July within the Fort Bragg, N.C., cantonment area, including Pope and Simmons Army airfields, and Camp MacKall. The mission was to identify deficiencies and make recommendations for upgrades to protect human health and the environment.

Jennifer Mancini and Lindsey Kneten, industrial hygienists in the Occupational Health Sciences Portfolio Industrial Hygiene Field Services Program, aided a Soldier suddenly stricken with heat stress June 6. This event occurred at a Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, dining facility. Mancini and Kneten noticed the woman having difficulties. They identified

she was in a state of disorientation and starting to lose motor control, so they provided aid and immediately called for medical assistance. Emergency medical treatment personnel arrived within five minutes and began treatment for a heat-related injury. The quick reaction and intervention by both Mancini and Kneten proved to be critical in preventing the Soldier from sustaining further injuries as a result of heat stress.

Baltimore Federal Executive Board winners were announced May 3 at a ceremony in Baltimore, Md. USAPHC silver winners were Lt. Col. Craig Gehrels, Occupational Health Sciences Portfolio, outstanding supervisor, and Chris Weir, G-6, outstanding professional (non-supervisory). Bronze winners were Edward Harding, OHS, public service career award, and Tariq Ahmido, OHS, rookie employee of the year (technical, scientific and program support).

Donald R. Ciliac, civilian audiologist in the Army Hearing Program and a retired Army colonel, was presented with the Military Audiology Association Founders award during July 9 at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. The award is presented to a current MAA member for excellence as a notable contributor to the advancement of professional issues related to audiology, hearing conservation or hearing science. This is the only time in the history of the Military Audiology Association that a recipient has been presented the same Department of Defense award twice. Ciliac is a founding father of Army audiology, serving 46 years as an Army audiologist, Department of the Army Civilian Hearing Conservation Consultant, and Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education Knowledge Preservation Program contractor. He retired from USAPHC in March 2013. Ciliac has mentored entire generations of uniformed and civilian DOD audiologists and earned this recognition for his long-lasting contributions to the field of military audiology. ▲

Leadership changes at U.S. Army Public Health Command



Maj. Gen. Dean G. Sienko (center) accepts the USAPHC's colors from Maj. Gen. Richard A. Stone, deputy Army surgeon general (right). Command Sgt. Maj. Gerald C. Ecker, at left, stands before the USAPHC color guard. (Photo by Christina Graber, Visual Information Division)

CHANEL S. WEAVER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

Maj. Gen. Dean G. Sienko assumed command of the U.S. Army Public Health Command in a May 23 ceremony at the Top of the Bay on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

Sienko replaced Maj. Gen. Jimmie O. Keenan, who became commander of Southern Regional Medical Command, Joint Base San Antonio, Texas.

Reviewing official Maj. Gen. Richard A. Stone, deputy Army surgeon general, congratulated Sienko and called the USAPHC “a jewel in Army Medicine.”

Keenan expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve as the commander of the USAPHC and pride in the public health experts she led.

“Every day, you promote the health, wellness and resiliency not only of Soldiers, but also of the military families that support them. By enabling readiness, you serve as a force multiplier,” she said.

Sienko said he is looking forward to working with the members of the USAPHC’s team as the organization maintains a legacy of outstanding service to Soldiers and retirees, their families and Army civilians.

“It gives me great honor to receive the colors of Army Public Health Command,” he said. “What a tremendous gift it is for me to assume the command of an organization that has an outstanding reputation and does such good for our Army family. Public health is my passion. I look forward to working with all of you and learning from you.”

Sienko is the 4th commander to lead the USAPHC.

Prior to accepting his new position, Sienko served as the associate dean for prevention and public health in the Michigan State University’s College of Human Medicine. He is a physician board-certified in general preventive medicine and public health. ▲



Singer named interim CSM

(ABOVE) Sgt. Maj. Alicia C. Singer accepts the non-commissioned officer sword from Maj. Gen. Dean G. Sienko, commander of the U.S. Army Public Health Command at a Change of Responsibility ceremony on Aberdeen Proving Ground-South July 23. Singer will serve as the interim command sergeant major and senior enlisted advisor at the USAPHC. Outgoing Command Sgt. Maj. Gerald C. Ecker (background) will serve as the new command sergeant major for the U.S. Army Medical Department Center in School at Joint Base San Antonio, Texas. (Photo by Christina Graber, Visual Information Division)



