



Robert E. Bush  
Naval Hospital

## Did you know?...

**Y**ou have the right to express your concerns about patient safety and quality of care.

There are several avenues open to you:

- \* Through the ICE website.
- \* The Hospital Customer Relations Officer at 760-830-2475, or any of the Customer Relations representatives in the Hospital clinics, or directly to the Joint Commission via:

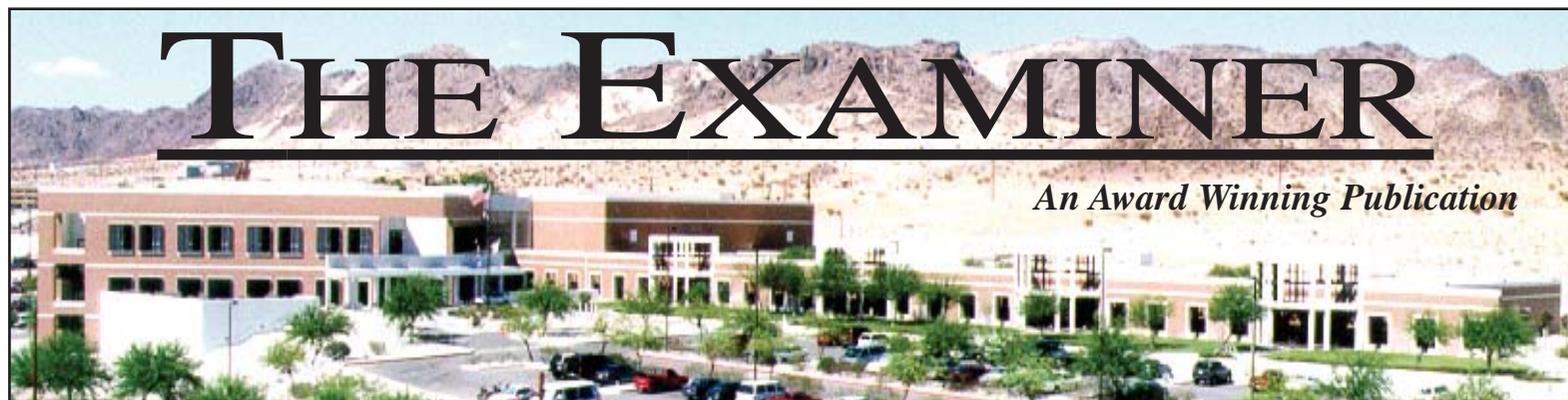
E-mail at [complaint@jointcommission.org](mailto:complaint@jointcommission.org)  
Fax: 630-792-5636

The Joint Commission  
Oak Renaissance Boulevard  
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

**T**o report Fraud, Waste and Abuse contact one of the below offices by calling:

Naval Hospital: 760-830-2344  
Combat Center: 760-830-7749  
NavMedWest: 1-877-479-3832  
Medical IG: 1-800-637-6175  
DoD IG: 1-800-424-9098

Commanding Officer  
Naval Hospital Public Affairs Office  
Box 788250 MAGTFC  
Twentynine Palms, CA 92278-8250



# THE EXAMINER

An Award Winning Publication

<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nhtp/pages/default.aspx>

## Meet Your New XO

By Dave Marks, NHTP Public Affairs Officer--with material from Official Bio

Capt. Jeffrey Bitterman, NHTP's Executive Officer, had a practical approach to choosing medical school. Growing up in Buffalo, N.Y., he had an uncle who served in the Navy during the Korean War, which he found intriguing. When it came time to choose a medical school, after earning a Bachelor's of Science degree in biology from Houghton College in southwestern New York, he chose the Uniformed University of the Health Sciences F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine, graduating in 1995. "I was happy with the decision and I've been in the Navy ever since," he said.

While in medical school he completed the U.S. Army Airborne and Air Assault Schools. He earned the Expert Parachutist designation during additional training with the Navy Special Warfare detachment. In 1997, while stationed at NAS

Pensacola, he was designated a Naval Flight Surgeon.

He was attracted to emergency medicine for the fast pace and variety. "I like to multitask and the ER really lends itself to that. You're not seeing individually scheduled patients. You see all comers, no matter what comes

in. I've worked in some fairly busy ERs so you have multiple beds going on and each patient is their own kind of case," he said.

