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[A few words with BUMED's 2015 Senior Sailor of the Year: Hospital Corpsman 1st Class \(FMF\) Alexander Burkhart](#)

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By Steve Van Der Werff, U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Public Affairs

Editor's note: Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (FMF) Alexander Burkhart was recognized as Bureau of Medicine and Surgery's 2015 Senior Sailor of the Year (SSOY) by Vice Adm. Matthew L. Nathan, Navy surgeon general and chief, BUMED November 3.



Petty Officer Alexander Burkhart, right, provides medical care to a patient.

The Sailor of the Year program was established in 1972 by the Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Elmo Zumwalt and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy John Whittet to recognize an individual Sailor who best represented the ever-growing group of dedicated professional Sailors at each command and ultimately the Navy.

Following the SSOY announcement, BUMED public affairs office met with HMI Burkhart to discuss his qualities as a leader.

Q: What sets you apart as a corpsman and a leader?

When I care for Marines, Sailors, and their families, I give it my very best. When I take care of junior Sailors, I give it my very best. It's my recipe to being a quality leader within the Navy Medicine enterprise.

Q: When senior leaders, your peers and juniors come into contact or work with you what impression do they take away?

I'd like to think they see me as being very personable, trustworthy and reliable. If we only think of people as customers, patients, or personnel, we lose something in the relationships we establish with each other. I respect everybody as an individual. To me, part of respect is treating each other the way I'd like to be treated.

Q: Have you always been a leader or did you have mentors who guided you?

I don't believe I was a born leader, but I have made it a point to emulate the good leaders that I have encountered throughout my career. I would like to specifically mention my mentor, retired Senior Chief Terry Green. No matter where I am in my career, he always reaches out to see how I'm doing personally

and professionally, and lets me know he is always there for me. It speaks volumes to a junior Sailor.



As a platoon corpsman, I proudly served alongside my brother Marines, rendering care to them whenever needed; whether on the battlefield or in the relative safety of a battalion aid station.

Q: What is your advice to Sailors striving to attain their personal and professional goals?

I practice the advice I once received from a senior leader who explained to me that the recipe to achieving what you want is to be an expert at your job, develop yourself professionally, be a pillar in your community, and take care of yourself and your family. By hitting all these areas, there's nothing you can't achieve.

Q: What are your short-term goals and long-term goals?

Advancing to chief petty officer used to be my primary long-term goal, but the last few years it has become my number one short-term goal. I've always wanted to take care of and lead Sailors. Becoming a chief will bring that to a new level. It's what being a chief is all about. I admire how chiefs have the answers or know where to find them and command the respect from junior Sailors because of their proven leadership.

It's my wish, that when I leave the Navy, that I leave behind a spotless reputation of leadership and respect to the junior Sailors that I will have impacted during my career.

Q: How did your deployments with the Marine Corps develop your strengths as a leader and a corpsman?

Taking care of Sailors and Marines is a professional highlight. As a platoon corpsman, I proudly served alongside my brother Marines, rendering care to them whenever needed; whether on the battlefield or in the relative safety of a battalion aid station.

Secondly, but certainly no less important, being a leader of corpsmen is very gratifying and rewarding. I might not always be the first on scene to administer aid to a sick or injured service member, but I recognize that the best way to continue to impact the lives of Sailors and Marines is through enthused leadership and mentoring. I want to impact future generations of Navy Medicine by sharing my experiences of providing exceptional patient care and pass along my knowledge of military health care and how to be a good leader to junior Sailors.



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Q: What do you want to accomplish at BUMED?

Before arriving at BUMED, less than a year ago, I made it my personal goal to quickly establish myself as an energetic, positive and inspired leader who leads by example. I also take great pride and pleasure, as the command's only command career counselor, in helping officer and enlisted Sailors map out their careers.

Q: How does your family fit into the equation of your success?

My family is what keeps me going. I strive to make them proud of me in everything I do.

“I'm HM1 Alexander Burkhart. I am Navy Medicine.”

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