



# Medici Cohortum

February 2016

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## MATCHED!

### (An interview with a military match survivor)

**What did your rank list look like?** I put Family Medicine as my first choice and Emergency Medicine as my second choice specialty. For my location, I wanted to be warm... so, I ranked 1st Camp Pendleton Naval Hospital (SoCal), 2nd Naval Hospital Jacksonville, Fl, 3rd Camp Lejeune Naval Hospital (NC), and Ft Belvoir (Northern

VA/Greater DC) for Family Medicine and for EMed, Naval Medical Center San Diego and Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, VA.

**Were you ever thinking of doing a civilian deferment? If not, what would have happened if you didn't match?** I had no interest in training in the civilian world. I wanted to train in the system where I plan to work for the next twenty-odd-years. Early during fourth year, I asked a Program Director at NH Jax if I should be nervous, and if I should consider filling out ERAS. He said that my application was one that should not have a problem for my first-choice specialty. However, *if* I had been advised otherwise, I would have looked at the latest numbers from the Navy. Looking at these numbers, Internal Medicine had openings. So I could have put that as a second-choice.

**Did you take both COMLEX and USMLE?** I took to heart what Navy HPSP told us: "Take the test that the Navy will pay for." With so many DOs in the military, COMLEX scores are not foreign to Program Directors. And because I did not plan to apply to civilian programs and because the Navy will only pay for the exam required for you to graduate, taking only the COMLEX was clearly the option.

**What kinds of questions were asked during the interview? Was there anything that came up that was unexpectedly important?**

"Why Family Medicine," "What are your strengths and weaknesses," and "What do we do well here and where can we improve" were standard. A few fun questions about "What makes you YOU," "What do you do for fun," and "what one thing are you most proud of that is NOT on your CV" were some good questions that I wasn't prepared for. In general, each interview was a conversation, and not a formal experience. I was given the opportunity at each interview to discuss any so-called "Red Flags" in my applications--any academic issues, board failures, or hiccups. Just relax, be yourself, and know that your experience throughout the entire audition is probably more important than just that interview. They want to know you for YOU, not from a paper file.

**What were some of the qualities that you looked for when choosing a residency program?** "Is this Hospital, Program and Location one where I will be happy in the next one- to three-years" and "Are the people and the culture at this hospital and program one that I can be happy with for my career." If you answer "YES," then you know you've found it! For me, I like people. I want to have colleagues who are good people, a great education, and the environment in which we work is one that can really make or break our combined experience as interns, residents, and Naval Medical Officers. So, it's not always how pretty a building is, or how seemingly desirable a location is, it is a multi-factoral process. And, maybe most importantly, you have to have faith in the system... regardless of where you end up, you should feel confident that Military Medicine will train you well, and to best serve your service members, their families, and our veterans.

**What do you feel made you a competitive applicant?** The DoD doesn't hide their scoring sheet, so you can have a pretty good idea of what points you'll have. I'd encourage you to get involved in research, even at the poster-presentation level. But number one, be a good student and be proud of your board scores. I'm one of those kids who is happily in the middle (OK...maybe a little to the left) of the bell-curve. Make a good impression by being a good person, teammate, etc. Do as you're told on rotations, fit in, and make the best of your experience. I think that I was able to shine as a good person on my auditions. I was told by an O6 Internal Medicine PD that he follows the kindergarten method of choosing a resident: are you nice, do you show up on time and do as you're told? ...basically making sure you're not a jerk, because he can teach you the medicine, but not how to be a good person. For me, I had OK grades and OK board scores, had some research, community service and was involved in Leadership. I also *wanted* to be involved in Navy Medicine as much as I could be as an HPSPer.


**What were some things you wish you would have known going into 3<sup>rd</sup> year? What about 4<sup>th</sup> year?**

I wish I'd know that when programs or residents said, "We've got a place for you to stay if you come non-ADT," that they really meant it. They *know* it is expensive for you to pay for yourself to get to some non-ADT Rotations, so they want to help you. I also wish that I had kept an open mind about what was *really* important at a program--it isn't just location. And sometimes your preconceived notions don't always live up to what you hope or expect. "Fourth Year-Best Year" is true. It's a fun, exciting, and terrifying time. Have fun with it. Learn as much as you can. Keep an open mind. And then... the real work will start. Perhaps the most important thing I wish I knew was to ASK QUESTIONS. ASK FOR OPPORTUNITIES. Military Medicine is what you make of it!