His approach to a new command is to take a wait-and-see approach. "My policy coming in is, number one, I want to be aligned with the Commander's intent. I want to be aligned with how the Skipper wants to proceed," he said. "Second, typically when I'm at a new place, I like to see what's going on for the first 60 to 90 days before going too gung-ho with trying to change things. We already do a lot of things well."



NHTP Executive Officer, Capt. Jeffrey Bitterman

Capt. Bitterman said he's a proponent of the concept of appreciative inquiry-- which builds on current best practices and successes as a mode of ongoing process improvement. "The CO and I will look at how we can further promote patient safety on the clinical side but even on the administrative

side, how do we streamline things so that processes move smoothly? We can take out unnecessary redundancy and make everybody's job a lot easier," he said.

As a hands-on emergency medi-

Continued on Page 7, NHTP Executive Officer



## Captain's Call!

NHTP Commanding Officer Capt. John Lambertton fields a question during Captain's Call July 14. Capt. Lambertton related an anecdote when someone on Base asked him what he did. "I care for patients," he replied. He used that exchange to expand upon the guiding principles that govern NHTP and BUMED: Ship, shipmate, self. "The ship is there to support you," Capt. Lambertton explained to the gathering of the civilians. "Shipmates support each other, and even though you wear clothes that are different than mine, we're still shipmates." Caring for patients is the bottom line for all of us, he said. "Our mission is to deliver high-quality care, efficiently, in a patient-centric environment." Capt. Lambertton encouraged the civilians to "build your knowledge. Caring for patients and staff involves more than can be found in a manual." Among the questions the NHTP Commander was asked were the disposition of dumpsters; whether a furlough could be on the horizon; solar panels over the patient-parking lot; and tuition assistance for civilians. Capt. Lambertton said he would track the questions on SharePoint and provide timely updates.

Patients seen in June -- 10,053

Appointment No Shows in June -- 873

In June we had an 10.2 percent no-show rate. We need to keep trending downward by keeping the appointments we make, or by canceling in enough time for someone else to use the slot...

To help patients obtain appointments, the Naval Hospital now shows the number of open appointment slots each day on the hospital Facebook site, check it out. On Facebook, search:

Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms.

To make an appointment call -- 760-830-2752

To cancel an appointment call -- 760-830-2369



*Hospitalman Second Class Kenny Henry reenlists for four more years July 7. HM2 Henry, who works in the NHTP Pharmacy, is from Ocala, Fla. He's been in the Navy nine years and has orders for an overseas deployment. Reenlisting officer is Lt. Quingyuan Cao.*

*Right: Mrs. Kimberly Davison is presented a Letter of Appreciation for her "outstanding performance in Patient Services, Pharmacy Dept., NHTP, for FY2015, Second Quarter. Your communication skills with patients and their family members have delighted and ensured that they are receiving the best care. You are a morale builder within your department with your can-do attitude and your kind and generous contributions to the Pharmacy Department."*



*Ms. Vanda Stanely, NHTP Health Benefits Advisor, receives a Federal Length of Service Award for 10 years of faithful service to the federal government.*



*Ms. Deborah Schlemmer, NHTP Housekeeping, receives a Federal Length of Service Award for five years of faithful service to the federal government.*



*Master-of-Arms First Class Steven Adams reenlists for two more years during an early morning ceremony in NHTP Emergency Dept. Reenlisting officer is Lt. Felicia Mendez. MA1 Adams and Lt. Mendez have known each other since working security together in San Diego in 2002 when Mendez was an Electronic Warfare Technician First Class ( a rate which no longer exists). MA1 Adams has been in the Navy 18 years. He's originally from Schulenburg, Texas.*



*Hospitalman Second Class Evan Fitch, laboratory technician, reenlists for five more years July 24. HM2 Fitch is from Vancouver, Wash. He's been in the Navy 10 years and is set to depart on deployment. Upon his return, HM2 Fitch has orders for the USS Bon Homme Richard, a Wasp-class amphibious assault ship based in Sasebo, Japan. HM2 Fitch will continue working in the ship clinic laboratory.*

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**Executive Officer**

Capt. Jeffrey W. Bitterman, MC, USN

**Command Master Chief**

HMCM (FMF/AW/SW) Carol Merricks, USN

**Public Affairs Officer/Editor**

Mr. Dave Marks

**Command Ombudsman**

Mr. J.Wesley Bassard (310) 433-0499 email:

The Examiner welcomes your comments and suggestions concerning the publication. Deadline for submission of articles is the 15th of each month for the following month's edition. Any format is welcome, however, the preferred method of submission is by e-mail or by computer disk.