PHCR-Europe welcomes Boles

(LEFT) Public Health Command Region-Europe marked a change of command July 31, and bid farewell to Col. Daniel H. Jimenez. Maj. Gen. Dean G. Sienko (right) passes the unit flag to PHCR-Europe’s new commander, Col. James W. Boles. Boles, a veterinarian, is a former director of Toxicology at what was then the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine. PHCR-Europe’s senior enlisted leader, Sgt. Maj. Tyrone Taylor (in front of color guard) witnessed the flag changing hands. (Photo by Peter Sachelarie, PHCR-Europe)

“What a tremendous gift it is for me to assume the command of an organization that has an outstanding reputation and does such good for our Army family.”



One Health readers speak

Thanks to all who responded to the 2013 One Health readership survey. Past survey responses helped the publication become a U.S. Army Medical Command award-winning publication. Civilians accounted for 61 percent of the respondents, followed by military officers at 14 percent, and enlisted military and contractors at 12 percent each. Seventeen percent reported that they did not have access to the magazine, whereas 43 percent knew that they had access to both electronic and hard copies.

The survey asked about level of interest in the types of articles found in One Health. Of the 278 people who responded, mission-related stories had the highest percentage of respondents in the top category of “very interested” compared to all the other article types. USAPHC-sponsored events was the article type that had the highest percentage of respondents in the “not interested at all” category.

Responses also indicated that readers were interested in other types of articles including:

- Stories featuring a program, branch or portfolio
- News and notes from around the command
- Feature stories on USAPHC employees
- Personnel or G-1 articles



Most respondents (59 percent) indicated they want to receive One Health electronically; however, a sizeable minority (17 percent) preferred to have hard copies available.

Once the survey data has been completely evaluated, validated results will be posted on the command intranet. Responses to the 2013 readership survey will continue to give direction for future editions of One Health magazine. ▲

One Health is available on the command intranet under “Quick Links” and at <https://iphc.amedd.army.mil/CHPPM%20Sentinel/Pages/default.aspx>

Prime vendor program: auditing the auditors

JANE GERVASONI
EDITOR

The U.S. Army Public Health Command ensures that food procured for all services is safe and wholesome. The USAPHC senior product auditors are among the key people who make this happen through oversight of the Prime Vendor Destination Audit Program.

With the prime vendor program, large commercial vendors are approved to sell categories of foods to the military such as fruits and vegetables or red meats; this allows the military to deal with a few large vendors rather than many smaller vendors. The program covers all foods delivered to the military in garrison and in deployed locations.

Four food areas come under the scrutiny of the USAPHC senior product auditors, and each area requires a special set of qualifications, according to Chief Warrant Officer 5 Christopher Finch, USAPHC’s senior food safety officer and a member of the Veterinary Services Portfolio at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

“In addition to their regular food safety and defense duties at the Public Health Command districts, our four senior auditors have a wider food inspection mission,” said Chief Warrant Officer 4 William Warren, Operational Rations section chief. “These senior product auditors train all of the (prime vendor program) auditors and perform a technical review of all of the actual product audits.”

Each of the other four auditors is required to have experience and certifications in his specialty. All four have prior experience as military food inspectors.

Garvin Ratliff is physically located at Public Health Command District–San Diego,

but he reaches across the globe to ensure that poultry, including chicken, turkey, rabbit and eggs, purchased for military use meets commodity standards for quality established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

“I have training equivalent to what is required by the U.S. Department of Agriculture/Agricultural Marketing Service, which means that I have been trained to grade or classify and sort raw and processed poultry for quality,” explained Ratliff.

At PHCD–Fort Carson, Colo., Terry Kinder looks at the red meats that go into Operational Rations, the food supplied to Soldiers during deployments. He is also responsible for the prime vendor program purchase of red meat for the military.

“When we talk about red meats, beef, pork and lamb are most often used,” Kinder said. “We need to ensure that vendors are providing the proper cuts of meat that have been ordered.”

