Exciting Events & Promising Future

Dear Dr. Miles,

Registration for AFOS/SECO is now open. Our meeting has innovative new features you cannot miss, and after you register for the AFOS Meeting, eligible members receive the ..... 

SECO GRAND EXPERIENCE REGISTRATION PACKAGE

Free*

*****a $697 VALUE*****

We are going to have a spectacular meeting beginning March 12th in Atlanta, Georgia. The Westin has completely remodeled their entire property, and you will love it. Included with every room is free wi-fi service for our members. Plus, AFOS continues to deliver the best value in all of optometry for its members. Leading edge CE, first class accommodations, top rated banquet services, and the best exhibitors in the industry await you at AFOS 2014 in Atlanta.

We hope everyone can be there. If you are not a member you can
Good afternoon everyone. I'd like to offer special thanks to Dr. David Cockrell, AOA President-Elect, for being here. Thanks very much to our Optometry Consultants for being here. Considering the fiscal uncertainty we are currently experiencing, thank you all for being here today. Most of all, thanks to my wife and two kids - I wouldn't be here without their support.

Distinguished guests, friends and colleagues; since February 11th, 1970, the giants in our profession - the Service Consultants worked with incredible and persistent effort to establish what we now know to be AFOS. Our optometric forefathers invested themselves in our future. And, they invested in us to build on their legacy.

There have been monumental achievements over the years:

- In 1973 - Optometry Specialty Pay was established

- In the 1980s - AFOS and the Pennsylvania College of Optometry led the way for DPA/TPA Certification and Licensure Laws which became the "Gold Standard" for nearly every state. Additionally, during that same time frame, AFOS worked with the AOA to establish optometry as a separate service within the military medical departments (many states utilized that structure in their licensing laws)
- In 1986 - The VA and Public Health Service Commission Corps were added to AFOS membership

- And in 1990 - Board Certification Pay was successfully enacted

Currently, AFOS continues to serve federal service optometrists well. I'll discuss some current issues and opportunities in a few minutes.

Since the year 2000, when I first became involved in AFOS, I have been very fortunate to have learned from some amazing leaders. I owe them and AFOS a great debt of gratitude - including the workhorses that make everything go so smoothly at these events and support our members with personalized service found in none of the other Affiliates - the Executive Directors like Dr. Steve Sem, Dr. Dave Simpson, Dr. Mike Pattison and now Dr. Anthony and Gina Borgognoni. I can't possibly thank everyone enough for their pride and passion for AFOS.

Today, as the 45th President of this amazing organization, I am deeply honored and humbled to be in this position. Although knowing there will be change and challenges ahead - I think some of the changes and some of those challenges will present the opportunities of a lifetime for us. Working together, we'll continue providing better eye care for our patients. My promise to you is that I will do the best I can to support you and this organization over the next year.

AFOS is a special place to be right now. This society fits into the unique position of being the only DoD, PHS and VA affiliate to the AOA that directly represents its members for the betterment of the profession. More specifically, AFOS is the only forum in organized optometry where DoD, PHS and VA optometrists may comprehensively be involved in: 1) mentoring and networking, 2) collaborating on tough issues, 3) modernizing training, equipment, and processes, 4) directly influencing the AOA through the House of Delegates and 5) ultimately supporting the legislated right to practice optometry. Considering professional development, nothing beats the ability to meet face-to-face with your colleagues - AFOS provides that opportunity.

We all know that AFOS was tied for the 10th most votes at the AOA House of Delegates meeting last June - this was the largest number of votes in our history. What you might not know is that we have been growing faster than any other affiliate and have the potential to go even higher. Thanks to all of you for paying your dues on time (by setting up the automatic payment option or paying in full by 31 March) and to our outstanding Executive Directors, AFOS is on the map. Being in the top 10 of the 51 affiliates to the AOA makes us relevant in the process that connects us to the source of our profession!
Right now, we are continuing to build on the best relationship with SECO, the AAO and the AOA in years. The AOA's position has been and continues to be - to fight for inclusion and equality for Optometry. There is no organization that can do this for us better than the AOA. Quite possibly, there has been no other time in history that support for organized Optometry is needed more than it is right now.

I've learned a great deal from participating in the AOA's Optometry's Meeting. I learned about the ACA, ACOs, ICD 10s, ABO, EHRs, the Harkin Amendment and exchanges (not the Base Exchange). I learned that the AOA has one of the top 10 lobbyists in Washington DC - a man by the name of Jon Hymes - a true superstar for our profession! I learned that the state of Florida achieved an opportunity of a lifetime and worked for no less than 30 years to finally gain the privilege of prescribing oral medications - that historical achievement happened in April 2013.

So, as I was there - consuming an alphabet soup of healthcare paradigm shifts - I simply thought - I’m insulated from some of these Medicare changes by simply being in the military. But even if I wanted to, I’m not going to be in the military for the rest of my life, unfortunately, so I better get an idea of what’s happening with this changing landscape stuff. And, more importantly, find out who is going to help digest this alphabet soup of healthcare acronyms so I can focus on life after the military, when that happens. So who will it be? I bet the AOA will be involved. As an affiliate, it is up to us to provide proposed solutions to issues that matter to us most.

I've got to tell you, this multitude of information just blew me away. I come from a small farm town in southern Nebraska - named "Superior" because of the quality of...the soil. Back then, I knew I wanted to be involved in a good community, but I never would have guessed I'd be in this position today - as a member of this great community of service. Whether serving our patients, our families, the Department of Defense, the PHS, the VA or our profession through AFOS - the call to serve is one of the most admirable and satisfying of pursuits. We - all of us - are positioned to be a part of this pursuit like no other group; supporting "the highest vision standards in the world". That's what sets us apart - that's what makes us unique.