**How to reach us...**

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# Preventive Medicine Corner

*Submit Questions/Concerns and Tanya Will Provide Answers*



**Tanya Stuckey**

Dear Tanya,

I have several health concerns, hopefully nothing serious. My husband has been encouraging me to get a doctor's appointment, but I feel extremely uncomfortable talking to a stranger, even if he is a physician, about myself and my body. Do other people feel this way? Anyway, I'm hoping you can give me some pointers on talking to my doctor. Thanks for all of your help!

Signed,  
Uncomfortable

Dear Uncomfortable,

It can be uncomfortable initiating conversation regarding sensitive medical concerns and you may have even used the internet to look up your symptoms and a possible diagnosis.

While there are some great reputable sites out there, nothing can take the place of seeing a medical provider that knows your history and will take the time to discuss your specific needs and options. I do have some tips from one of our own doctors here at NHTP and I would love to share them:

**1. Make a list of questions you would like to talk to your**

**provider about and prioritize them.** Scheduled appointments seem to fly by when you are engaged in conversation with your provider and you want to be sure you have covered as much as you can in that time. Writing it down and prioritizing allows you to guide the appointment in a way that gets your questions answered and you won't walk away feeling as though you forgot something.

**2. Be completely honest with your medical team.** This does not mean that you have to give personal and potentially embarrassing information at the check-in desk, but once you are face to face with your provider, tell him/her what your concerns are. It may be difficult to get the initial words out, but your provider has likely dealt with similar issues before and can assist in making the discussion less uncomfortable. Remember, this is your health and wellness and your provider needs the whole story to give the best care. This includes all medications (over the counter and prescription), supplements, home remedies you have attempted and vitamins you take regularly. This is especially important if you utilize providers outside of the naval hospital.

**3. Ask for clarification. If you don't understand what your provider has said, ask for more information.** Your medical team is here for you and they want to be sure you receive the care you deserve. Medical jargon can sometime be confusing and for those who use it regularly, it may slip into provider/patient conversation. If you aren't sure what something means, please speak up. Providers are more than willing to give you more details to be sure you are both on the same page.

**4. Use all of your resources. Relay Health and the Nurse Advice Line (1-800-TRICARE) are here to help answer questions.** Relay Health allows you to make an appointment, follow up on test results or ask your provider a question from the comfort of home. Your Nurse Advice Line is a great resource for non-emergency situations and can alleviate stress as you seek credible information.

**5. Know that you, your health and your privacy are priority.** Providers want you to be healthy, happy and as comfortable as possible when discussing your medical concerns. Some medical concerns are difficult to discuss and this is why you are afforded the opportunity to speak with your provider one-on-one in a private exam room. He or she will spend as much time as possible to be sure you have that opportunity.

Appointments often feel rushed and it is imperative that you have a chance to be heard and understand your provider's guidance. The few extra minutes a provider can spend answering a patient's questions often means a longer wait for the next patient. It is important not to wait until the end of your appointment to mention a new concern or drop big news that could have been discussed at the beginning. Your time is valuable and we want to be sure it is well spent.

It is very likely that anything you have a question about or symptoms to address, your medical provider has heard it before. Once you are able to get past the discomfort of verbalizing it, you will see that you and your provider can create a plan for optimal health and build a solid foundation for open communication.

## Change Leads to Healthier You

*By Tanya Stuckey, NHTP Public Health Specialist*

Have you considered making changes to create a healthier lifestyle? Sometimes it seems that the more you research, the more overwhelming change can feel! There are so many choices for fitness classes, groups and programs and what appears to be a never-ending selection of meal plans, tracking devices and "guaranteed results" claims from supplement and diet companies.

So, how can you know which one is right for you, or for that matter, if they are safe?

One thing we all know to be true is a diet consisting of whole foods shared with an exercise plan is a great place to start! Combine proper diet and exercise with a restful night's sleep, good hydration, good oral health and surrounding yourself with people and things that make you feel well-- and you will see results.

There are so many ways to make positive, healthy changes without spending a fortune; as a matter of fact, some may even save you money! Cutting out impulsive trips to fast food establishments or grabbing that sugary snack while waiting in line at the store are great examples. Keep a small container of nuts, seeds or a piece of fruit with you at work or while on the go as a way to treat yourself during a snack attack and you will be less likely to surrender to take-out or that beckoning drive-thru. Quitting tobacco, cutting back on alcohol consumption, drinking more water

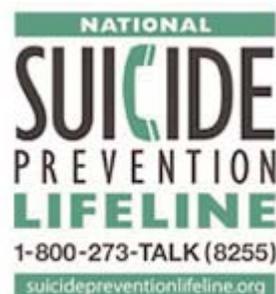
and spending less on sodas, coffee and energy drinks are not only healthy lifestyle practices, but will add weight to your bank account while trimming your waistline.