Kinder has training including Institutional Meat Purchase Specifications as well as the North American Meat Processors Association “Center of Plate” training, which means he is trained in meat preparation and cooking, animal agriculture and animal welfare, and other areas associated with ensuring meats are wholesome.

Processed fruits and vegetables, another category of foods covered by the prime vendor program, are the garden/farm items that have been processed into a can, pouch or jar. These are monitored by Brian Sullivan, PHCD–Fort Hood, Texas. These items go through a heat process, or they may be flash frozen during processing. Sullivan has special training in both canning and freezing methods for these food items.

Marcus Alston, PHCD–Fort Bragg, N.C., is the group’s seafood specialist who served with the U.S. Department of Commerce as a consumer safety inspector. This prime vendor program category includes anything from fin fish to frog legs, alligator, lobster, shrimp and other shell fish. Alston also doubles as a bakery specialist.

“Having worked at Otis Spunkmeyer as a quality assurance supervisor, I have a good understanding of the bakery items that show up during commodity audits,” he said. “However, my main focus is on seafood, and my experience proved invaluable as the Public Health Command examined shrimp after the Gulf of Mexico oil spill.”

As in the oil spill, this program is also used to assist in special inspections that may be necessary due to natural or intentional incidents that involve food contamination.

Focusing on their specialty areas, the senior product auditors work together to perform the Prime Vendor Destination Audit Program.

They also train program auditors to provide comprehensive product data (weight, grade, amount and quality) by examining the contents of an order looking for defects to use in validating and/or improving the quality of food served.

The prime vendor program auditors’ primary function, though, is to review audits done in the field and document deficiencies for vendor awareness.

“As auditors, we ensure economic value and protect the financial interests of the government. These are overriding concerns incorporated into this program,” explained Ratliff.



Terry Kinder (right) demonstrates red meat inspection techniques. Kinder has prime vendor program responsibility for the purchase of beef, pork, lamb and other red meats. (USAPHC photo)

“AS AUDITORS, WE ENSURE ECONOMIC VALUE AND PROTECT THE FINANCIAL INTERESTS OF THE GOVERNMENT ... THESE AUDITS FALL UNDER THE QUALITY ASSURANCE UMBRELLA.”

— Garvin Ratliff
Senior Product Auditor

“These audits fall under the quality assurance umbrella,” he explained. “QA is the opposite side of the coin of food safety because without quality you are not getting what you ordered.”

“These four senior product auditors have inspected prime vendor contracts and participated in the management of billions of dollars of subsistence,” according to Finch.