While AFOS continues to work its 5 year plan developed by Dr. Mike Sunman in 2011, Dr. Wasik has done a great job building on our list of successes. These two have gone above and beyond to serve this organization. Thanks very much Mike and Aly. As an organization, AFOS is involved in a lot - relationship building within the profession, great conferences, CE, mentorship, recognition of stellar ODs, Licensure by Endorsement and much more. There is a great deal of positive momentum within this organization right now.

As an organization, we need to leverage this momentum. The challenges ahead are far too complicated for just one person to solve. These issues must be addressed by
collaborative teams. If you'd like to get involved in a winning team, I recommend you talk with our Vice President - Dr. Mike Davis (PHS), our Student member - Jason Christman (Army) or one of our committee chairs:

- Awards Committee - Dr. Carla Engelke (VA)
- CE Committee - Dr. Tyson Brunstetter (Navy)
- Communications - Dr. Tyler Miles (Navy)
- Licensure by Endorsement - Dr. Adrienne Ari (Army)
- Meetings - Dr. Susan Yee (VA)
- Membership - Dr. Peter Carra (AF)
- Nominations - Dr. Aly Wasik (VA)
- Paraoptometric - Dr. Darren Rhoton (AF)

In closing, the paradigm shifts in healthcare are upon us and the AOA is working tirelessly to support the entire profession. AFOS is heavily involved in Licensure by Endorsement - has been for many years, and is involved in much more.

If you've ever had ambitions to pursue the opportunities of a lifetime that could shape your future and our profession - there is no better time than now. I look forward to serving with each and every one of you.

Thanks for all you do.

Dr. Adrienne Ari
President Elect

The Annual AFOS meeting in Seattle, WA was fantastic! The meeting was hosted at the Red
Lion Hotel, just minutes from the Seattle Convention Center and the sights of Seattle. Highlights of the education series included two workshop-type COPE approved CE during the exhibitor's breakouts, and the first Annual Career Symposium. Tyson Brunstetter and his team coordinated for a total of 10 hours of COPE approved CE over two days - well done, CE Committee!

The installation of the officers was done a bit differently this year. Instead of being sworn in at the Business Meeting, Dr. David Cockrell installed the officers at the President's Reception. All agreed that it was a much more intimate and meaningful ceremony.

At the Awards Luncheon, we took time to recognize a number of our members. Dr. Angela Musick received the AFOS OD of the Year award, Dr. Tara Jayne received the AFOS Junior OD of the Year, Dr. Jennifer Martin received the Reserve Forces OD of the Year, and Dr. David Hilber received the Orion Award.

The AFOS and Federal Service Optometry meetings are a great way to get to know your fellow Federal ODs. Travel can be difficult, given the government funding constraints, but AFOS is a great bang-for-your-buck! So, make plans to come even if you have to come TAD or TDY. The next AFOS Federal Optometric Service meeting will be 12 March 2014 in Atlanta, GA prior to the SECO meeting. The next AFOS annual meeting will be 10-11 November in Denver, CO. Hope to see you there!

Army
COL T.J. Lantz

As I prepare my submission for this edition of the newsletter, Thanksgiving is next week. Happy Thanksgiving and I want to wish everyone a very safe and Happy Holiday Season. I will relinquish the position as the Chief of Army Optometry and Consultant to The Surgeon General by April of 2014. It has been a distinct honor and pleasure to serve in this capacity. I was selected to serve as our Medical Service Corps, Corps Specific Branch Proponent Officer and will move to San Antonio, TX this summer. I want to thank you for all the outstanding support and phenomenal care you provide to all our beneficiaries.

TJL
New Accessions, Farewells, and Retirements

You're in the Army now! - **New Accessions**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPT Jarrad M. Berry</th>
<th>Duty Station</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPT Derek A. Black</td>
<td>Fort Bragg, NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPT Holger N. Brencher</td>
<td>Fort Bliss, TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPT Benjamin V. Clingan</td>
<td>Fort Jackson, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPT Ryan D. Johnson</td>
<td>Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPT Jessica R. Linder</td>
<td>Fort Bliss, TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPT Michael D. Noble</td>
<td>Fort Hood, TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPT Kyle R. Ohman</td>
<td>Fort Knox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPT Diana C. Pust</td>
<td>USAHC Baumholder, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPT Samantha S. Rieger</td>
<td>USAHC Katterbach, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPT Van L. Sim</td>
<td>Fort Lewis, WA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Farewell:**

- LTC Thomas White
- MAJ Andrew Costello
- MAJ Joshua Baker
- MAJ Thomas Schell
- CPT Coleman Anderson
CPT Brian Finley  
CPT Timothy Rains  
CPT Ryan Yealy

**Retirement:**

COL David J. Hilber

---

**Promotions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Major</th>
<th>To Lieutenant Colonel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAJ John Cary</td>
<td>LTC Doug Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAJ Brad Cunningham</td>
<td>LTC Gary Hughes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAJ Ginger Emig</td>
<td>LTC Susan Sloan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAJ Ann Rudick</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Order of Military Medical Merit**

LTC Jose Capo-Aponte  
LTC Gary Hughes  
LTC Cameron VanRoekel

---

**German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge (GAFPB)**

CPT Bret Lehman
MAJ Chan Webster assumed command of 759th Medical Team (Forward Surgical) (Airborne) and deployed to Afghanistan. The photo was taken during the Transfer of Authority (TOA) ceremony on 13 March 2013 at the Jalalabad Airfield. MAJ Webster and his Team redeployed in November 2013. Congratulations MAJ Webster!

COL Donovan Green assumed command of the SHAPE Healthcare Facility (SHF) on 3 July 2013 after serving as the Optometry Service Chief at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center. The SHF is staffed by medical professionals from 10 NATO nations.
The 24th Medical Detachment (Optometry) conducted a Change of Command in Kuwait on 4 September 2013. **CPT Tony Turin** relinquished the command to **CPT Amasa Mecham**. COL Thomas Johnson, CDR 48th Combat Support Hospital (FWD) passed the guidon from the old to the new commander.