Get moving to feel better!

Physical activity is great for cardiovascular health, weight management, and mental health. Our southern California weather and diverse terrain gives us extra incentive to get off the couch and golf, hike, bike, walk, run, swim (think pools or a drive to the beaches, rivers and lakes) or climb. Anyone who says there is nothing to do around here just hasn't explored the options. If the summer heat is too much for you to handle, consider early morning and evening events.

There are indoor activities like free fitness classes through MCCS--featuring health-conscious community members who teach zumba, spinning and yoga. Sign up and and join like-minded individuals; increase social opportunities; and see your motivation level increase.

Need more information on how to implement healthy changes that fit your lifestyle? Call or email me for more info (760) 830-2173 / Tanya.L.Stuckey.civ@mail.mil . Here are some great resources to get you started.  
NHTP Health Promotions (760) 830-2814  
NHTP Nutrition/Dietician (760) 830-2274  
MCCS Semper Fit (760) 830-6451  
MCCS Outdoor Adventures (760) 830-7235



2X3  
Smith's Family  
Properties

# Super Stars...



Cmdr. Kristina Morocco is awarded the Meritorious Service Medal "for outstanding meritorious achievement as Director of Surgical Services, Obstetrics and Gynecology Dept., NHTP, from July 2013 to July 2015. Cmdr. Morocco performed her duties in an exemplary and highly professional manner. She expanded command capabilities by the addition of active duty chiropractor care, oral and maxillo-facial services, dependent orthopedic care, hiring a breast-health nurse, arrangement for full-time podiatry services, and gained approval for another anesthesia provider. She reduced referrals to the network and saved the command over \$500,000 annually. Under her guidance, the Obstetrics Department performed better than the national average in 24 specific perinatal care measures including the highlight achievement of a historically low cesarean section rate of 19 percent, more than 30 percent below the national average. She revised the Universal Protocol Policy, initiated operating room TeamSTEPS huddles, and established the Good-Catch Award. Cmdr. Morocco's exceptional professional ability, steadfast initiative, and selfless dedication to duty reflect great credit upon herself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

For the President,  
Bruce L. Gillingham  
Rear Admiral, Medical Corps,  
United States Navy



Lt. Cmdr. Stacie Milavec is awarded the Meritorious Service Medal "for outstanding meritorious achievement as Director for Clinical Support Services, NHTP, from Sept. 2012 to July 2015. Lt. Cmdr. Milavec provided outstanding leadership in the full implementation of a new Occupational Therapy Clinic by locating clinic space, acquiring support staff, and procuring \$15,000 in equipment and supplies. This robust clinic provided care to 25 patients per day, reduced purchased-care costs by 21 percent, and recaptured \$160,000 in 2014. She reformulated a business case analysis on magnetic resonance imaging network costs and loss of in-house care opportunities, thus allowing the command to secure approval for a new magnetic resonance imaging service which will save the command \$1,195,000 annually. She executed a plan to achieve command vision for in-house mammography services. She steered the laboratory in fiscal responsibility to achieve an overall cost avoidance of \$755,000 by restructuring contracts, redirecting reference lab tests to DoD facilities, and redesigning a laboratory layout plan for a new base branch clinic. Lt. Cmdr. Milavec's exceptional professional ability, personal initiative and total dedication to duty reflect great credit upon herself and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

For the President,  
Bruce L. Gillingham  
Rear Admiral, Medical Corps,  
United States Navy



Lt. Cmdr. Lisa Gibson is awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal "for meritorious service in the superior performance of her duties while serving as Department Head, Patient Centered Medical Home Blue Team, NHTP, from July 2011 to July 2015. Lt. Cmdr. Gibson became a certified lactation consultant and provided services during critical staffing, maintaining the Command's status as a Baby-Friendly Hospital. As Chief Medical Informatics Officer, she supervised the implementation of several telemedicine initiatives that brought specialty services to remote locations. Lt. Cmdr. Gibson's exceptional professionalism, perseverance and devotion to duty reflect great credit upon herself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."



