



SWPAG NEWSLETTER

VOLUME IV, ISSUE III

SEPTEMBER 2012

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2012 SWPAG Meetings

September 12
December 12

SWPAG Newsletter
created by
CDR Julie Niven, LCSW,
DCSW, MAC



35 SOCIAL WORKERS Receive Temporary Grade Promotions During 2012 Promotion Cycle!

To TG O-6

Jeasmine E. Aizvera	01/01/2013
Wanda L. Finch	07/01/2012
Douglas Edward Mowell	04/01/2013
Jean O. Plaschke	01/01/2013
Emily Jo Williams (EEP)	07/01/2012

To TG O-5

Teresa Baptiste	07/01/2012
Carlos R. Castillo	07/01/2012
Todd Alan Cesar	07/01/2012
Jeremy Mark Combs	07/01/2012
Larry Scott Conner	07/01/2012
Robyn Marie Coons	07/01/2012
Scottie Max Eppler	07/01/2012
Maria Victoria Tagal Fields	07/01/2012
Anita M Glenn-Reller	07/01/2012
Todd Erin Johnson	07/01/2012
Kristin J. Kelly	10/01/2012
Kara Nichelle Ellis Lampasone	01/01/2013
Jenny Lind Mccorkle	07/01/2012
Julie A. Niven	07/01/2012
Melanie Ruth Pedersen	07/01/2012
Anthony Gene Perry	04/01/2013
Willie Tompkins JR	10/01/2012
Kathleen Lisa Watkins	07/01/2012

To TG O-4

Latoya Nicola Belgrave	07/01/2012
Tricia Hart Booker	07/01/2012
Caroline Beth Coffey	07/01/2012
Valarie Tucker Gardner	07/01/2012
Indira Maria Harris	07/01/2012
Lamar Blair Henderson	07/01/2012
Lakeesha Denise Hope-Pritchett	07/01/2012
Patrick Daniel Neubert	04/01/2013
John David Stanson	07/01/2012
Cole Don Weeks	07/01/2012
Chad Wheeler	07/01/2012
Aimee Elizabeth Williams	07/01/2012



Click on the following link
to view a slide show of
the 2012 OSG Promotions
and Awards Ceremony:

[http://s1264.photobucket.com/
albums/jj493/OSGEVENTS/
album-
view=slideshow&track=share_email
album_view_click](http://s1264.photobucket.com/albums/jj493/OSGEVENTS/?album-view=slideshow&track=share_email_album_view_click)

USPHS: America's Health Responders

By LT Indira Harris, LCSW

Through a highly competitive process, in January 2012, five PHS junior Health Service Officers were hand-selected by senior PHS leaders as Joint Services Health Service Officers of the Year. As part of this honor, we represented the US Public Health Service Commissioned Corps (USPHS) at the Medical Service Corps Junior Officer Week (MSC-JOW) in Maryland and were joined by our peers from the US Air Force, US Army, and US Navy. This was a special opportunity, as the training was also billed as a mid-level development course for Company-Grade (ENS, LTJG, and LT/2LT, 1LT, and CPT) Officers and we learned valuable information accordingly.



Left to Right: LT Weagle, LT Cheng-Dobson, LT Tsai, RADM Lushniak, LT Harris, LT Smith, and BG (Brigadier General) Doyle

The MSC-JOW was unprecedented in nature, as the theme of the week underscored the direction of health-care for our men and women in uniform: Joint efforts by all uniformed services. Few knew of us, but many had high respect for us as individuals in our respective clinical specialties, and collectively as representatives of the USPHS Commissioned Corps. Together, we learned about each of the uniformed services represented and the values, mission, and way ahead for each service. RADM Boris Lushniak conducted a superb presentation on USPHS, highlighting the various agencies in which we serve and how we have been integrated into all facets of healthcare/public health in our country and other allied countries we support.

All five USPHS officers in attendance were broken up into squads with our counterparts and were encouraged not only to interact with each other, but also to do a gap analysis of the current state of Army/military

Continued from page 3...

healthcare: where we are, what resources we have and need, and where we should be. We were encouraged to also identify tools that can be leveraged to propel us into advanced methods of healthcare delivery and standards.