The Change of Command for the 19th Medical Detachment (Optometry) took place at Peden Field, Fort Benning, GA on 23 August 2013. The outgoing Commander, **CPT Michael Stevens**, relinquished command after 34 months to **CPT César Costales**. The 14th Combat Support Hospital Commander, COL Paula C. Lodi, presided over the ceremony.
Col Annette Williamson, Optometry Consultant for the AF Surgeon General

Working closely with the Air Force Medical Operations Agency's (AFMOA) Office of Transformation, Air Force Optometry is gearing up to launch an ambitious transformation project impacting our entire product line. The project's charter was signed on 30 October 2013 by Brig Gen Sean Murphy, the AFMOA Commander, who serves as the project's champion. We are assembling a specially-selected team of optometrists and ophthalmic technicians, along with subject matter experts from other key areas including medical business planning, TRICARE health benefits, group practice management, flight and deployment medicine, and ophthalmology.

The goal of our transformation project is to develop standard work processes and incorporate efficiencies that can be implemented Air Force-wide to reduce variability and enhance access. By doing so, we hope to recapture a portion of the $215 million spent to purchase network optometric care annually. In addition to improving the bottom line, this recapture
will enhance the currency of our optometrists by bringing more and a greater variety of patients through our clinics, and will also enhance currency of our ophthalmologists by increasing the referrals we generate for ophthalmology.

I want to emphasize that this initiative is NOT about working harder-everyone I know is already working hard enough. It's about working smarter with the best possible leveraging of our personnel, space, and technology. It's about everyone working to their highest level of training. It's about taking an enterprise-wide look at what we do and asking "how can we do it better?" Bottom line, this is about ensuring we continue to give the American taxpayer the very best value for their money.

In his most recent "Letter to Medical Airmen", our AF Surgeon General, Lieutenant General Tom Travis, stated, "Recapture Equals Readiness...I need everyone to focus hard on recapturing care so we don't lose the precious opportunity we have been afforded to care for the very best beneficiary population on the planet." Our transformation initiative is completely in line with the AF/SG's perspective.

I wholeheartedly expect this initiative will benefit all of us-both providers and technicians. Obviously this is not easy nor can it be accomplished overnight or even within one FY, but I have every confidence that the capabilities of our docs and techs, in partnership with AFMOA, will lead us to sure success.

Finally, it is such an honor to represent our AF optometrists and to collaborate with our federal colleagues in support of our great nation and I look forward to working and collaborating with this group in the years ahead.

It's December again! Another busy year, with travel being our Achilles heel. From unanticipated new rules instituted Oct 2012, a multitude of subsequent format changes and a government furlough, it has been a bit challenging. Unfortunately, I can't say it will get any easier in the future. We will continue to submit packages for approval, but
please know there are no guarantees.

Congratulations on FY13 promotion selections:

CAPT(s) Andre
CDR Herwitz, CDR Hatch, CDR Read, CDR(s) Olson, CDR(s) Abbott
LCDR(s) (Tarter) MacDonald, LCDR(s) Williams, LCDR(s) Kerekgyarto, LCDR(s) Osmond, LCDR(s) Mayo

Welcome new Lieutenants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LT Church</th>
<th>NH Oak Harbor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LT Luft</td>
<td>NBHCL NSA Norfolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT Tran</td>
<td>NBHCL Fisher, Great Lakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT Vingoe</td>
<td>NBHC Groton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT Gresko</td>
<td>NBHCL NS San Diego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT Hoang</td>
<td>NHCL Corpus Christi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PUBLIC HEALTH

CAPT Michael A. Candreva, OD
Chief Clinical Consultant

PHS/IHS

Biennial Eye Care Meeting: June 2 through June 4, 2014 at SCCO/M.B. Ketchum University. All necessary documents have been submitted to IHS HQ as of August 2013 to attain IHS HQ's sanction for this meeting; response pending.

IHS Loan Repayment Program: FY 2013 brought 10 New Awards and 22 Extensions. Currently, no backlog exists for IHSLRP Optometry applicants. All applicants are being awarded within the FY they apply.

IHS Scholarship Program: FY 2013, a total of 11 IHS Optometry scholars are currently being funded.
Eye Care DataMart: The following is an overview of National Eye Care DataMart information.

AOA: Many thanks to the AOA for forwarding a letter to Capitol Hill in support of HR 3391; new legislation that would extend tax-free status to those professionals receiving IHSLRP. Making the IHS loan repayments tax-free would save the agency $7.21 million, funding an additional 232 awards.

Government Performance Results Act: Congratulations to all, we met our National GPRA Diabetic Retinopathy Screening goal of 56.8%. Please continue to work on exceeding our GPRA ‘14 Target of 58.6%.

PHS Promotions PY’14: Those Officers who are up for promotion, please ensure that you visit the following link: http://usphs-hso.org/?q=pac/sub/careerdev/promotion
Take the time to follow the following checklist: http://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/promotions/2013_Promotion_Year_Checklist.asp
Please make sure you CV is in the correct format which encompasses the 5 PHS Pillars. Promotions are getting more and more competitive within PHS; Officership is imperative. An Officer is required to extend beyond clinical roles and get involved on an Area or National level. This can be within IHS or PHS.

New Calls to Duty: Currently PHS is not calling Optometrists to duty. PHS is limiting new calls to Physicians, Dentists, PA’s and NP’s. That being said, if you know of an Optometrist who is interested in PHS, please let me know ASAP. I am gathering names of those who are interested and attempting to push new Optometry Calls forward.
ACA and IHS:

* States have the option to expand Medicaid eligibility to adults ages 19-64 with income up to 138% of the Federal Poverty Level *$15,282/yr. for an individual, $31,322/yr. for a family of 4, in Alaska for individual $19,086/yr. for a family of 4 $39,155/yr.*

* Average income of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) households is $35,192, compared to $50,502 for the entire nation*

* No premiums or deductibles for AI/ANs who are eligible to and do receive IHS, tribal 638, or urban Indian health services

* No copays for services received from an Indian health care provider or through referral under contract health services

* No out of pocket costs: If a member of a federally recognized tribe chooses Indian Health Services as their provider in an insurance marketplace network

* Break on Costs for Certain Income Levels: federally recognized tribal members earning less than $34,470 and families earning less than $70,650 a year will not pay any out of pocket costs for health services anywhere.