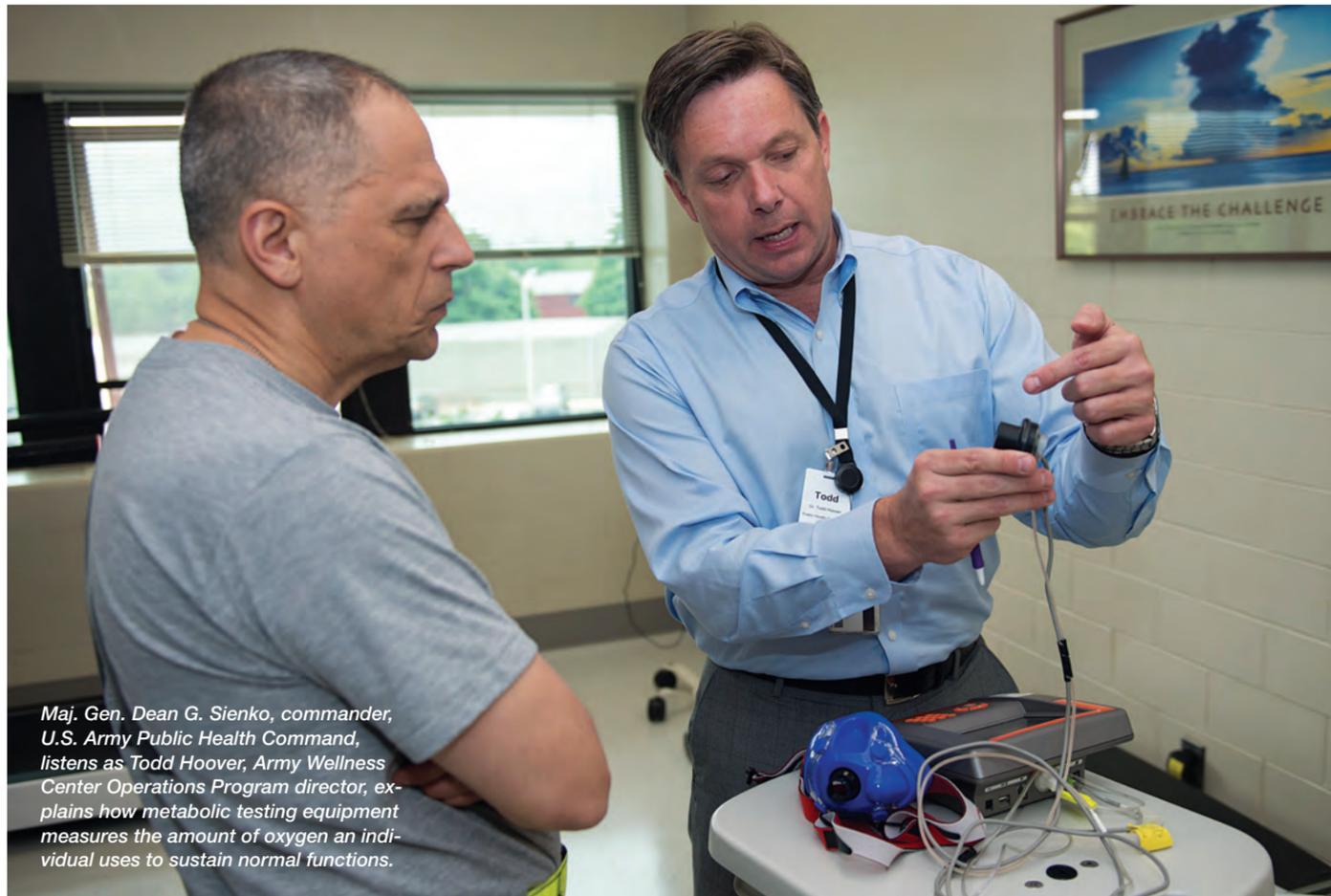
“They write the audit data packets, which are self contained Standard Operations Procedures for inspection of specific food products. They also provide training for the new prime vendor destination auditors.

“They have a passion for things to be done right and to be relevant to the DOD, and they demonstrate their importance to our military community every day,” said Finch. ▲

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMANDER LEADS BY EXAMPLE

Maj. Gen. Dean G. Sienko, commander, U.S. Army Public Health Command, understands the importance of a ready and resilient force. He has deployed to Kosovo and Kuwait, and he knows how the Army surgeon general's performance triad of activity, nutrition and sleep can affect the health of deployed Soldiers as well as those who support them.

That is why Sienko made a visit to the Army Wellness Center, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., one of his first priorities.



Maj. Gen. Dean G. Sienko, commander, U.S. Army Public Health Command, listens as Todd Hoover, Army Wellness Center Operations Program director, explains how metabolic testing equipment measures the amount of oxygen an individual uses to sustain normal functions.

JANE GERVASONI
EDITOR

“I was excited to learn how the services such as metabolic testing, nutrition counseling and stress management are being used to teach Soldiers, civilians, retirees and family members how to be healthy,” Sienko, who is also a physician, explained.

Todd Hoover, USAPHC Wellness Center Operations Program manager, led Sienko through the steps that all AWC clients experience when they make an appointment at an AWC.

All clients need to complete an electronic health and wellness questionnaire, a six-page, comprehensive health assessment that asks questions about sleep habits, nutrition, fitness and overall well-being.

“The Soldier Fitness Tracker AWC portal gives us a snapshot of where people are before we begin a program,” Hoover explained to Sienko. “Responses provide a ‘wellness’ score that lets us tailor services to meet each client’s needs.”

Hoover used resting metabolic testing to provide Sienko with nutrition information such as the number of calories needed to maintain basic body functions including heart beat, breathing and normal body temperature. Then Sienko went on a treadmill to determine his cardio-respiratory fitness level.

“The screening information combined with metabolic testing, body composition testing and other information allows our health educators to write an exercise prescription to help meet the needs and goals of the clients,” said Hoover.