Lt. Cmdr. April McGill is awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal "for meritorious service in the superior performance of her duties while serving as Department Head, Obstetrics and Gynecology, NHTP, from July 2013 to July 2015. Lt. Cmdr. McGill revised the perinatal code response, implemented a pregnancy passport, and championed numerous policies that promoted safe, quality patient care with per-

formance well above the national benchmark on 22 perinatal and four oryx metrics. Highly dedicated to education, she trained 25 residents, led two women's health symposiums, and presented her research nationally. Lt. Cmdr. McGill's distinctive accomplishments, unrelenting perseverance, and steadfast devotion to duty reflect great credit upon herself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."



Lt. Cmdr. Jason Mihalcin is awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal "for meritorious service in the superior performance of his duties while serving as orthopedic surgeon, Orthopedic and General Surgery Dept., NHTP, from July 2011 to July 2015. Lt. Cmdr. Mihalcin generated a cost equivalent of \$6 million of surgical care. As chair of the Risk Management Advisory Committee and Blood Bank Medical Officer, he promoted a culture of safety and led successful programs with zero deficiencies during the Joint Commission Survey. Lt. Cmdr. Mihalcin's exceptional professionalism, perseverance and devotion to duty reflect great credit upon himself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."



Lt. Claire Berkeley-Hitt is awarded the Navy and Marine

Corps Commendation Medal "for meritorious service while serving as shift charge and staff nurse, Mother Infant Nursing Dept., NHTP, from April 2013 to July 2015. Lt. Berkeley-Hitt proficiently supervised 30 staff members in the delivery of quality care in a high-volume Labor & Delivery unit. As co-chair of the Junior Nurse Leadership Council, she directed the Command Nurse Excellence Award in recognizing top military and civilian nurses. Lt. Berkeley-Hitt's distinctive accomplishments, unrelenting perseverance, and steadfast devotion to duty reflect great credit upon herself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."



Lt. Qingyuan Cao is awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal "for meritorious achievement while serving as Department Head, Pharmacy Dept., NHTP, from July 2012 to July 2015. Lt. Cao led an effective outpatient service with an average patient wait time of under seven minutes while maintaining a medication error rate of 0.001 percent making her service one of the most efficient in navy medicine and recognized as a "best practice" by Navy Medicine West. Lt. Cao implemented the enterprise wide pharmacy standard operating procedures, trained 40 medical staff, and secured 100 percent command compliance with the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. Lt. Cao's distinctive accomplishments, unrelenting perseverance, and steadfast devotion to duty reflect great credit upon herself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."



Lt. j.g. Jason Cherry is awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal "for meritorious service in the superior performance of his duties while serving as Chairman, Command Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Committee, Charge Nurse, Mother Infant Nursing Dept., NHTP, from Oct. 2012 to July 2015. Lt. j.g. Cherry conducted quarterly command code blue drills, revised the Command Cardiac Resuscitation Plan, and managed the Automated External Defibrillator Program, increasing command emergency readiness. As charge nurse, he expertly supervised 30 staff, increasing efficiency and skill proficiency. Lt. j.g. Cherry's exceptional professionalism, perseverance and devotion to duty reflect great credit upon himself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."



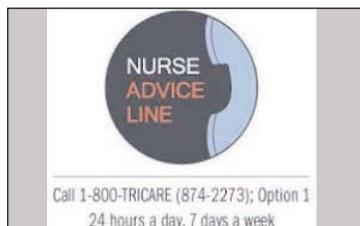
Culinary Specialist Second Class Stephen Fuqua receives a Letter of Appreciation "for your outstanding performance in customer service, NHTP, for FY 2015, Second Quarter. You have demonstrated excellent customer-service skills with your fellow team members within the Combined Food Operations. You have been recognized by one of your peers

for your exceptional ability to provide increased morale which has shown in an increase in customer satisfaction throughout the department. Your ability to make patients and staff feel good about their experience at NHTP is noticed by all who work with you. Your exemplary professionalism and outstanding performance of duty reflect great credit upon yourself and are in keeping with the highest tradition of the United States Naval Service. I commend you for a job 'Well done!' and wish you continued success in your future endeavors."