There were multiple highlights of the week to include tours to Arlington National Cemetery, the Pentagon, and Capitol Hill. We were also able to meet and interact with Legislative Aides to the House's Armed Forces Committee. Culminating the end of our week was the Award of Excellence Dinner. We were all able to take pictures with the new Army Surgeon General, Lieutenant General (LTG) Patricia Horoho, the recently appointed Chief of the US Army Medical Service Corps, Brigadier General (BG) Dennis Doyle, and our very own RADM Boris Lushniak, Deputy Surgeon General. Each Officer was coined by all three flag/general officers, which was a tremendous honor by itself.

In summary, this was a once-in-a-lifetime honor bestowed upon each of us. We were able to show the relevance and significance of the USPHS as a uniformed service and a partner to all of our sister services. Most importantly, this opportunity reinforced our commitment to continue doing excellent work at our respective agencies and provided us with additional fuel to continue blazing our own trails, while simultaneously demonstrating that USPHS Officers are diverse, highly skilled, and up for any challenge sent our way! Congratulations on a job well done:

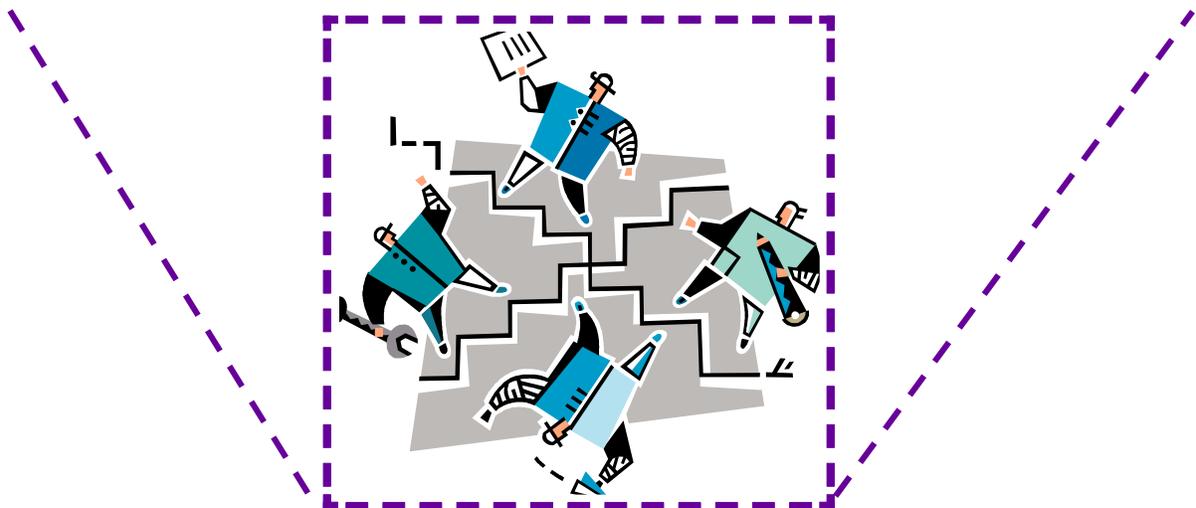
LT Darin Smith (Physician Assistant) – ICE Health Service Corps

LT Michelle Tsai (Clinical Psychologist)—DoD/Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda

LT Jennifer Cheng-Dobson (Epidemiologist)—National Park Service

LT Sheila Weagle (Public Health Advisor)—Center for Disease Control and Prevention

LT Indira Harris (Licensed Clinical Social Worker)—DoD /Fort Bragg (Army)



Suicide Conference Spurs Hope for Answers

by CAPT Janet Hawkins, LCSW, BCD & CAPT Wanda Finch, LICSW, CAS

The 4th annual DoD/VA Suicide Prevention Conference was held June 20-22, 2012 in Washington, D.C., with three days of presentations by top officials from the Pentagon, the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Health and Human Services. The theme for this year's conference was "Back to Basics: Enhancing the Well-Being of our Service Members, Veterans and their Families." The goal for the conference was to reinforce core skills for suicide prevention training so that leaders at all levels and in multiple settings can better support the force and enhance the quality of life for service members, veterans, family members and DoD civilians. The conference had three tracks focused on core skills in suicide prevention training: (1) clinical; (2) research; and (3) practical application.

