

MHS SUPERHEROES

LT. KYLE ZUNK



★ ★ ★
National Nurses Week



MHS

Military Health System
health.mil

MHS SUPERHEROES

NAVY LT. KYLE ZUNK

Assistant division officer, Ambulatory Procedure Unit/
Post Anesthesia Care Unit
Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, California

I knew I wanted to be a nurse when I was diagnosed with lymphoma as I was finishing my undergrad degree. I wound up spending 10 days in the hospital. The nursing staff were the ones who provided not only the medical care but also the emotional support, empathy, and optimism to endure numerous difficult situations. They contributed significantly to my success throughout six months of treatment and recovery.

The best thing about my job is the people. I've had the unbelievable pleasure to serve everyone from new recruits straight out of basic training to veterans who fought and sacrificed in places such as Iwo Jima, Japan.

My most prominent memory of being a nurse is my first job, fresh off orientation in the neuroscience intensive care unit. I was working the night shift, and it was the first time I had a patient deteriorate on me. I alone was responsible for managing the patient, informing the physicians of the patient's condition, collecting the supplies for an emergency bedside procedure, and assisting in the procedure before whisking the patient to the operating room.

My most memorable patient experience was caring for the wife of a retired service member during the night after she had coded and then had been revived. I was able to be there for her while also serving as an empathetic presence for her husband and assisting with his needs.

My nurse superpower is never hesitating to speak up when I encounter something I don't know or understand, and to ask for help whenever I need it. I believe we all need to be comfortable with the realization that no matter how much we know, there is much more that we don't.