[signed]  
J.A. Lamberton  
Medical Service Corps  
Captain, Commanding Officer,  
United States Navy



Hospital Corpsman Second Class Jennifer Rand is awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal "for meritorious achievement while serving as Assistant Leading Petty Officer, Emergency Medicine Dept., NHTP, from Feb. 2011 to July 2015. Petty Officer Rand led 12 corpsmen in the delivery of emergent treatment for 33,329 patient encounters and led two respiratory therapy technicians in the treatment of 585 patients. She was instrumental in acquiring vital advanced life support equipment valued at \$177,930 which increased patient safety throughout the command. Petty Officer Rand's distinctive accomplishments, perseverance, and devotion to duty reflect great credit upon herself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."



Hospital Corpsman Third Class Glen Shortt, is awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal "for professional achievement in the superior performance of his duties while serving as a staff corpsman, NHTP, from June 2013 to July 2015. Petty Officer Shortt led two junior corpsmen in the delivery of urgent and emergent treatment for 2,662 patients. He facilitated monthly training for 22 staff members on code-blue response procedures. He managed an inventory valued at \$785,000 in medical equipment and trained four departmental equipment managers on biomedical repair schedules with zero discrepancies. Petty Officer Shortt's personal initiative, perseverance and unswerving devotion to duty reflect great credit upon himself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."



Hospitalman Justin Templeton is awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal "for professional achievement in the superior performance of his duties while serving as general duty corpsman, Family Medicine Blue Team, NHTP, from June 2013 to July 2015. Hospitalman Templeton, while acting as leading petty officer, displayed

leadership above his paygrade which included assisting in development of standardized protocols for patient care areas in family medicine. As the primary corpsman qualified, he assisted in the performance of 86 cardiac treadmill stress tests saving over \$60,000 in purchased-care costs to the command. Hospitalman Templeton's exceptional professional ability, initiative and loyal devotion to duty reflect great credit upon himself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.



Hospital Corpsman Third Class Wanda Lorde is presented a Letter of Appreciation for her outstanding performance in customer service, Obstetrics and Gynecology Clinic, NHTP, for FY 2015, Second Quarter.



Mrs. Audrey Waters, Laboratory Dept., NHTP, is presented a Letter of Appreciation for her outstanding performance as a patient services representative for FY 2015, Second Quarter. You are consistently mentioned by our beneficiaries for your kindness and willingness to help. You expertly relayed our patient's needs to the team to help expedite their care resulting in receiving the highest positive patient surveys for this quarter.



Mrs. Tanya Stuckey, Directorate for Public Health, is presented a Letter of Commendation for her selection as Senior Civilian of the Quarter, NHTP, for the period from Jan. 2015 to March 2015.

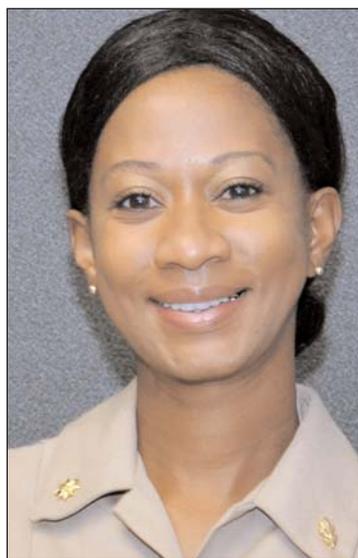


Mrs. Heidi Heard, Quality Management Dept., is presented a Letter of Commendation for her selection as Junior Civilian of the Quarter, NHTP, for the period of Jan. 2015 to Mar. 2015.



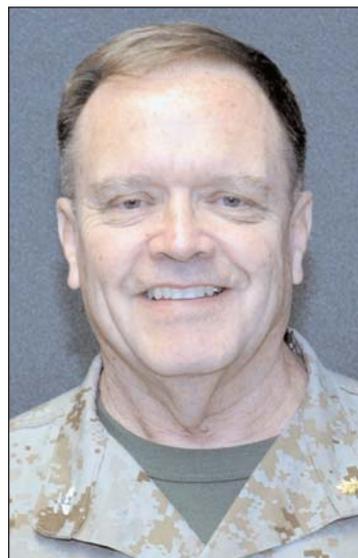
Mrs. Theresa Partin, Adult Medical Care Clinic Pharmacy, is presented a Letter of Appreciation for her outstanding performance in Patient Services, AMCC, FY 2015, Second Quarter.