During the three-day conference, the secretaries for the Defense Department, Department of Health and Human Services, and Department of Veteran Affairs voiced their concerns and emphasized continuing efforts to further address suicide. The secretaries spoke to the importance of ending suicides, providing quality programs, and communicating suicide programs and research amongst departments, service branches, providers, peers, and individuals. Each senior leader reinforced a personal message. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta called for pioneering and breaking "new ground in understanding the human mind and human emotion." Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius inspired hope for our country as she spoke of removing "any distinction between behavioral and mental health." And Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki committed to "ending Veteran suicides—not controlling, reducing, or managing those at risk." Throughout the conference, speakers emphasized that suicide isn't an isolated event and is preventable. Valuable information to avert suicides was integrated into a thorough and diverse agenda. It was a great opportunity for two senior PHS Social Work Officers to support our service men and women, while contributing to a conference that is making a difference within the military and civilian communities.

As social workers, providers and peers, we were honored to represent both the Public Health Service and the Department of Defense in a conference that convened an unprecedented and historic participation of senior dignitaries, senior enlisted military leaders, and international speakers. Federal partners, the Defense Department, and civilian leaders are working harder than ever to improve the lives of those who have served our country in uniform.



CAPT Finch and CAPT Hawkins at the 2012 DoD/VA Suicide Prevention Conference



Ready to Serve When Called...

CDR Dale Thompson, LCSW

Ready to serve when called is a commitment we make as PHS Social Work Officers. In my 9 years as an officer I have found great fulfillment in the opportunity to service those in need when called upon. Recently however, my family was among those affected by the Waldo Canyon Fire disaster in the mountainous area around Colorado Springs, CO. This fire devastated nearly 350 homes in the Colorado Springs vicinity. On Tuesday the 26th of June 2012, as many were returning home from work towards the end of the day, the raging Waldo Canyon Fire in the Pike National was pushed down the mountain by a 65 mile per hour wind. The firestorm breached the firefighter's defenses and entered the densely populated subdivisions along the northwest flank of Colorado Springs. This, the second largest town in Colorado, was blanketed with an orange glowing smoke that burned the back of our throats. The Colorado Springs Fire Chief, Richard Brown, noted, "This is a firestorm of epic proportions," and the evacuation was ordered which displaced 32,000 individuals from their homes. Most of these represented the families in northwestern Colorado Springs. As we rushed from our homes, loading important family belongings into our vehicles, burnt debris was falling on our roofs, yards, and streets. In those moments we all experienced a collective thought, "we will not return to our homes". Sitting in an apocalyptic gridlock, we witnessed volunteers helping direct traffic, opening their homes for those needing water and the restroom, neighbors racing back home against the gridlock to gather forgotten items, families exchanging hugs, phone numbers, and evacuation locations. All were headed for refuge. A strong sense of community exists in Colorado Springs, so much so that shelters were minimally used as friends, co-workers, families and generous individuals extended help to those in need. Looking back over our shoulder to the Northwest our hearts skipped a beat witnessing neighborhoods reduced to kindling, engulfed by a wall of fire that stretched for miles across our town. In the end, the Waldo Canyon Fire is recorded as the most destructive wildfire in Colorado state history. Our losses were great: 32,000 individuals were evacuated, 346 homes were destroyed, 18,000 acres were lost, an estimated \$122 million dollars in damage, many of our beautiful mountains were consumed, and two lives were lost. Due to the valiant efforts of those fighting the fire and safeguarding our community, most families and individuals returned to their homes, my family included.

Now our attention has turned to thanking those who protected us, from the firefighters and police to the friends and community that absorbed and sheltered so many of our families. How does one show gratitude to a community that absorbs and shelters many from so much danger and fear? The reward is in living in such a town and calling that community "home". What great confidence this disaster has

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solidified in the hearts and souls of so many. The human spirit rises in such challenges and sets itself up in opposition to disaster and suffering. In this effort we, as USPHS Social Workers, are all called to throw the weight of our life's energy at forces natural and manmade that threaten our communities. In doing so we assure that the goodness in the human spirit thrives and prevails.

