

CAREER SUMMARY
CAPT. Judith A. Bell Krotoski, OTR, CHT, FAOTA

Upon completion of degree requirements, CAPT Bell-Krotoski began her work as an Occupational Therapist in the Merchant Marine Hospital in New Orleans, Louisiana. She took a special interest in treatment of the hand and regularly attended the orthopedic clinic of Dr. Daniel Riordan, a hand surgeon. Her interest in hands peaked and was the impetus for a job transfer to the Philadelphia Hand Center where she worked for three years and began to study sensibility. In 1978 an opportunity arose for CAPT Bell-Krotoski to work with a world renowned hand surgeon, Paul Brand, at the Hansen's disease program at Carville, Louisiana. CAPT Bell Krotoski's assignment at the Carville facility was to assume a clinical and research position with Hansen's disease patients who had 50-75% peripheral nerve involvement of the hand and foot. Her research was focused on rehabilitative improvements for the hand, primarily focusing on objective measures, and the monitoring and prevention of peripheral nerve involvement and associated deformities. This mixture of research and clinical treatment in rehabilitation was established by Dr. Paul Brand, Chief of Rehabilitation at the USPHS Hospital. At that time, much of hand therapy, hand treatment, and all of rehabilitation needed further documentation, research, and substantiation – thus, research and writing were natural outcomes of the hand specialty requiring a position description combining clinical practice with clinical research which CAPT Bell-Krotoski enthusiastically fulfilled.

Due in part to her experience and work with Dr. Brand regarding specific therapeutic procedures for reconstructive surgery patients, the specialty of hand therapy was established. CAPT Bell Krotoski was one of six organizing members that founded a group of specialists which became known as The American Society of Hand Therapists. CAPT Bell Krotoski completed extensive research on sensory testing instruments and the validation of objective testing. She played a major role in developing a screening tool to identify patients in need of treatment that is now used nationally and internationally; and has become a standard for cross clinic and across program comparison of improvement or worsening of patients with treatment. CAPT Bell Krotoski has obtained study grants as principal investigator to establish baseline measurements on patients and provide input into international Hansen's disease rehabilitation/prevention efforts. The greatest outcome of these studies is the transfer of knowledge regarding monofilament and other monitoring devices of peripheral nerves in the United States, Brazil, India, Ethiopia, Nepal, China and other countries.

CAPT Bell Krotoski's research and clinical practice have contributed to the knowledge base of therapy in general, and to the prevention of disability in Hansen's Disease treatment. Her work has helped to underscore the significance of, and need for therapy research. Her writing and teaching have emphasized the need for objective measurements, substantiation of therapy treatment, and meaningful outcomes of therapy treatment. CAPT Bell Krotoski has designed teaching and training information and contributed to a collaborative (NHDP) website project. She independently designed and launched a web site, ahtf.org, to highlight the need for evidence-based practice in

therapy. This website's purpose is to help make grant information and research skills available to all therapists, to encourage collaboration on research projects, and facilitate international networking. This site has a list of upcoming meeting and training opportunities worldwide, makes intercommunication of therapists possible, and provides links to fellowship programs and conferences.

CAPT Bell Krotoski has served as Principal Investigator, and published several research projects, some of which include: "Assessment of Levels of Cutaneous Sensibility" 1978; "Monitoring of Patient, Neural Status During Drug Therapy" pilot study in 1984 and approved Hansen's Disease Research in 1985; "International Project to Measure Peripheral Nerve involvement Underlying Disability of the Hand in Hansen's Disease" 1990-1995.

In addition to CAPT Bell Krotoski's extensive research career, she has been involved in several United States Public Health Service Activities which include:

- organizing a therapy symposia within the general program for therapists at the Public Health Service Centennial Meeting in new Orleans in 1989
- obtaining recognition of therapist contributions by presentation of scientific papers and encouragement of others to submit papers in numerous Commissioned Officer Association Professional Meetings
- CAPT Bell Krotoski has served as President of the Carville Branch Commissioned Officer's Association, 1982-83
- Discipline Chief, Occupational Therapy, communicating with all PHS OT Therapists during the Reduction in Strength of 1981
- She has met with former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, and on two occasions, demonstrated therapy programs, and discussed the OT profession with his granddaughter, who was considering OT as a career

During her career CAPT Bell Krotoski has served as a member of Therapist Professional Advisory Committee (TPAC) and has made several important contributions to the overall success of the Therapist Category including:

- She participated in the TPAC working on updating OT billets, therapy research and specialty billets
- She provided updates to the TPAC from Carville, as field representative from 1983 to 1998, and as a voting member 1991 - 1995

- She also participated in developing alternate qualifications for specialty billets in 1991
- She served as the TPAC chair, reporting to the Surgeon General in 1994-1995, and was one of two therapist officers nominated for the Chief Professional Officer Therapist Category, USPHS, in 1994

The International contributions that CAPT Bell Krotoski has made have been unprecedented within the Therapist Category.

- She helped launch and participated in the development of the International Federation of Societies of Hand Therapists (IFSHT). She attended and participated in four International Congresses, including the last one in Istanbul Turkey, where she served as organizer and chair of a Plenary Session on peripheral nerves, and gave a post Congress 2 day Workshops in objective measures and sensory testing to surgeons and therapists at the Hand Microsurgery and Orthopedic Trauma Hospital, Ismir, Turkey.
- Over 100 papers and publications have been written by CAPT Bell Krotoski, and numerous presentations have been made regarding hand therapy, research and patient treatment. Research information and materials have been widely disseminated to hand therapists and educational travel has been extended to Japan, India, Brazil, Nepal, Ethiopia, San Salvador, Turkey, Holland, The United Kingdom and Canada; many of these trips at her own expense, in order to exchange information, educate and train therapists.
- CAPT Bell Krotoski has also researched monofilament material for calibration, size, design, and bulk distribution overseas to facilities that cannot afford to have access to test equipment. Most of these facilities formerly did sensory testing using a pencil or ball point pen. Part of her research grants obtained through the Hand Foundation and American Leprosy Missions was to investigate “in country” ways of producing monofilament test kits.
- Although most of her professional career has been primarily with the USPHS, she participated in research and therapy treatment programs outside the PHS hospital Programs, and hand therapy in general. This exchange of information has developed significant insight and skills that can be given back to health care in the program in order to communicate what was learned from Hansen’s Disease United States.
- CAPT Bell Krotoski has served as an international consultant and has communicated with international treatment programs, therapists, and health care workers for over 20 years. She has evaluated and edited numerous international papers while encouraging therapist to do clinical research and report the results of their efforts.

In summary, CAPT Judith A. Bell Krotoski's career as a Commissioned Officer has been exemplary. While always seeking excellence in treatment, applying objective evaluation measures, and searching for new ways to improve patient care, she has served as a positive role model for the entire Therapist Category. Her dedication and commitment to health and welfare of our Nation is consistent with the highest traditions of the United States Public Health Service.