# Introducing New Staff -- Welcome Aboard!



**Lt. Cmdr. Bettina Solwazi**

*Lt. Cmdr. Bettina Solwazi is an operating room nurse recently arrived from Naval Hospital Pensacola where she was service head for the Orthopedics Department and then Division Head for the Ambulatory Care Unit (APU) and the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU). She's been in the Navy 14 years and was born in Frankfurt, Germany. "I'm an Army brat," she notes when asked about her hometown; although Florida and Maryland are her favorite places. She has a BS in Nursing from Hampton University, Hampton, Va., and a Master's of Business Administration and a Master's of Healthcare Administration, both from the University of Maryland. Husband, Dumifani, a marketing liaison, will be joining Solwazi and daughter, Saniyah, 14, and son, Ezra, 4, in the near future. Hobbies include fishing, shopping and traveling*



**Capt. Richard Merrifield**

*Capt. Richard Merrifield is NHPT's new Oral Maxillo-facial Surgeon. He's freshly arrived from Naval Hospital Lemoore where he's held the same position for the past five years. Capt. Merrifield has been in the Navy 42 years. He's currently in a retired/retained status. He was born near Syracuse, N.Y., but currently considers Oceanside, Calif. home, where he's been geobacheloring from Lemoore. He appreciates being at Twentynine Palms as it's closer to Oceanside where his wife, Emily, his daughter, and two sons live. He earned his Dental degree from the University of Buffalo and did his residency at Naval Hospital San Diego. Capt. Merrifield was stationed at NHTP from 1980-'82. "I'm excited to be here," he said. Hobbies that he enjoys with his wife include home remodeling projects, landscaping and gardening.*



**Lt. Cmdr. Laurence Belin**

*Lt. Cmdr. Laurence Belin is NHPT's new general surgeon on staff. He just completed his seven-year surgical residency at New York Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center in New York City. He earned his medical degree at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia. Hometown is Valley Forge, Pa. He's here with his wife, Kristen, and seven-month-old daughter, Clementine. They've found a house in Yucca Valley. "We're very comfortable in the house we've found," Belin said. "This is a really beautiful area that a lot of Americans don't get a chance to see." For off-duty activities, Belin enjoys marathons, reading, writing, movies, video games and spending time with Clementine. Kristen, his registered nurse wife, is looking for work in the area and is scoping out NHTP as a possibility.*



**HM2 Richard Mathisen**

*HM2 Richard Mathisen is freshly arrived from Surface Warfare Medical Institute San Diego where he's been a student. Previous to that he was a team leader for the Family Practice Team at Branch Health Clinic Mayport, one of six branch health clinics aligned with Naval Hospital Jacksonville. He's been in the Navy eight years and hometown is Everett, Wash. Mathisen is here with his wife, Lythia, a pharmacy technician. They plan to live in Base housing in Twentynine Palms with their two dogs, a corgie and a collie mix named CJ and Chester. HM2 Mathisen has completed some college and intends to pursue a registered nursing degree through the Medical Enlisted Commissioning Program. Hobbies include paintball and shooting. Wife, Lythia, has recently begun making jewelry at home.*



**Mr. Peter Sharpe**

*Mr. Peter Sharpe is NHPT's new Industrial Hygienist, recently arrived from Naval Air Facilities Japan. He has over 27 years of active-duty and reserve duty, which he completed in the Air Force as an electronics technician and a bio-environmental engineering technician. He's here with his wife, Farrah, three-month-old son Pdraigh, and almost three-year-old son, Philippe Marc. The High Desert doesn't hold any surprises for Mr. Sharpe, however. He's been here before, serving as an NHTP Industrial Hygienist from 2005 to 2010. Hobbies include travel and scoping out interesting dining opportunities. The Sharpes are still house hunting. They previously lived in Yucca Valley, and thinking of returning "because it's a few degrees cooler." But they're also interested in finding programs for their children, "so it's still up in the air."*

cine physician, Capt. Bitterman also enjoys the leadership and mentoring that comes with seniority. "I enjoy the comradery of the Executive Steering Committee and leading in a governing body where we all lead horizontally for the greater good of the organization as opposed to individually owning a single area of responsibility and focusing on that." Broadening that scope of thinking into how we take the organization to the next level is a principal focus, he said. But he still plans on doing occasional shifts in the Emergency Department to maintain his clinical competency.