The exercise prescription helps clients to set small attainable goals and helps them learn strategies for enhancing their health.

“I am very pleased with my tailored fitness and nutritional plan that incorporates cardio, strength training and a balanced diet,” Sienko said. “The evaluation results give me some insights on areas where I would like to improve, and I look forward to the next evaluation of my progress.”

Sienko’s background as a civilian public health expert makes him a committed advocate of prevention as the best way to build and sustain good health. AWCs offer programs and services that help their clients achieve healthy lifestyle changes and prevent or mitigate chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease and stroke. Their programs are individually tailored to meet client goals and address the whole person—body, mind and spirit.



Maj. Gen. Dean G. Sienko, works out on a treadmill to determine his metabolic rate and assess his cardio-respiratory fitness level as Todd Hoover monitors his progress.

“THE EVALUATION RESULTS GIVE ME SOME INSIGHTS ON AREAS WHERE I WOULD LIKE TO IMPROVE, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO THE NEXT EVALUATION OF MY PROGRESS.”

— Maj. Gen. Dean G. Sienko

“Army Wellness Centers provide an overall assessment and the integration of a holistic approach to wellness, and Todd Hoover and the staff at the Army Wellness Center APG demonstrate a high level of expertise,” said Sienko.

Chris Sorrells, AWC APG’s director, said she was very pleased that Sienko had come to the AWC. She explained that since the opening in January, more than 550 clients from all over the APG area have used AWC services.

Sorrells encouraged others to make an appointment for a wellness assessment at the AWC, located at Kirk Army Health Clinic at APG-North.

“The Army Wellness Center Program offers a great opportunity for everyone in the Army family,” said Sienko. If you haven’t been to an Army Wellness Center, it is important that you go. This has been a valuable experience for me and my health.” ▲

USAPHC recognizes Soldier & NCO of 2013

JANE GERVASONI
EDITOR

Sgt. Mario Leon and Spc. Kyle Biggs, Public Health Command Region–Pacific, took top honors June 7 after a week of intense challenges that tested the mental and physical abilities of 11 non-commissioned officers and Soldiers.

The U.S. Army Public Health Command conducted its 2013 Best Warrior Competition June 3–7 at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. The competition brought together the best NCOs and Soldiers from USAPHC headquarters and all five USAPHC regional commands.

The events tested their strength, endurance, marksmanship, warrior skills, board interview aptitude, physical fitness, knowledge through written exam, dismounted day and night land navigation, and other tasks relevant to the Army’s operating environment.

“This competition convinced me that I know more and can go farther than I thought I could,” said Leon, a veterinary food inspection specialist at Public Health Command District–Central Pacific. “I also found out that MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) aren’t so bad after all.”

Biggs, an animal care specialist at PHCD–Central Pacific, said he was lucky to have this opportunity to measure himself against so many great Soldiers.

“This was a great opportunity for all of us to better ourselves and continue to learn,” explained Biggs.

USAPHC’s Command Sgt. Maj. Gerald C. Ecker commended the participants for the hard work and energy they expended to be chosen to represent the headquarters and the regional commands.

“You have proven that you are the best-ready individuals to defend our Constitution and our country,” said Ecker.

“I feel like I wear three hats,” said Biggs. “I am a professional Soldier, an athlete and a battle-buddy: I have rubbed shoulders with the best (in the Army Public Health Command). We can make a difference if we care.”

In recognizing the skills of the competitors, Maj. Gen. Dean G. Sienko, USAPHC commander, spoke about Vince Lombardi, football coach of the Green Bay Packers. Using a quote from the football hero Sienko said that the USAPHC Best Warrior competitors “chased perfection ... to catch excellence.”

“The future of the Army will depend on you,” Sienko told the competitors.

Both Soldiers were impressed with Sienko’s comments about being part of the Army.

“I feel like I have a real purpose; the Army is my home and my family,” said Leon.

