

Athletic Trainers in the Military and Government

Text **Ian Wood, MS, ATC**
NATA Clinical & Emerging Practices in Athletic Training Committee

Not too long ago, the only way to serve our nation as an athletic trainer (outside of the four military academies) was to become a member of the U.S. Armed Forces as a medic or corpsman. Today, there are many other ways to serve our country using the knowledge, expertise, and certification we have earned as athletic trainers.

The traditional setting is still very strong, with all four military academies employing ATs to work with both intercollegiate athletes and the general student population. Each of these academies also has a preparatory school that employs ATs. The Army has a position with the World Class Athlete Program where health care is provided to the Army's Olympic athletes in 14 different Olympic sports.

More opportunities have come about over the last five years, as many military branches and government agencies are realizing the benefit ATs can bring to their organizations. Many people are aware of the use of ATs with the SEAL teams, but did you know ATs are employed to work in the clinical setting of



SMART clinics (Sport Medicine and Rehabilitation Therapy Clinic) at naval bases serving both Navy personnel and Marines? The U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps utilize athletic trainers in boot camp to keep basic trainees healthy, which means more trainees are graduating and serving in our military today.

The Army also has Musculoskeletal Action Teams (MAT) that work with strength and conditioning coaches, nutritionists/dietitians and Army physical therapists to prepare soldiers for deployment. In addition, the U.S. Army Special Forces are looking to add ATs to the services they provide to their operators.

Government service doesn't just include working directly with the military. There are many ATs who work directly with the FBI and NASA, as well as the sheriff departments, police departments and fire departments.

Many people have questions about these jobs. How do you find out about them? How do you know when they are available? How do

you apply? Most government jobs are posted on www.usajobs.gov and may not have the title of athletic trainer listed in the job description, so you have to be very thorough when searching. Doing your due diligence— checking government websites, the NATA Career Center and other job resources— will give you more opportunities to find these open positions.

There are two groups that are working hard to keep up with this job setting: the Clinical and Emerging Practices Athletic Trainers' Committee (CEPAT) the Armed Forces Athletic Trainers' Society (AFATS). CEPAT is a NATA committee dedicated to recognizing other workplace settings for ATs outside of the traditional setting. AFATS, with approximately 100 members, is a society of athletic trainers who work in governmental service or are trying to break into this setting.

If you or someone you know is working in the service of our government, reach out and let our groups know so we have a better under-

standing of where ATs are working. One area that hasn't been covered involves those who are serving our country in Active Duty, National Guard, or Reserve capacities. We know you are out there serving quietly like many of us do, but please speak up and let us know what you are doing. Be proud to be an athletic trainer serving our great nation!

To learn more about this athletic training job setting, visit the CEPAT website at www.nata.org/CEPAT or the AFATS website at <http://afats.org/index1.htm>.