Among his most memorable and rewarding experiences was being assigned as Medical Contingent Commander for the Pacific Partnership mission in 2009. "We had seven partner nations and 11 non-governmental organizations. Among the islands visited were Tonga, Solomon Islands, Marshal Islands and Samoa. "It was just a great experience of leveraging everybody's subject-matter expertise and best practices among all of these different nations and non-governmental organizations," he said

Capt. Bitterman his wife, Shannon, and daughters, Peyton, 6, and Kaitlyn, 7, are residing in base housing. "They're excited to be here," he said. "The girls are already involved in swimming and they're looking forward to getting actively involved in Twentynine Palms Elementary School." For leisure activities, the Bittermans enjoy "anything outdoors. We like to swim. The girls are actively involved in bike riding and hiking. I have a Harley that I occasionally ride, but not as much now that I have kids. Mostly we're focused on outdoor activities with the girls and helping

them with their school work." Capt. Bitterman arrived from Camp Pendleton where he served as both the Director of Medical Services and Wounded Warrior Medical Director. He stood up the Concussion Clinic for Traumatic Brain Injury care and established the Warrior Recovery Center to provide multidisciplinary Wounded Warrior rehabilitation services. In 2011, he deployed as OIC of Noble Eagle 4608 to the United Kingdom Role 3 Combat Hospital in Camp Bastion and then to the NATO Role 3 Multinational Medical Unit in Kandahar, Afghanistan. He graduated from the Naval Postgraduate School with an MBA in September 2014 and received the Louis D. Liskin Award for Excellence in Business and Public Policy. He is an Assistant Professor of Military and Emergency Medicine and a fellow of the American College of Emergency Physicians and the American Academy of Emergency Medicine. Dr. Bitterman is an FAA Medical examiner and a member of multiple professional organizations including the American Medical Association, the Aerospace Medical Association, and the American College of Health Care Executives.

Captain Bitterman's personal awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal with two Gold Stars, Strike/Flight Air Medal with Numeral 1, Aerial Achievement Medal, Navy Commendation Medal with two Gold Stars, USAF Commendation Medal, USAF Outstanding Unit Award with combat "V", NATO ISAF Medal, and various unit, service, and campaign awards.

"Twentynine Palms is a great situation to step into because morale is already high and the command has so much going for it. It's very positive. You can feel the optimism here," he said.

## Seismic Damper Work Begins



*Workers begin sawing and jackhammering concrete on the NHTP loading dock July 20 to retrofit the hospital for greater structural integrity in the event of an earthquake. The project is expected to be completed by May 2016. First phase locations: Loading Dock (20 July - 20 Aug); Resource Management/Fiscal (20 Aug - 25 Aug); PEBLO/Occupational Therapy (20 Jul - 02 Sep); Orthopedics/Cast Room (04 Aug - 09 Sep); Ship Store (10 Aug - 09 Sep); Manpower (19 Aug - 24 Sep). Second Phase: MSW E206/G201 (26 Aug start); Hospital Gym (31 Aug start); Galley (09 Sep start); Command Suite (29 Sep start); Patient Admin (20 Oct start); MSW J201/J203 (03 Nov start). Scaffolding will be erected in the Galley patio for the 26 Aug start in MSW. The patio will therefore have to be closed through the completion of Patient Admin construction, likely until late November. The contractor will be using the patio for construction activities. The Galley will remain open to staff and patients for the duration of this construction project with a few possible shutdowns of a day or two.*

## NHTP is Recognized with Blue-H Navy Gold Star Award

On behalf of the entire command, from the hospital and on through to the Branch Health Clinics in Bridgeport and China Lake, congratulations on receiving the Blue-H Navy Surgeon General's Health Promotion and Wellness Award, Gold Star.

This demonstrates the commitment of many persons, and our command, to the health and readiness of our forces and sets the standard for other organizations to follow. You and your



team are part of the Navy Medicine team, a global health-care network of 63,000 Navy medical personnel around the world who provide high-quality healthcare to more than one million eligible beneficiaries.

Please take a moment to smile and enjoy the fruits of your labor. You are making a positive difference for those around you. Again, congratulations and many thanks for your leadership and the constant enthusiasm you show each day!

[signed]

J. A. Lamberton  
Medical Service Corps  
Captain, Commanding Officer,  
United States Navy



Trying to kick the habit and become tobacco free?  
Feeling stressed and overwhelmed?  
Have trouble sleeping?



The hospital's Health Promotion and Wellness Program offers one on one assistance. For more information call 760-830-2814



*Clinical Skills Fair! Far left: Martha Hunt discusses NHTP's Health Promotion and Wellness Program July 9 and 16 in Classrooms 4 & 5. Left: Teresa Turbyfill, NHTP Infection Preventionist, demonstrates proper the proper technique for donning and removing personal protective equipment (gloves and clothing). Breast health, patient evacuation and sterile technique were among skill stations.*

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