Leon and Biggs are stationed in Hawaii. They will compete against Soldiers and NCOs from across the entire U.S. Army Medical Command in the next MEDCOM Best Warrior Competition to be hosted by the USAPHC. ▲



Sgt. Mario Leon, a veterinary food inspection specialist from Public Health Command Region–Pacific, dons Mission-Oriented Protective Posture, or MOPP, gear as part of the “survive” segment of the Army warrior tasks and battle drills during the 2013 U.S. Army Public Health Command Best Warrior Competition. (Photo by Christina Graber, Visual Information Division)



Spc. Kyle Biggs, an animal care specialist from Public Health Command Region–Pacific, participates in a balance and agility drill as part of the 2013 U.S. Army Public Health Command Best Warrior competition. (Photo by Christina Graber, Visual Information Division)

Soldiers write winning essays

CHANEL S. WEAVER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

America’s warriors are renowned for their professionalism, competency, discipline and adherence to standards, but Soldiers at the U.S. Army Public Health Command are being recognized for another trait—good writing skills.

At the direction of USAPHC Command Sgt. Maj. Gerald C. Ecker, Soldiers throughout the command participated in an essay contest.

The contest rules required Soldiers to write essays in support of the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic’s theme for 2013: “America’s Army—Our Profession.”

Soldiers could choose to write about two topics—are leaders born with high standards or discipline or are those skills acquired through conditioning or training? (topic 1) or how does the USAPHC innovate/optimize the development of high standards and discipline across its worldwide command? (topic 2).

Six winning essays were chosen from all essays submitted from across the command. For each of the two topics, a senior non-commissioned officer, mid-grade non-commissioned officer and junior enlisted winner was selected.

Sgt. 1st Class David Roland, a veterinary operations non-commissioned officer who works at Public Health Command Region–Pacific, wrote a winning essay that explained how standards and discipline are developed over time. Roland essay noted that an individual is not born with high standards, but wrote that these standards are instilled.

“I was interested in sharing my own experiences with others, hoping it will help them manage whatever situation they may be in—good or bad,” said Roland.

Master Sgt. Jason Stillwell, the non-commissioned officer-in-charge in the Laboratory Sciences Portfolio at the USAPHC Army Institute of Public Health, wrote another winning essay on maintaining high standards across the command. Stillwell’s essay reiterated the importance of NCOs in mentoring and training their subordinates to maintain high standards. He said the topic really motivated him, and he enjoyed reflecting on the Army profession.

“I elected to write about how to instill standards and discipline across a worldwide organization because I felt that sharing my opinions and observations from my 22 years of service would be relevant to Soldiers at all levels,” said Stillwell.

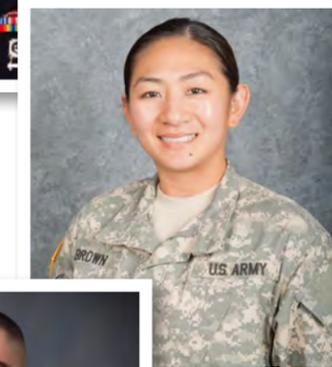
Sgt. Sharia Leal, a preventive medicine non-commissioned officer who works at Public Health Command Region–Europe, was another essay winner. Leal’s essay noted that high standards can be optimized through empowering leaders, and allowing people to succeed.

Leal said she enjoyed participating in the contest, and was rewarded by the experience.

“This experience taught me that my command cares about what Soldiers think and what their viewpoint is on certain things,” said Leal.



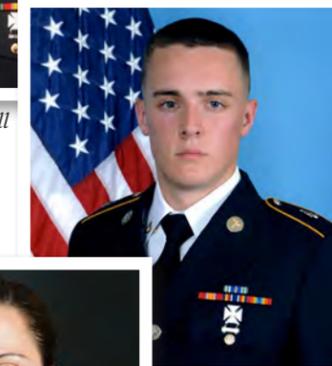
Master Sgt. Jason Stillwell



Staff Sgt. Nichaya Brown



Sgt. Andrew Campbell



Pfc. Jaden Cua



Sgt. Sharia Leal

Other essay winners included Staff Sgt. Nichaya Brown, AIPH, and Spc. Andrew Campbell (recently promoted to sergeant) and Pfc. Jaden Cua, PHCR–North.

Each winner received an Army Achievement Medal. ▲

USAPHC EMPLOYEES

SHARE SKILLS TO SURVIVE

THE FURLOUGH

JANE GERVASONI
EDITOR

THE U.S. ARMY PUBLIC HEALTH COMMAND PROVIDED A SERIES OF “surviving the furlough” brown-bag lunches for its employees.