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**Do you have any advice for someone who wants to match into their 1<sup>st</sup> choice?** If you fit in at your first choice, if you feel like you like the residents and your colleagues and they like you, then you should feel great about your rank list. But remember, the needs of the Navy/Air Force come first, which means that your rank list and the programs' list might both have to be adjusted. Ultimately, you're going to go where they need you and have a great experience! I'll tell you one thing, as someone who is going to his 1st-choice specialty and 2nd-choice location (albeit a very close second choice), I'm excited for the opportunity. I'm excited for the challenge. I'm excited for the learning curve. I'm excited for the new. I'm excited for the unplanned change of events. I'm excited to, hopefully early on, not feel like I need to wear dark underwear everyday to work. Most of all, be "*Semper Gumby*," Always Flexible. Go Navy!

## A Quick Note: Enlisted Ranks of the Navy

O-1	ENS	Ensign	
O-2	LTJG	Lieutenant Junior Grade	
O-3	LT	Lieutenant	
O-4	LCDR	Lieutenant Commander	
O-5	CDR	Commander	
O-6	CAPT	Captain	
O-7	RDML	Read Admiral (lower half)	
O-8	RADM	Read Admiral (upper half)	
O-9	VADM	Vice Admiral	
O-10	ADM	Admiral	
Special	FADM	Fleet Admiral	

## Interview with a Top Grad

**When did you go to Officer Training?** I went to COT between my 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of medical school. I was unable to attend prior to 1<sup>st</sup> year because I was on the scroll list for so long due to the government sequestration. Class 14-04. I would recommend for anyone going through the HPSP program to try to go to COT prior to 1<sup>st</sup> year as you then have some options for what to do between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year (most likely the last summer you'll have in your life.) You can choose to either do AMP (which I've heard really good things about) or relax (which I've also heard is a good thing, I wouldn't know).  
**When did you start preparing?** I started preparing for COT during the winter prior. I needed to find the proper COT class that fit the dates between my 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year. It took some searching to find the dates for the 2014 year, but they should be on the Maxwell AFB Air University page. Start looking early and contact HPSP early to try to get into the class that

fits your schedule. After that it was taken care of I didn't do a whole lot besides get a set of ABUs and some PT wear.

**Where did you get your supplies?** I got my supplies online from the Air Force Exchange online, but I would recommend trying to find someone that either has supplies that you can try on or go to a Base Exchange because the sizing can be a little funny sometimes. The remainder of my supplies I got when I went to COT.

**How did you get your prepared?** I had been working out fairly consistently during medical school, where I was helping to run an exercise group. Besides that, I had a workout plan that was actually designed for the Army PT test. You can find a variety of exercise plans online that are built like a taper program to prep. If you can't find, just do lots of pushups, sit-ups and run. The run is the most important part of your PT composite score but the part of the test most people failed when I was at COT surprisingly was the sit-ups portion, so don't blow that part off.

**How did you have time to exercise?** I had more time than I expected during medical school to exercise. That being said, it's all about prioritizing what you think is important. Exercise has always been an important part of stress control for me, so it was easy to make time for it. Having a workout buddy is always good to keep you motivated and push you through the days when you really don't feel like doing a workout.

**Why do you think you were the best around?** I scored really well on all the exams, took leadership positions and scored well on the PT exam. I think the biggest thing they are looking for is just for you to buy into what they are trying to teach you there. Some of the things they have you do might seem silly, but as long as I was there, I figured I might as well buy in and do everything as best I could. I think a big part was probably the way I handled the planning of the mock-deployment portion of COT. I was the Group Air Expeditionary Force Officer so was in charge of the organizing of that event and the battlefield hospital. I got a lot of compliments for that and was coined by the Lt. Colonel that was my overseer for that process. This again goes into buying into what they are trying to teach and just performing every task as best as possible.

**Do you have any other exciting advice?** Sleep when you can. They try to pack as much into your day to mentally wear you out. Try to eat right as best you can and take the time they give you for PT seriously because there isn't a lot of it.

**How many pushups can you do?** Not as many now as before to be honest. You have way less time to work out during rotations than during the didactics portion of medical school. I can probably do around 70 in a minute now if I really had to.