* Special Monthly Enrollment: Members of federally recognized tribes can change their enrollment status in any plan through the marketplace once a month.

* No Requirement to have Insurance: Exempts AI/ANs eligible for IHS from obtaining any health insurance.

VETERANS AFFAIRS
Dr. Kelly Thomann

I would like to extend warm wishes to all of our VA optometry colleagues as we enter the holiday season. In my initial correspondence as NAVAQO vice president, I would like to recognize the outgoing NAVAQO officers for the leadership they have provided to NAVAQO and VA optometry over the past years. I will also provide a short summary of the annual NAVAQO meeting held on October 24, 2013 at this year's American Academy of Optometry convention in Seattle Washington.

The individuals who comprise the NAVAQO executive committee should be commended for their on-going commitment to VA Optometry. Their dedication has enabled NAVAQO, to continue to make great strides within the VA and also assist VA optometrists in the field
throughout the country. I would specifically like to thank Dr. Dawn Tomasini, who has written the quarterly NAVAO Newsletter for the past 2 years. Over her tenure, this newsletter has expanded significantly and now includes topical subjects pertinent to VA optometry, along with a vast amount of other valuable VA information. I would also like to thank Dr. Janel Chou, our past AND current NAVAO secretary, who continually manages to summarize VA optometry conference calls and other events each month for NAVAO. As addition, NAVAO remains in excellent fiscal standing, thanks to the dedicated work of our treasurer, Dr. Makesha Sink. Dr. Kathy Wang, NAVAO Membership Director, has quietly worked behind the scenes for years to continue to increase our membership and Dr. Kevin Mercado continues to maintain our website as Director of Technology. And last, but not least, I would like to thank outgoing President Dr. Brian Kawasaki and outgoing Vice-President Dr. David Storer for their longstanding dedication to VA Optometry. I truly admire the time and effort they have contributed to NAVAO. Thanks to the strong leadership from Dr. Kawasaki and the other NAVAO officers, Dr. Wong, myself, and the other new NAVAO officers can easily transition into our new positions.

Unfortunately I was not able to be present this year at the annual NAVAO meeting and reception. I greatly missed the opportunity to mingle and reconnect with my fellow VA optometrists in Seattle. I recognize that our NAVAO reception is a wonderful opportunity for VA optometrists to gather, socialize and recognize our successes (and obstacles) within the VA. In addition, the annual NAVAO meeting is a time to thank and recognize the VA leadership and all they have done during their tenure in NAVAO executive positions and other Optometry leadership roles.

From my feedback with individuals within NAVAO, the reception on October 24 at this year's Academy meeting was another success - beginning with the transition of the Presidency position from Dr. Brian Kawasaki, to our new President, Dr. Nancy Wong. As a personal aside, I have known Nancy for almost 20 years, and I believe that NAVAO is in extremely capable hands, because no one will work harder for NAVAO and VA optometry than Dr. Nancy Wong.
In her first proceeding as NAVAO President, Dr. Wong introduced AOA President, Dr. Mitchell Munson, who began by telling the group that the AOA is proud to work with NAVAO, standing up for VA Optometry. He went on to say that the AOA takes very seriously its mission of safeguarding the rights, scope, privileges and independence of all federal service optometrists. He also stated that "what happens in the VA can influence what happens in the private sector." Dr. Munson concluded his address to NAVAO members with the valuable thought, "Embrace your patients and their needs responsibly, honor the legacy of your profession by staying informed and involved, treasure the efforts put forth on your behalf by organized optometry, covet the independence of your profession and most importantly, let the unique talents that define each of you shape your career, your path of involvement and your future."

Dr. Wong awarded certificates to the four 2013 NAVAO Resident Scholar recipients. Dr. Wong and Dr. John Townsend, Director of VA Optometry, also awarded Mr. David Danielson an NAVAO award and VA commendation for his 38 years of service to VA Optometry. Dr. Townsend spoke briefly about Mr. Danielson's distinguished career and concluded by thanking Mr. Danielson "for his distinguished service in leadership and the initial development and gradual expansion of VA optometric services for our nation's veterans.

For more than 38 years Mr. Danielson has been a steadfast advocate for federal service optometrists, especially in the position of Deputy Director of Government Relations for the AOA".

Dr. Wong next introduced the keynote speaker for the evening, Dr. Robert Newcomb. Dr. Newcomb delivered a first-hand account of the history of VA optometry, from its "humble
Dr. Newcomb told the group that VA optometry actually began in 1947, when the U.S. Army first commissioned optometrists to provide eyecare in VA hospitals. However, he did admit that he was not part of this first group! He then went on to relay that Optometry’s "real beginnings" actually occurred after 1972, with our first optometry resident, first Chief of Optometry and Optometry Service Director. He went on to relay that NAVAQO was formed in 1977, and the first "Optimum VA" newsletter was published in April of that year. Dr. Newcomb regaled the audience with several anecdotal stories of early life as a VA optometrist. He ended with a flash forward to 2013 - with NAVAQO now 36 years old, 756 VA optometrists, 211 residencies and over 1.6 million patient visits. All of us "younger VA optometrists" owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Newcomb as one of the generation who literally transformed optometry into the fully involved medical profession it is now in the VA.

Dr. Wong concluded the evening by again thanking Dr. Kawasaki and the other outgoing executive leadership, along with the keynote speakers from the evening.

I look forward to serving VA optometry over the course of the upcoming year and hope to receive active feedback from the VA Optometry within the field and increase communication within NAVAQO and all VA Optometrists.