These classes helped employees stretch their budget dollars through such sessions as preparation of frugal gourmet meals, bargain shopping and couponing, basic budgeting, container gardening, canning and preserving, and budget-savvy pet care. The courses were taught by USAPHC employee volunteers.

Donna Doganiero, USAPHC Occupational Health Sciences Portfolio director, taught the first in the series of planned sessions focused on strategies for eating well on a budget.

“Preparing for this session reminded me of college and grad school, when money was always tight,” said Doganiero. “Being of Italian descent, I have always enjoyed cooking and how food brings people together, and developing ideas for planning and preparing meals within a budget encouraged me to relook how I cook.”

Cooking is something that Doganiero does very well according to the employees who attended the brown-bag session.

“Donna made some wonderful and inexpensive black and red bean soup and some delicious cupcakes for us to try,” said Shirley Eller, G-6 Information Management secretary.

Besides providing some inexpensive foods to sample, Doganiero also gave some tips on saving money at the grocery store.

“Buying the large economy size is not always the least expensive option,” she said. “If you can’t store the economy size or if you end up with leftovers that go to waste, you have not saved money.”

She also explained how to use unit pricing to decide which size of a product is the least expensive.

Doganiero urged employees to make use of the Internet to compare prices at local stores, and explained how to look for grocery bargains.

“This was a combination of practical common sense reminders and inexpensive gourmet tips like adding almond extract to a boxed cake mix to enhance the flavor,” said Karen Deaver, USAPHC statistician.

“These sessions are opportunities to get together and see a different side of the people we work with,” Deaver added. “It is great that the command is putting these sessions on—it’s a little thing that shows we are all in this together,” she added.

Materials provided at all these sessions are available to employees on the command intranet at <https://iphc.amedd.army.mil/functions/commandinfo/CP/Pages/default.aspx>. ▲

USAPHC bids farewell

continued from back cover (page 20)

Ecker’s days with the USAPHC were quite busy. Under his leadership, the USAPHC distinctive unit insignia, or unit crest, was approved by the Institute of Heraldry in March. The DUI will be worn by USAPHC Soldiers assigned to DOD installations and deployed locations around the globe.

Because he has deployed four times, Ecker is often sought after for his experience. He’s enjoyed assisting the command in the assimilation of how to better support the operational force by sharing some of his experiences and war-fighter knowledge.

But as a leader, Ecker can also articulate some of the challenges of his job. Because USAPHC is spread over 395 geographical locations, time, space and their effect on communication hindered his ability to lead his Soldiers.

“Leadership is a very fine art and without the opportunity for presence, it becomes challenging to influence leaders, Soldiers and the situation,” said Ecker.

But Ecker believes it is better to offer a solution to a problem, rather than complain.

He began several initiatives to inspire and mentor Soldiers, including several competitions to reward the command’s best and brightest. He elevated the challenges of the command’s Best Warrior competition, focused Soldiers on the medical aspects of combat soldiering, and stimulated thought through essay competitions. He also enlisted the help of Soldiers and non-commissioned officers across the command to demonstrate and achieve exceptional standards and discipline across the USAPHC.

“Although senior leader presence has been a challenge, I am proud to say our junior officers and NCOs across the globe have performed in an exemplary fashion, and I am proud of them,” said Ecker.

Ecker’s loyalty to the military comes as no surprise to members of his family. His grandfather and three of his uncles served in the Army. Tragically, two of his uncles were killed during the Korean War and Vietnam War, his grandfather lost a limb during World War II, and one uncle was wounded twice in Vietnam.

Despite these circumstances, Ecker joined the Army in 1987 because he believed in its mission.

“As a young boy, I had a romance with the uniform, the flag, and courage and service,” said Ecker. “I still do.”

When he is not spending his time with the Army, Ecker enjoys many activities including reading, learning, playing baseball, playing guitar, and spending time with his two children.

His family is very active in his local church. His wife is the church organist, and he serves an usher and lector.

In the future, Ecker wants to continue to serve his country in-and-out of uniform. He also plans to spend more time with his family.

“I want to take many walks with my wife, go fishing with my son, walk my little girl down the aisle—and God willing, answer to the title of ‘Grandpa,’” said Ecker.