For those who have never been through an evacuation, a good reminder in helping to organize valuables is to collect the "P(s)" from your home

(i.e., people, pets, papers [important documents], photographs, personal computer, prescriptions). For additional information on how to prepare for a possible evacuation, look up http://www.azein.gov/azein/Wildfire%20Series/Wildfire_Evacuating.pdf.



From left: CDR Dale Thompson, CDR Rebecca Singleton , Nick and Susan Fischer, Waldo County residents





SPOTLIGHT On Tripler Army Medical Center

LCDR Rachel Darnell-Miller, LCSW

Tripler Army Medical Center (TAMC) in Honolulu, HI has welcomed USPHS Behavioral Health officers since the beginning of the DoD partnership in 2008. It provides many clinical and leadership opportunities to our service allowing us to serve a very deserving population of veterans.

My first tour at TAMC began in August 2009 with the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) clinic. I have been involved in groundwork efforts to establish many new programs including the Brain Educational series, PTSD/TBI support groups for soldiers and their families, development of a TBI data base, BH treatment groups and working with video telehealth. My most rewarding opportunity was to serve as a provider to one small group of soldiers which began through the PRMC TBI Video Telehealth project. Later I was fortunate to work with this same group at Schofield Barracks “Warrior’s in Transition Battalion” (WTB).

Embedded within the military are pockets of soldiers who are recruited from unique cultural areas. One such area is the US Territory American Samoa. It is home to the Theater Support Group Detachment Reserve Unit which is a part of the 100th BN 442nd Infantry. I initially began my work with this population and their families through TBI video telehealth. I then traveled to American Samoa twice to get a broader understanding of their culture. As an ambassador of our services I provided outreach, education and networking with local community service agencies. I was even interviewed by the local TV morning show. I began planting seeds for referrals and developing relationships. The TBI video telehealth project became more popular as the word was getting out about the additional services that video telehealth could provide!

In an effort to continue to expand my caseload the program was implemented at Schofield Barracks for the Warriors Transition Battalion. The goal was to provide video telehealth services to family members of American Samoan soldiers who were in the WTB. It was a way to incorporate families into the soldiers’ treatment plan. Also to provide family and couples counseling if needed. Through this initiative I was able to address the needs of this formerly underserved population.

Later I began the Pacific Island Support Group among the WTB soldiers at Schofield Barracks that incorporated some of the cultural practices of American Samoa. Activities include singing, prayer, fishing and Umu (a traditional feast cooked in an underground oven). This group identified specific challenges that they identified as needing more support because of their unique culture.

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Currently I am in my second tour here and my leadership opportunities have increased. I am now providing services to WTB soldiers as the Deputy Director of the Wellness Program at Schofield Barracks Army Base.

The mission of the WTB Wellness Program is three-fold:

- (1) Provide high-risk warriors with the necessary tools that can lower risk levels and increase their personal safety.
- (2) Provide an intense, integrated and comprehensive Wellness Program to support soldiers. A program to enhance their defenses, instill resiliency, and increase coping strategies which are all items necessary to aid in their successful transition.
- (3) Utilize the Wellness Program model as a cost effective way to treat emotional and behavioral disturbances that would likely result in a psychiatric re-hospitalization.

The Wellness Program is an 8 week program that combines traditional mental health treatment intervention with more integrative education and holistic approach. The program focuses on three main components: coping skills, social skills & support, and therapeutic activities. Therapeutic models utilized include Behavioral Activation, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and Mindfulness techniques. These dynamic approaches allow soldiers to gain a variety of skills for coping. They also teach the ability to be flexible and tailor a plan specific to the needs of an individual soldier.

I feel that working with soldiers is a very rewarding experience and the DoD/US Army offers excellent opportunities to serve and support our troops. Please feel free to contact me at Rachel.darnellmiller@us.army.mil if you would like to learn more about my experiences.



NOTE FROM THE EDITOR: SPOTLIGHT articles are encouraged and invited. It's great for us all to become familiar with other duty stations.