Air National Guard
Maj Jennifer Carver

Please note the Air Surgeon's Message in the December 2013 Air National Guard's Air Surgeon's Directorate, the "Head's Up":

"As many of you are aware, the ANG Medical Service Transformation is one of the largest projects my office staff is currently and diligently working. Just a few months ago, the initial proposed basic plan was sent to the field for comments and concurrence/non-concurrence. I am pleased to say that we received inputs from all 89 units...thank you! My staff has reviewed your justifications and recommend that we add the optometrist (AFSC 42E3) into the FFGK2 UTC package in exchange for the second Physician Assistant (AFSC 42G3), since manpower levels cannot be in-creased. Once the FFGK2 UTC is approved and fielded, those units that still feel an additional provider better supports their mission may submit a manpower change request (MCR) to Mr. Steve Larson for
review. The approved provider AFSC substitutions will include physicians, mid-
levels (Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants) and dentists."

Col Mark Gaul

For those of you who are not familiar with the situation; transformation was a proposal that
among its many change's, would have eliminated optometrists from the Air National Guard
and convert that position to a physician assistant. As stated in the article, all 89 ANG units
provided input, and the majority supported retention of the optometrist. Not only were our
voices heard, but it is gratifying to know that our positions are valued by not only our MDG,
but wing and state leadership as well!

Even before most in the ANG heard of this proposal, AFOS was swiftly moving into action
by quickly enlisting the power of the AOA. A strategy was deployed to attack this proposal
on 3 fronts. First, AFOS took a public stand against this proposal by writing effective letters
to the Secretaries of Defense and Homeland Security. Next, the AOA aggressively petitioned
Capitol Hill by activating all of optometry's congressional allies at the federal and state
levels. Lastly, the support was supplemented by the mobilization and action of our ANG
optometrists in every unit.

Lt. Col. Alan Peaslee, Georgia Air National Guard, spearheaded this effort, working closely
with the AOA office and AFOS leadership. Lt Col Peaslee provided written rebuttal
templates and suggestions for objecting to this proposal to all the units for whom we had
contact information. Below are some of Lt Col Peaslee's comments after the submission
process had been completed.

"It was the AFOS leadership that pushed this to the forefront, and helped us
engage the AOA Legislative team. I want to point out the intense support
we received from the AOA. Their connections and strategic maneuvers
were invaluable, and I doubt we could have achieved the level of
congressional interest in this issue without their support. If we are to
survive, both in the DoD and in our private practices, the AOA is going to
be an increasingly important weapon in our arsenal."

"Many of you, and myself included, have not always been happy with everything the AOA
has done and how they've done it. But at the end of the day, we would not be where we are
without their support and advocacy. If you're unhappy, then take a role and be the change
you want to see. But regardless, without members the AOA is powerless. If you're not now a
member, I encourage you to join either through AFOS or your state as appropriate. And for
those that affiliate through your state, please consider an associate membership in AFOS."

ALAN G. PEASLEE, Lt Col BSC GAANG
Assistant to the State Air Surgeon and Joint Surgeon

-----
This is not the first time Federal Service Optometry has been threatened, and it will not be the last. It is more important than ever that we both collectively (AFOS/AOA) and specifically (ANG optometry) maintain a strong association. Together we have proven our strength.

AFOS will be having an ANG optometry breakout session at the upcoming AFOS/SECO 2014 meeting on March 12th. Be sure to register through AFOS, and enjoy great CE and terrific camaraderie with your fellow ANG and Federal ODs.

---

**NAVY RESERVE**

**CAPT Marie Gannon**

Greetings

I am very excited and honored to have been selected as the Specialty Leader, for NR Optometrists! I look forward to working with you! Please feel free to contact me anytime at gannonmar@hotmail.com.

As you know, Navy Reserve Optometry has many exciting opportunities. In addition to providing optometric support at various worldwide medical installations, Navy Reserve optometrists satisfy the needs of Innovation Readiness Training (IRT) exercises, fill administrative roles and command medical facilities. With that said, there are 3 IRT exercises for FY14. IRT exercises offer a unique training opportunity for reservists to travel to an austere/remote environment, work in field-like conditions with members of other military services and civilians, where basic medical and optometric care are delivered to underserved communities in the United States. IRTs offer the ideal training venue to prepare reservists for future Humanitarian Assistance or Disaster Response missions. If you are flexible, like to work hard and meet interesting new people and make an impact with underserved populations, please consider volunteering.

Here are the details on the 3 missions:

1) **Cajun Care**: This exercise will be led by the Air National Guard and members will be working in a joint service environment with ANG and USNR personnel.

**Dates/Location:** 23FEB - 6MAR 2014; underserved areas in/around the city of Abbeville,
2) **Arctic Care**: This exercise will be led by the Air National Guard and members will be working in a joint service, austere environment with ANG and USNR personnel.

**Dates/Location**: 30MAR - 11APR 2014; 6 small, remote villages around Kodiak Island, AK.

3) **Tropic Care**: This exercise will be led by the Army Reserve and members will be working in a joint service environment with Air Force, USNR, USMC and Army personnel.

**Dates/Location**: 14 - 26 JUN 2014; underserved areas in/around 3 communities in Kauai, HI.

We are in a competitive time. We have to assume greater range of duties, assume positions with greater span of control and exercise our leadership skills. At the current time, there are only 7 paid optometry billets, in the Navy Reserves. With that said, we have more than 15 reserve optometrists. Some of these folks are in the Voluntary Training Unit (drill with no pay), some hold Director for Administration positions for Operation Health Support Units(OHSU) or Expeditionary Medical Facilities(EMF), and a few hold support billets. I highly recommend that you take on extra collateral jobs; that you volunteer for leadership positions such as the Officer-in-Charge, Training Officer, Operational Officer positions at your OHSU/EMF, if you have not already done so.

