

## EHO 2011 RESPONDER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Lieutenant Commander Carolyn J. Oyster is cited for her global crisis response and public health protection efforts during the calendar year of 2010. She deployed 100 days, responding to Operation Unified Response-Haiti for 21 days, the 100th Anniversary Boy Scout Jamboree for 14 days, Deepwater Horizon MC 252 Oil Spill response for 52 days, and she took 13 days' vacation to volunteer her services to the city of Rio Blanco, Nicaragua, helping to set up a community water system. For her efforts this year, I highly recommend LCDR Oyster receive the EHO Responder of the Year award.

LCDR Oyster served 21 days as the Incident Management Team (IMT) Safety Officer (SOFR) for U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Operation Unified Response-Haiti (OUR-H), at the USCG District 7 IMT in Miami, Florida. LCDR Oyster developed a Quick Reference Card (QRC) during OUR-H to provide clear, concise safety directions and educate members on possible exposure hazards. The QRC addressed over 25 significant in-theater exposure hazards and became so successful multiple responding agencies in Haiti requested the QRC from the USCG, making it the first inter-agency emergency response tool to protect responders during Haiti operations. During OUR-H she also took technical data and wrote an easy-to-read site safety plan with organized data directing USCG response for multiple medical/safety scenarios. LCDR Oyster coordinated the USCG Occupational Medical Surveillance and Evaluation Program tracking for all responding units. She met with responders returning from in-theater operations and outlined all exposure hazards experienced by unit members in Haiti. Using this knowledge she developed a potential exposure list for all returning members. This list became a tracking tool sent to all deployed members. This was the first time a tool had been designed to assist medical personnel in accurately tracking exposures experienced during an emergency response, and resulted in unit coordinators successfully tracking personnel exposure hazards in Haiti. In addition, LCDR Oyster was hand-selected to serve as Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS) safety officer while deployed for OUR-H. She worked directly with multiple OVS planning agencies to evaluate potential Temporary Staging Facility (TSF) sites for migrants attempting to flee Haiti. During a TSF safety visit at a location to house 3000 migrants, she utilized her environmental and public health expertise to identify gross emergency egress inadequacies, improper sanitary planning, and various safety/public health concerns. Her report resulted in OVS canceling use of that location as a TSF.

LCDR Oyster deployed 14 days to the National Boy Scout Jamboree at Fort AP Hill, Virginia. Jamboree attendance was 43,395, which included 8,825 staff, 30,468 youth, 3,725 adult leaders and 377 international scouts. The event also attracted an estimated 250,000 visitors who participated in daytime activities. During the Jamboree, LCDR Oyster was part of the USPHS Public Health team and collaborated with Joint Task Force Public Health Staff on specific tasks like vector control, water supply, and waste disposal throughout the Jamboree. The team was responsible for public health issues for the 43,000+ campers, 8,800+ staff and the thousands of event visitors. LCDR Oyster had direct responsibility for food safety and public health in 5 of 20 Sub Camps where the Jamboree participants were encamped. She coordinated public health activities with her five adult leaders in Sub Camps 1-5 who volunteered as assistants. During her daily visits she monitored Sub Camp commissaries, field kitchens and sanitary services. She also visited the first aid stations to consult on public health issues and consulted with regional Boy

Scout leadership officials on public health matters. She served as technical advisor to her five Sub Camp assistants and spent most her time on food safety related issues, Sub Camp system repairs/improvements and maintenance of sanitation systems. Through her active problem-solving approach LCDR Oyster provided a valuable and popular service to her five Sub Camps.

LCDR Oyster deployed 52 days to New Orleans, LA for the Deepwater Horizon (DWH) Oil spill response. She worked as the Unified Area Command (UAC) SOFR. She directly oversaw an area of responsibility which included Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. She supervised one O-4 Decontamination officer, three Incident Command Post (ICP) SOFRs (O-4 and two O-3s), two (E-7s) Assistant SOFRs and one (E-5) Safety technician. In addition, she indirectly managed 46 field safety observers, 14 vessel safety officers and 200+ vessel decontamination inspectors. LCDR Oyster organized communication between USCG and British Petroleum by developing meeting/conference calling as well as data sharing. In addition, LCDR Oyster wrote, planned and trained 200+ marine inspectors on the first-ever USCG Vessel Decontamination qualification, allowing USCG inspectors to systematically and proficiently release 13,000+ Vessels of Opportunity back to normal operations. She also assisted UAC Planning and Logistics in consolidating two ICP safety offices into a new Incident Management Team (IMT) safety structure, releasing unnecessary USCG safety assets back to normal operations. She also wrote weekly safety alerts. These alerts were translated into multiple languages and alerted deck plate level workers on items such as spider bites, electrical wiring, driver safety, slip/trip/fall injuries, heat stress, etc. She developed a DWH oil spill response coin, which was distributed to 20,000+ demobilizing responders. Finally, she created and presented a PowerPoint presentation on DWH response for international safety professionals coming to the UAC to learn how to manage an oil spill emergency in their country. The training allowed attendees to learn from DWH actions regarding next steps if such a situation happened in their country and they needed to be responsible for safety of their responders.

Finally, LCDR Oyster volunteered 13 days of her personal time to help assess the Rio Blanco, Nicaragua public water system. She traveled to Nicaragua through an international aid organization. Once in-country, she worked with the local population, talking about the necessity of a clean water source. She conducted classes on water-borne disease transmission to local community members and legislators. She also conducted training sessions to community parents on maintaining a healthful water system. As an additional task requested of her once on-site, she worked with the local Rio Blanco construction team to lay electrical wire and provide safety assessments of a newly-constructed building.

Lieutenant Commander Carolyn J. Oyster's dedication, judgment and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Public Health Service and United States Coast Guard. She is hereby recommended for the Environmental Health Officer 2011 Responder of the Year Award.