**Where do you keep your trophy?** I keep it on the sofa table in our living room. It might be kind of corny, but I'm pretty proud of that achievement.

## Intern's Insight

**How did you go about choosing your residency?** For me I was looking for a program that I felt that I fit into. I really tried to get a good vibe of the residents when I was rotating – did they seem happy, did they work well together, did they seem to like their jobs, etc.

**What do you think made you successful?** I think a good work ethic made my rotation go well and made it to where I was selected. I showed interest on my rotations – I asked questions – I came in early and stayed late.

**How do you like the program so far?** I am very pleased with my selection. There are days where it is rough (just like any residency program) but I can't imagine doing anything else anywhere else. I love my coworkers – lots of support from them. The staff are really good at teaching and really do care about helping you learn. I would love to change the hours!! (LOL). We work hard as I'm sure every other resident does but OB residents seem to have longer harder hours than some of your other counterparts so be aware of that. I wish there was more study time – as I'm sure every other resident feels. Be ready to do on the job learning because there is not much time for books.

## Advice From a Program Director

### On Points for the Selection Board

- There is no firm guidance for scores and points
  - A certain board score does not guarantee you a certain amount of points however board scores matter as they're an easy way to categorize people.
  - Points are decided amongst the specialty you are applying to.
  - Points for grades are complicated by the fact that different schools have different grading standards.
  - If you have a high Board score, it's easier for me to give you maximum points.
- GMO's have a statistical advantage as they have the ability to earn more points during their intern year
- Intern years aren't magic-- if you're not a strong candidate, you're likely to be a not strong intern
- Career potential as an officer scores points
  - Means different things for the branches
  - A whole picture of clerkship, interview, etc
  - Strongly influenced by the program directors LOR (a letter that is put together by the Program Director after your interview with them).

### Check out our new App:

The National SAMOPS Board looks forward to meeting all our chapter members this coming conference. In hopes of better connecting you with us and to share your conference experience, we have developed an app. It's very easy to set up and you'll be able to view the schedule, post pics, contact other members, etc. To download, follow the instructions below:

1. Download "YAPP" from the App Store or Google Play (you can also follow this link <http://my.yapp.us/5U7USL> )
2. Use the access code: 5U7USL
3. Turn on your notifications in the top left corner

### Welcome to AMOPS Conference

We welcome you to this year's conference! Countless hours of preparation have gone into making this conference the best ever. Our hope is that you leave Philadelphia with a better understanding of what it means to be a DO serving our nation's finest and what an honor it is to serve alongside some of the nation's best physicians. We hope you take the time to meet new people, especially some of the more seasoned doctors, as their advice is invaluable. We also invite you to seek out any of the upperclassmen and Student Leadership and ask for advice. You should not leave with any doubts or questions about what to expect in the next few years. We also hope you'll be able to return to your schools and, in turn, help other military students. Lastly, we invite you to make the most out of your experience here in Philly. Use this app to stay connected, know what's going on, and post pictures. A special thanks goes out to Stephanie Wilson (SAMOPS Executive Director) and Brant Adams (National Student Conference Chair) for tailoring this year's conference around what prior students have asked for.



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## What Can SAMOPs Do For You?

So, we've convinced you to open and read our newsletter, let us explain what SAMOPs can do to help you.

At the national level, we are working to get information from all branches of service about applying to residency, being prepared for officer training and setting up your ADTs. At the school level, being a part of the SAMOPs club at your school gives you easy access to this information, lets you participate in volunteer opportunities, and helps you work on your leadership skills throughout medical school. If you have particular concerns or questions feel free to contact your East or West Representatives.

If your school is East of the Mississippi contact Amira Saad at [asaad19@midwestern.edu](mailto:asaad19@midwestern.edu). If your school is West of the Mississippi then please contact Kristopher Lange at [krlange@atsu.edu](mailto:krlange@atsu.edu)

Be on the lookout for emails from [SAMOPS@amops.org](mailto:SAMOPS@amops.org), our new student-specific email address. If you or someone you know wants to be on the mailing list please feel free to send us an email and we'll be happy to add you!

### Your SAMOPs Leadership

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If you have a great story relevant to SAMOPS or HPSP and want to share it or an idea for a future article, please email me at [kdittman@atsu.edu](mailto:kdittman@atsu.edu)