**Second, prepare your record!**

Selection boards, whether statutory or administrative, select to the record! Every officer should review their record at least twice a year to ensure accuracy. This includes review of your Officer Summary Record (OSR), Performance Summary Report (PSR) and Official Military Personnel File (OMPF). All of these can be found through the BUPERS on-line website.
Continuing Education Committee
CDR Tyson Brunstetter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Air Force</td>
<td>Maj Justin Sandholm, OD, FAAO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capt Bryan Sixkiller, OD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>MAJ Jason Hales, OD, FAAO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CPT William Garrison, MDiv, OD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>CDR Tyson Brunstetter, OD, MBA, PhD, FAAO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Chair]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CDR Kevin Jackson, OD, MPH, FAAO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td>LCDR Gregory Smith, OD, FAAO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paula Johns, OD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>Joni Scott-Weideman, OD, FAAO [Vice-Chair]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meghan Elkins, OD, FAAO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/Civilian</td>
<td>(Vacant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Chairs</td>
<td>Lt Col Anthony Jarecke, OD, MBA, FAAO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wm. Scott Slagle, OD, FAAO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The past year has been busy for the AFOS Continuing Education (CE) Committee. Despite extraordinary TDY/TAD funding challenges, the Feb-13 Federal Service Optometry (FSO) Meeting and Oct-13 Annual Meeting were extremely positive from a CE perspective, with a combined total of 18 hours of available world-class education. To my knowledge, this is the most COPE-approved CE that AFOS has ever provided its membership, and this is due to the forward-thinking of our AFOS Executive Counsel and Executive Directors. Bravo!

I’d like to thank LCDR Christopher Cordes and MAJ Ina Lee for their longstanding-and outstanding-efforts on the CE Committee. LCDR Cordes and MAJ Lee have recently entrusted their Committee seats to Dr Paula Johns and CPT William Garrison, respectively. Welcome aboard, Paula and Bill; we’re looking forward to working with you! And finally, I’d like to congratulate Maj Justin Sandholm on attaining a key professional milestone in October: AAO Fellowship!
The Committee is preparing for February's FSO Meeting and is actively seeking speakers. Any suggestions (speakers, topics, etc.) would be greatly appreciated. As always, our goal is to provide federally-focused CE that is relevant to all AFOS members to the fullest extent possible (a formidable task, for sure!). Please email any recommendations to us anytime (via Tyson.J.Brunstetter.mil@mail.mil or through your CE Committee Branch representatives). Our AFOS family includes a broad range of Subject Matter Experts, so if you (or a colleague) have an interest in presenting on a national stage, contact us!

The CE Committee is looking forward to seeing you all in Atlanta!

Best regards, Tyson Brunstetter

---

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
Dr. Tyler Miles

AFOS Communication Committee update

2014 Online dues payments
Last year, with the implementation of the new website, we added the option to pay AFOS and AOA dues at quarterly or monthly intervals instead of the standard annual interval. A number of members tried it out for 2013, and are currently set up with automatic recurring payments for dues.

If you are currently utilizing automatic recurring payments, your payments will continue for 2014 at the same interval with the amount adjusted to reflect the 2014 AFOS and AOA dues structure. You shouldn't have to do anything. If your credit card is expiring, or you need to switch to a different credit card, please contact the executive directors, who can update your credit card information.

If you are currently paying dues on an annual basis and would like to change to a quarterly or monthly recurring payment, email the executive directors at execdir@afos2020.org and they will enable your account for automatic recurring payment. After your account is enabled for
monthly or quarterly payment, you will need to enter your payment account information on
the website through the "renew" link.

**AFOS Facebook page**
Did you know AFOS has a facebook page? If you use facebook, you can find our page by
clicking on the facebook link on the right side of the AFOS homepage, by searching "armed
forces optometric society" on facebook. or going to the following URL:
https://www.facebook.com/pages/Armed-Forces-Optometric-Society/254314983872. The
AFOS facebook page contain announcement and news items, as well as pictures of AFOS
events. **Pictures** are now available from the Seattle AFOS meeting. If you "like" the AFOS
page on facebook, then you will see new posts in your personalized facebook news stream.

**Call for AFOS member pictures**
Our current web page includes a slideshow of federal service Optometrists working in various
settings. We would like to find more of these pictures to display, and so I am asking you (our
members) to send in pictures you may have of federal service optometrists practicing in your
environment. If you have any pictures you can contribute, please ensure that anyone in the
picture has given their permission for the picture to be displayed on the AFOS site or
Facebook page, and send to tpmiles@gmail.com

---

**Awards Committee**
**Dr. Carla Engelke**

"Award those who deserve!"
Awards:
The presentation of the AFOS Service-specific OD and Junior OD of the Year Awards will take place in March at the FSO meeting prior to SECO in Atlanta. Award nominations will be due 3 January 2014. Get started now!

The winner of these Service-specific awards will then compete for the AFOS OD and Junior OD of the Year Awards which will be presented at the AFOS meeting prior to AAO in the Fall of 2014. These awards are an excellent way to let our members know that we are aware of their dedication, talent, and devotion to Federal Service and the optometric profession. Visit the AFOS website to nominate some of our talented doctors: http://www.afos2020.org/AFOS_Awards.asp, an easier format has been incorporated which is aligned with the AOA Awards. Please note that the process for the ORION Award, the AFOS Reserve OD of the Year, and the COL Bzdula AFOS Student Award will not change and will continue to be awarded at the AFOS Annual Meeting prior to the AAO. Please send all nominations and direct any questions to Dr Carla Engelke at carla.engelkel1@gmail.com and Dr Joseph Pruitt at pruitt.joseph@gmail.com.

