

**Deployment Narrative Form**

# Required Fields

Date (MM/DD/YYYY):

03/15/2023

# Name (Rank, First, Last, Credentials):

LT Nash Witten, MD, FAWM

# Deployment Team or Tier (e.g. Tier 3):

Ready Reserve

Title/Position at Duty Station (e.g. Epidemiologist):

Interim Medical Director

# OPDIV:

Department of the Interior, National Park Service / Ready Reserve Region IX

Email Address:

nash.witten@hhs.gov

Narrative Questions [respond to as many as applicable]

1. What is your current assignment in USPHS?

Interim Medical Director at the Yosemite Medical Clinic in Yosemite National Park, California.

1. What was the mission of your deployment? (e.g. dates, location, and other pertinent details)

**Mission**: Yosemite National Park Rural Health Clinic Support

**Dates**: 11/22/2022 – 03/21/2023 (120-day deployment)

1. What was your role during this deployment? What skills (scientific, personal, etc.) did you use?

To serve as the interim medical director at the clinic, which provides primary care, urgent care, and emergency medical services to park employees, residents, and visitors. I assisted with clinic policy drafting and implementation and health insurance credentialing. I also provided lectures and skills-based workshops to the clinic and Emergency Medical Services staff.

1. Was this your first deployment? Either way, how did you prepare for the deployment, personally or workwise?

This was my second deployment with the USPHS Ready Reserve. Unlike my prior deployment to an urban setting, this deployment was to the remote location of Yosemite National Park. This deployment was also for four months which involved significant coordination with my colleagues at home to cover my clinical and teaching responsibilities. The length of this deployment also required assistance from my neighbors to ensure my house and yardwork were maintained in my prolonged absence!

1. Do you have any advice or “pearls of wisdom” for fellow officers who are being deployed or are interested in deploying?

“Semper Gumby” is required! Although you may think and be told you’ll be going to one place, and for a certain amount of time, things are likely to change. Pack your “needed” items, like instant coffee, sleeping aids, and exercise clothes. Take the time to get to know your coworkers and make it a goal to leave your deployment setting better than when you arrived!

1. What was the most important thing you learned during this deployment?

The importance of taking care of your mental and physical health on deployment. I enjoy running for exercise and my mental health, and due to the rather snowy conditions during my deployment, running as often as I would like was unsafe. Finding new means of exercising, like a spin bike or treadmill, was critical to maintaining my deployment readiness. Getting outside to enjoy your deployment area is also essential!

1. What were some of the key challenges that you experienced?

Yosemite National Park experienced an unusually wet winter during my deployment, resulting in weeks of park closures, road closures, flooding, and a lack of medical transport. Additionally, the initial vehicle I was given for deployment was a Toyota Corolla which could not have snow chains attached to it, which meant I was trapped in the park since chains were required for most of December.

1. What did you enjoy the most (e.g., favorite memory) about this deployment?

There are so many incredible memories from this deployment! One of my favorite memories was successfully going down my first green ski run at Badger Pass with LCDR Emily Gaffney and our clinic staff directing me on how not to crash. During the deployment, I also rode on my first ski lift with LCDR Gaffney. So maybe you can teach a person from Hawaii how to ski as an adult!

1. What would you consider to be your major accomplishment stemming from this deployment?

Successful credentialing of the Yosemite Medical Clinic as a primary care clinic, which involved drafting and implementing over 23 standard operating procedures and staff training, stands out as one of my significant accomplishments during my deployment.

1. Were there any classes or trainings that helped you in your deployment?

When not deployed with the USPHS Ready Reserve, I work as a Family Medicine physician at a Federally Qualified Health Center in Hawaii. Working in this underserved community has provided me with the clinical skills and scope of practice to handle all of the medical cases that presented during my deployment. I am grateful that I completed ACLS and PALS training before deployment, as working in this remote setting required this skill set outside my normal civilian clinical skills. In addition, prior experience with x-ray acquisition and interpretation in medical school and residency also came in handy on this deployment.

1. How was your post-deployment/reintegration experience? Was it a smooth transition back to your daily activities?

Although I am an employed primary care Family Physician, which means my coworkers can cover my inbox and after-hours call when I am deployed, there are always so many things that only I can do upon returning from deployment. A new challenge during this prolonged deployment was that my landlord inadvertently turned off the power and water at my house, resulting in me needing to replace all the food in my fridge/freezer and much work revitalizing my yard upon returning from deployment.

1. Please feel free to share anything else regarding your deployment to highlight your experiences or to increase the readiness of fellow officers.

As I tell many of the medical officer applicants to the Ready Reserve, as a medical officer, you will likely be deployed to do clinical medicine. As a Family Medicine physician, I can care for the entire life spectrum, from cradle to grave, which is ideal in the deployment setting. For other specialties, like Internal Medicine and Pediatrics, ensuring that you have reference materials to review on deployment is critical as you’ll likely need to see patients outside of your civilian scope of practice when deployed. I do not practice inpatient medicine currently and working in this remote setting meant I needed quick reference materials to manage common inpatient conditions like unstable atrial fibrillation with rapid ventricular response. Make sure you have your favorite clinical reference materials in your go bag!

1. Do you consent to your narrative being posted on Twitter? (y/n)

Y

1. Do you consent to your narrative being posted on Facebook? (y/n)

Y

## Thank you for your service!

**Please send your completed form, along with a personal portrait and any other optional approved media for posting (e.g. photos from your deployment) to photos from your deployment) to LCDR Kari Schlessinger (**[**kschlessinger@bop.gov**](mailto:kschlessinger@bop.gov)**) and LT Benjamin Patrick (**[**benjamin.o.patrick.mil@mail.mil**](mailto:benjamin.o.patrick.mil@mail.mil)**)**