...CDR Niven

SWPAG – Mentoring Subcommittee Reaches Out to PHS Officers to Provide “Leadership Mid-Career and Senior Officer Expectations” Training

LCDR Malaysia Gresham , LICSW, BCD

Leadership is the application of intellect, humanism, and superior communication utilized to rapidly and accurately assess the needs of an organization while leveraging available resources for the community being served. Good leadership is developed by implementing one’s knowledge and expertise through influencing others through such strategies as integrity, decisiveness, and confidence to achieve a common goal. Inspiring and motivating others in their efforts of protecting, promoting, and advancing the health and safety of our Nation without regards to personal recognition will maximize the output of the team. ~ USPHS Phoenix Group

Leadership is one of the most fundamental corps values. Developing influential leaders requires empowerment and nurturing. The Social Work Professional Advisory Group (SWPAG), Mentoring Subcommittee has taken a strong pledge to provide education and support to USPHS Officers at the mid to senior levels of their career to ensure their preparedness and commitment to mentoring and developing junior level officers.

The SWPAG Mentoring Subcommittee conducted three teleconference trainings and roundtable training at the 2012 USPHS Scientific Training Symposium entitled, “Leadership Mid-Career and Senior Officer Expectations”. A total of ninety-one officers participated. The training was well received by the officers and requests were made to offer additional leadership training in the future. 93.8% of the survey respondents indicated that they would recommend the training to others.

The objectives for the training included describing effective leadership characteristics of mid-career and senior officers, discussing the importance of continued leadership, mentoring and community involvement during each stage of their careers, and describing three empowerment strategies that can ensure successful development of junior officers. The training incited an intellectual discussion between the mid-level and senior level officers regarding leadership that provided motivation for them to increase their mentorship with junior officers.

Highlights of the training included distinguishing between the roles of the leaders/mentors and their mentees. The facilitators encouraged the leaders to ensure effective continuity and transformation of their roles to subordinates. These leaders were trained to provide nurturance that will prepare our future leaders in enhancing mission readiness and the successful operation of each organization in which USPHS officers serve across the nation.

The SWPAG Mentoring Subcommittee would like to thank all of the officers who participated in these valuable trainings. We look forward to offering additional trainings in the future. If you have any feedback or suggestions, please feel free to contact the SWPAG Mentoring Subcommittee Chair, CAPT Kerima Gibbons at kerima.a.gibbons@us.army.mil.



Report on the HSO Category Day at the USPHS COA Conference

CDR Todd Lennon, LCSW

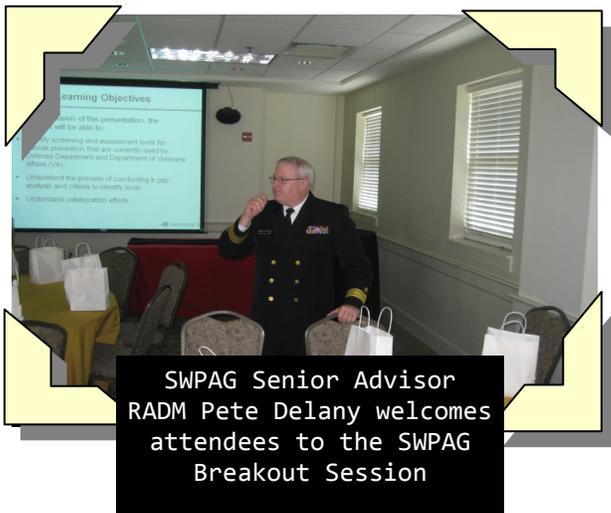
The Health Services Category Day was held 21 June 2012 at the University of Maryland, College Park. A shortened overall conference agenda elevated the profile of Category Day at the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium this year. Social workers were in the spotlight several times during the proceedings. As a group, the SWPAG has a lot to be proud of.

One of our own, CDR Dwayne Buckingham, was honored with the category's prestigious Stanley J. Kissel Award, itself named after a social worker. CDR Buckingham also received the Senior Social Worker of the Year Award from SWPAG. LCDR Jonathan White received the Junior Social Worker of the Year Award.

SWPAG Senior Advisor RADM Pete Delany was part of a panel discussion on the National Prevention Strategy in the morning. Several social workers presented during roundtable sessions in the afternoon.

The day ended with the SWPAG breakout session, which featured presentations from LCDR Dana Lee on Clinical and Non-clinical Tools for Suicide Prevention and LCDR Anthony Johnson on The Evolving Social Worker: A Collaboration of leadership and Ethical Philosophy. LCDR Sarah Garrett put a personal touch on the breakout by bringing goodie bags for attendees. RADM Delany and about 30 social workers attended the breakout.

