



With Pride & Distinction

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Junior Officer Advisory Group

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Commissioned Corps Deployments

Contributed by LCDR Jessica Schwarz

The US Public Health Service Commissioned Corps has a long history of serving the underserved. While many officers have been stationed in remote locations providing assistance to communities in need for over a hundred years, the willingness and enthusiasm for providing care during emergencies is a long standing tradition as well. Corps officers have provided critical care in times of tragedy, and foundational public health assistance (food safety, disaster engineering) in the recovery phase. They have also built capacity in strained communities and provided essential services at home and abroad.

While we were only able to obtain the numbers for deployments occurring from 2005-2012, we were truly impressed with the commitment Corps officers have shown in the fight to protect, promote and advance the health and safety of the Nation. The numbers are staggering: since 2005, over 8221 officers have deployed for 257 missions in locations varying from our own backyard (river floods, hurricanes, suicide clusters) to the far flung corners of the world (Ecuador, Vietnam, Liberia, American Samoa).

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Random nuggets of knowledge: Public health professionals of our present day categories, such as engineers, were actually employed as civil servants by the PHS before becoming commissioned as reserve officers.

ODU- DID YOU KNOW ?

*Contributed by LCDR Kristina Estes
& LCDR Gene Gunn*

Did you know that the new PHS Operational Dress Uniform (ODU) is officially replacing the BDU and is now available for purchase online? There are some key differences between the uniform used by members of the Coast Guard and the PHS, however, so be careful when ordering all the components and carefully read the [PPM 12-002](#) and the [ordering instructions](#).

For those officers with old BDUs, some components may still be worn with the ODU including the black webbed belt and black boots. In addition, serviceable non-uniform items such as the camouflage backpack and the olive drab duffle bag may still be used. Unfortunately, the black PHS cotton t-shirts and the black Command Ball

Cap are not authorized with the new uniform. The new blue ball cap comes in three styles (Velcro, auto-fit, or 'trucker') and is the preferred cover for wear with the ODU, although a blue 8-point utility cap will be authorized as well. Note that the new ball cap comes with embroidered rank and visor ornamentation so it may *not* be worn with civilian clothing, in contrast to what is stated in the PPM.

Unlike the old BDU, the sizes for the ODU blouse are *gender-specific*. When ordering the blouse, note that the even numbered sizes are for males and the odd numbered sizes are specifically for females. So, if you are a male and you order a size 38 and it's too small, don't order the 39 or you may find that it's *even smaller*; you should order the size 40 instead to get the next size up.

Please note that there are no shoulder patches

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We are clinicians (doctors, nurses, therapists, dentists, etc.) and public health ambassadors (environmental health specialists, engineers, epidemiologists, etc.). We willingly and enthusiastically



leave the comfort of our home, family, and duty station for the unknown areas of strife. We work tirelessly until

the job is complete, often outside our comfort zone and occasionally outside our specialty. We partner with local health departments and across government agencies to provide a cohesive response to the event at hand. We are flexible, mobile, knowledgeable, but most of all we are compassionate.

As many of our brethren are deployed for the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, we hope you remember why we serve: "...in the silent war against disease, no truce is ever seen. We serve on the land and the sea for humanity, the Public Health Service Team." Continue to serve our Nation with leadership, service, integrity and excellence!

[Did You Know continued...](#)

presently authorized for wear on the ODU blouse although some special patches (i.e. RDFs) may be authorized in the future. In addition, the official blouses do not have epaulettes or pockets on the bottom front so order only from proper sources. The trousers are unisex and the appropriate selection can be made by consulting the chart that describes a range of waist and inseam measurements.

The Coast Guard site also has some useful tips about appropriate wear of the ODU that are not spelled out clearly in the PPM. For example, the bottom edge of the blouse must not go beyond the top edge of the cargo pockets of the trouser. Trousers should be worn bloused over the boot (not above) between the 2nd and 3rd eyelets from the top of the boot. Also, the sleeves must cover the wrist bone (+ or - 3/4") when worn down, and the shoulder seams must reach a point to the outer edge of the shoulder joint. Of course, most officers ordering won't be able to judge these things until the uniform arrives and it can be tried on at home.

As stated above, it will be necessary for the

vast majority of officers to order the ODU online. Due to the various hoops officers must jump through, including pre-registering on the Coast Guard site, obtaining the correct component from the appropriate vendor, and finally having all accoutrements sewn on, do not wait until a few days or weeks prior to your deployment to get the ball rolling.



LCDR Kyle Wright, Fairbanks, Alaska

Don't be left out in the cold! Order your ODUs well before you'll need them.