2013 Award Recipients:

**ORION Award:**
COL David Hilber (Army)

**AFOS OD of the Year:**
Dr. Angela Musick (VA)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award Type</th>
<th>Recipient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFOS Junior OD of the Year:</td>
<td>Maj Tara Jayne (Air Force)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFOS Reserve OD of the Year:</td>
<td>MAJ Jennifer Martin (Army)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COL Bzdula AFOS Student of the Year:</td>
<td>Matthew Weinheimer, ICO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFOS 1st Honorary Membership Award</td>
<td>Dr. Ronald Hopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFOS 1st Optometry Icon Speaker</td>
<td>RADM Michael Mittelman, US Navy (ret)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Salus University Armed Forces Optometric Society Tribute Scholarship:**

Salus University has established a collaborative partnership with AFOS through which Salus University would offer partial scholarships (50% of tuition) to pursue an online Masters in Public Health degree. **AFOS/AOA members** in every category (Active, Associate, Alumni, Adjunct, Life) in good standing and **their dependents** are eligible to apply*. All applicants must complete the University on-line MPH application process at [http://www.salus.edu/publicHealth/ph_applicationProcess.html](http://www.salus.edu/publicHealth/ph_applicationProcess.html).

All qualified applicants will be considered for selection by the Scholarship Selection Board which will be comprised of appointed members of the AFOS Awards committee and the Salus University MPH program. The window for **Spring term** submissions is **20 January - 7 February 2014** with the Spring term starting on 17 February 2014. Additional information can be found on the AFOS website Awards page at [www.afos2020.org](http://www.afos2020.org) or interested applicants may contact Dr. William Monaco at wmonaco@salus.edu or Dr Joseph Pruitt at pruitt.joseph@gmail.com.

*Eligibility: This means being current in your AFOS/AOA dues paid through March 31, 2014 (1st quarter 2014). If you are set up on month-to-month or quarterly recurring payment you are also in good standing.*
THANK YOU! Because of your membership, we are happy to report that AFOS has had the highest AOA affiliate growth in the nation with a 57% surge in credentialed members! This is all due to your willingness to become an AFOS and AOA member and your commitment to stay involved in organized optometry. WE had the most dynamic shift from 384 to 603
members - an all-time AFOS record since 1970.

By becoming the 10th largest affiliate, we now have a bigger voice in the AOA House of Delegates for key issues affecting all of our futures. In a time of federal optometry uncertainties and budget concerns, it is more important than ever that we continue to stay active and united in our professional organization.

Total AFOS credentialed members: 57% Increase
Rank by size of AOA affiliates: 10 out of 52
Voting power in the AOA Congress: 57 votes

If you are interested in volunteering for a VACANT position, please contact me at Peter.Carra.1@US.AF.Mil

The AFOS membership committee has been hard at work maintaining current members as well as recruiting new ones. This year we have developed a new program to recognize our AFOS members. Those in attendance at our meetings will receive a certificate on longevity at five year anniversary increments.

Don't forget that 2014 annual AFOS/AOA dues are due on 1 Jan

* We apologize if we are missing any names. Please contact us to update your membership record.
2014. Dues may be paid in full, quarterly, or monthly. If you need an additional tax deduction for 2013 pay now.

Pay dues online at www.afos2020.org and while you are logged in, we kindly ask that you review your membership profile and update your current information so we may keep you posted on the latest news and events with AFOS.

Meetings Committee
Dr. Susan Yee &
Dr. Samuel Jarvis
Co-chairs

The Meetings Committee is the integration of two previous AFOS committees: the Exhibits and Posters and Facility Support. The goal of the committee is to work closely with the Executive Directors to set up and facilitate both AFOS Meetings. A noteworthy accomplishment was achieved at the annual meeting in Seattle 2013. Under the direction of Dr. Matthew Rhodes, we were able to improve the quality of the Resident Poster Program this year. In addition, peer reviewed abstracts can be submitted electronically and easily accessed on the AFOS website.

As 2014 approaches, the Meetings Committee is looking forward to all of the opportunities that lie ahead for AFOS. This is also a good time to thank both Dr. Gregory Hutcheson and Dr. John Dziadul, immediate past chairs of Exhibits and Posters and Facility Support committees respectively, for their leadership and contributions. The committee wishes the best to both of them as they begin to assume other responsibilities with AFOS.

Current Committee Roster:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Air Force</th>
<th>Dr. Stephen Simpson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Nikki Lagendyk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Army | Vacant  
---|------
Navy | Dr. Samuel Jarvis (co-chair)  
| Dr. Larry Schmiege  
| Dr. Sara Bustamante (Navy)  
| Dr. Sanjeet Shahi (VA)  
VA | Dr. Susan Yee (co-chair)  
| Dr. Matthew Rhodes

AFOS 2013 Annual Meeting Poster Program
by Dr. Matthew Rhodes

Congratulations to the AFOS member residents and graduate students whose poster abstracts were accepted for presentation in this year's AFOS annual meeting poster session in Seattle. A peer review panel accepted thirteen poster abstracts, and posters were displayed at the Red Lion Hotel on Tuesday, October 22nd. Accepted abstracts have been published in this edition of the AFOS newsletter.

Poster abstracts were reviewed by a panel of 5 AFOS members comprised of a representative from the Army, Navy, Air Force, IHS, and VA. A hearty thank you goes to Dr. Gregory Hutcheson (Army), Dr. Samuel Jarvis (Navy), Dr. Stephen Simpson (Air Force), Dr. Michael Davis (IHS), and Dr. Susan Yee (VA) for their expertise and service as abstract reviewers.

Poster Abstracts AFOS 2013 - Click here

Student Liaison
Jason Christman
AFOS National Student Liaison Report

We are continuously striving to increase awareness among the student population of Health Professions Scholarship Program in the Army, Air Force, and Navy, as well as increasing awareness of AFOS and the opportunities available for future federal careers.