All agreed that Category Day was a success. With 17.5 hours of continuing education available throughout the conference, it was time and money well-spent.



SWPAG Senior Advisor RADM Pete Delany welcomes attendees to the SWPAG Breakout Session



LCDR Anthony Johnson



LCDR Dana Lee

...Other News ...

The SWPAG Career Development (CD) Subcommittee actively seeks and disseminates information on career opportunities for professional development, vacancies, and special assignments. In an effort to accomplish its mission the CD Subcommittee has created a calendar that lists various trainings/webinars, conferences and continuing education credit opportunities that might be of interest to our members. More current months will contain the most information. You should check back frequently as we will update the calendar as we learn of CD offerings around the country. Please email questions/comments, suggestions for making the calendar better and information about trainings/webinars, conferences and continuing education opportunities to LCDR Tracy Pace, Chair, SWPAG Career Development Subcommittee, at tpace@hrsa.gov. Requests for more specific information about any of the events on the calendar should be directed to the event host.

SEPTEMBER 2012

12: SWPAG General Membership meeting. 1500 to 1600 Eastern Time, 1-866-561-3692, Participant code: 3556504. Contact: CDR Todd Lennon (tlennon@hrsa.gov)

28-October 2: Conference: “National Conference on Addiction Disorders”, Orlando, FL, <http://www.addictionpro.com/ncad-conference/national-conference-addiction-disorders-2012>

NOVEMBER 2012

9-12: Conference: “Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting”, Washington, DC, <http://www.cswe.org/Meetings/2012apm.aspx>

11-16: Conference: “AMSUS 118 Annual Continuing Health Education Meeting”, Phoenix, AZ (registration information forthcoming at: <http://amsusmeeting.org/>)

DECEMBER 2012

12: SWPAG General Membership meeting. 1500 to 1600 Eastern Time, 1-866-561-3692, Participant code: 3556504. Contact: CDR Todd Lennon (tlennon@hrsa.gov)

ANYTIME

Ethics: <http://www.aswb.org/education/courses/index.php>

Ethics: Boundary Crossings and the Ethics of Multiple Role Relationships
<http://www.continuingedcourses.net/active/courses/course066.php>

Ageing, Mental Health, and Long-term Care. <http://www.continuingedcourses.net/active/courses/course041.php>



Traumatic Brain Injury and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: <http://www.dcoe.health.mil/TrainingCalendar.aspx>

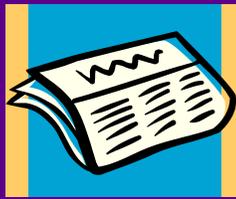
The National Child Traumatic Stress Network: <http://learn.nctsn.org/course/category.php?id=3>

Center for Deployment Psychology
<http://deploymentpsych.org/training/online-courses>



...Other News ...

...Other News ...



**2012
UNIFORMED SERVICES SOCIAL WORK
CONFERENCE (USSW)**

**14 –15 November USSW Conference
(11-16 AMSUS Conference)
Phoenix Arizona**

*Begin planning now...work with your leadership to secure funding
as central funding is not available.*

CEUs available!!!!

Registration opens Aug 20, 2012

POC: Maj Kelly Czeiszperger kelly.czeiszperger@us.af.mil

For additional information, please also visit:

<http://amsusmeeting.org/>



*The Mission of the U.S. Public Health Service
 Commissioned Corps is to
 protect, promote, and advance the health and safety
 of our Nation.*

For more information about our PAG, visit the SWPAG website at
<http://usphs-hso.org/?q=pags/swpag>



2012 SWPAG Meetings

September 12

December 12

From 1500 to 1600 ET

1-866-561-3692

Participant code: 3556504

SWPAG Colleagues:

The Communications Committee encourages officers to submit any news/events information about fellow social workers, something you've accomplished, clinical issues, job/agency opportunities, recruiting ideas or strategies, career enhancement suggestions, educational opportunities (CEU's), publicity events, deployment/OFRD training experiences, CCA events etc. for publication in the SWPAG newsletter. Please have submissions cut and paste ready.

Thank you!

*Please respond to CDR Niven at:
 julie.a.niven@us.army.mil with submissions*