Finally, he plans to become wise with time and retire next to a lake in Minnesota.

Ecker credit his mothers with teaching him values, and for serving as his role model.

“My mother taught me work ethic, citizenship, decency, faith in God, and genuine love,” said Ecker.

USAPHC personnel say Ecker was certainly an asset to the organization and will be missed.

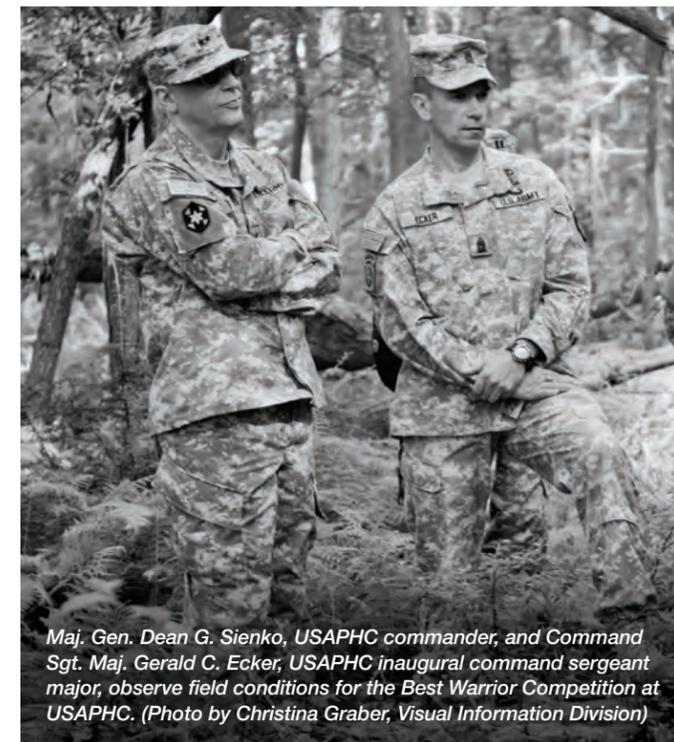
“As Public Health Command’s first command sergeant major, CSM Ecker has set the bar exceptionally high,” said Col. Dennis C. Brown, the USAPHC chief of staff for Ecker’s entire tenure. “He’s a Soldier’s Soldier, a skilled medic and a rare leader. He asks nothing of his troops that he cannot and will not do, and you can always be sure that CSM Ecker will always perform to the highest standard.”

Ecker says he will miss the people he has met and worked with over the years.

“I’ve enjoyed everything from the start of my enlistment to now ... from serving in elite, rapid deployment units specializing in airborne insertion and forced entry capability to my current service as the first USAPHC command sergeant major,” said Ecker.

He cherishes his Army career because of the selfless service of his comrades.

“I’ve most enjoyed the people whom I’ve served alongside,” said Ecker. “The U.S. Army is indeed the strength of our nation because of her service members’ service to one another, a unique camaraderie, cohesion, esprit de corps and special friendships, strong enough to live for, and die for.” ▲



Maj. Gen. Dean G. Sienko, USAPHC commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Gerald C. Ecker, USAPHC inaugural command sergeant major, observe field conditions for the Best Warrior Competition at USAPHC. (Photo by Christina Graber, Visual Information Division)

USAPHC

bids farewell to

FIRST COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR



CHANEL S. WEAVER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

When Gerald C. Ecker, the inaugural command sergeant major for the U.S. Army Public Health Command, discusses the key concepts of the USAPHC mission, it's hard to believe that he has only been with the organization for a little more than two years.

As the senior enlisted leader for the command, Ecker can often be observed speaking to various audiences about the USAPHC. He has become well-acquainted with the mission of the organization—to promote health and prevent disease, injury and disability in Soldiers and military retirees, their families and Army civilian employees, as well as veterinary food safety and defense and animal care.

"I've enjoyed learning and understanding all the technical ways in which this command supports the means of the three entities of the public health concept—people, animals and the environment," said Ecker.

On July 23, Ecker left his position at the USAPHC to assume new duties as the command sergeant major for the U.S. Army Medical Department Center and School at Joint Base San Antonio, Texas. (*cont. page 19*)