After the AOA meeting we have contacted (hopefully) all current HPSP students with invitations to join AFOS and to visit the new AFOS student website, but please spread the word to students who may be interested. The new AFOS student website has been launched with many new resources for students. Mentors for all major Federal Optometry Services have volunteered to answer questions and point students in the right direction as we try to navigate our sometimes-confusing career options. The student website also has descriptions of Optometry in all major Federal branches, so that students can understand better their options. Including Indian Health Services, Public Service, Prisons, Public Health and Emergency response, Veterans Affairs, and Military. I would like to invite all student HPSP or otherwise to visit www.afos2020.org and click on the student tab to access many helpful tools and information. Like our Facebook page for updated scholarship information, articles, events, and news! You’ll hear all the new information we receive about HPSP, like the latest scholarship numbers from Army: 4 to 3 yr HPSP, 6-2 yr HPSP, 2-1 yr HPSP. We only report the information that we can get. HPSP numbers are always difficult to get. But speak with your local AFOS student representative for ways to apply. We are really trying to get the information to the students so that they realize what a huge opportunity Federal Optometry can be! Please contact me if you have any suggestions about how we can be more effective, or if you would like to join our team! christmanjason@gmail.com. Some key points from AFOS meeting Seattle, October 2013:

Plan your career in advance, and get to know your service’s Optometry career planner. Read their reports in this newsletter, and get to know them. They know what is best for your career and can help you get where you need to be. Be willing to work with them and communicate well with them. They will help you be placed in prime positions for your first and subsequent duty stations, where you will develop your career and skills. Your duty stations may not be what you wanted at first, but they can always grow and broaden your career.

Look for opportunities to be trained to the highest scope of your ability. The most surprising thing I learned about Federal Optometry was the degree to which many career optometrists
move into a public health/hospital administration. You are encouraged to further your education by getting Masters Degree, residency, and Fellowship in the Academy. Rear Admiral Michael H. Mittelman, an Optometrist, has been responsible for federal health care in regions, hospitals, and served as deputy Surgeon General. When he spoke to AFOS he said that optometrists should never let an opportunity pass them by. He advanced in his career by being willing to do many jobs that he didn't expect as a staff optometrist.

There are many ways to expand your influence and expertise as a federal optometrist and public health officer. This includes policy making, hospital administration, research and development, disaster response, and field medicine. I also spoke with many who work in optometry clinics and love the work they continue to do. Go into Federal Optometry with an open mind and willing attitude.

Residencies, Careers, and Specialties in Indian Health Services, VA, and Public Health are a great way to practice Optometry. The pay is competitive, the work is challenging, and the scope of influence is great.

Federal Optometry can certainly be an "out of the box" mode of practice; it can lead to huge personal and professional growth while still maintaining a steady salary and benefits. I believe the adventure, opportunity to serve, and financial incentives can be well worth the journey.

Congratulations to Matthew Weinheimer, 2013 COL Bzdula AFOS Student of the Year, awarded at the Seattle AFOS meeting.

Remember our meeting in March at SECO! See you there.

Please contact me if you have any suggestions about how we can be more effective, or if you would like to join our team! christmanjason@gmail.com

Jason Christman

13-14 National AOSA/AFOS Liaison

Click the link below to check out the new AFOS FACEBOOK page for students. Don't forget to like us!
EDs' FINAL THOUGHTS

Whoa.... what an amazing year. First, let us express what an honor it is to serve AFOS. We want to thank each of you for your membership. Federal optometry is advanced and protected by federal optometrists. AFOS as an affiliate of the AOA, has a top priority to advance optometry throughout the federal government. This is a key component of our mission, and it is not accomplished in theory, or by opinion. It occurs through our collective membership.

We'd like to give accolades to some of your fellow members, who have dedicated themselves in service to our organization. First are our outgoing Executive Council members:

COL (Ret) Jeff Weaver, US Army Reserve  
Lt Col Tony Jarecke, Air Force  
CDR Kevin Jackson, Navy  
LTC Greg Hutchinson, Army

These individuals have served AFOS and the AOA in a leadership capacity for years, and they are due our sincerest appreciation.

Also we'd like to recognize your most recent immediate past president Commander Mike Sunman, Navy. Many feel that our profession, but especially AFOS has gone through some of our toughest times these last 3 years. As President Elect, then President, and through this year as Immediate Past President, Dr. Sunman was a steady unwavering leader for AFOS. The success of our organization today, is in large part due to his vision, and determination. He demonstrated that being engaged through participation from within, makes change a reality. Change and advancement is never accomplished by being a critic from the outside.

Finally, acknowledgments would be enormously incomplete without recognizing your most recent president, Dr. Aly Wasik from Veterans Affairs. On day one as president, she put her foot on the accelerated and never took it off. AFOS achieved most of its 5 year goals during her one year presidency. Those who believe we are glorified opticians, attacked federal optometry on multiple fronts in several services. No matter how onerous or complex the issue, President Wasik took every issue head on. She never ducked, or asked someone to fight for us. Federal optometry is advanced and protected by federal optometrists. It's our job (each of us), to take care of our federal optometric colleagues. No one exemplifies this more than Aly Wasik OD.... a passionate, dedicated advocate for our profession.

Again, it is an honor and privilege to serve each of you. In 2014, we have a bold agenda that will take us to new heights. Be sure to renew your membership now. Remember AFOS is
the best deal in all of optometry.

If you are not a member JOIN Today by going to www.afos2020.org.

See you at AFOS/SECO 2014 in March. Let us know if we can ever assist you in any way.

Anthony & Gina

AFOS/SECO 2014
you don't want to miss this

REGISTER AFOS NOW!

First register for the AFOS Meeting. Then for eligible members, a confirmation email with the SECO registration link & code along with the Westin reservation information will be sent to you.

SECO 2014
March 13 - 16
IMMENSE APPRECIATION TO OUR 2013 SPONSORS

EAGLE PATRIOT
Available
Platinum AFOS Sponsors
Gold AFOS Sponsors

NOVA Southeastern University

Sincerely,

Anthony & Gina Borgognoni
Dr. Anthony & Gina Borgognoni
Executive Directors of AFOS
www.afos2020.org
execdir@afos2020.org
214-533-0227