

# NTTC welcomes new commanding officer

By Penny Randall  
Staff Writer

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Naval Technical Training Center (NTTC) welcomed a new commanding officer, Cmdr. Shane G. Harris, and said farewell to Cmdr. Christopher "Rusty" Bownds on June 16 during an official ceremony.

"This has been a challenging and rewarding experience," Bownds told the audience of fellow military members, base personnel and community leaders. "I've had the chance to work with the best staff and the Navy's future Sailors who are more educated and dedicated than ever."

In the two years as the head of the training center, Bownds and his staff graduated 6,000 Sailors in five ratings – Logistics Specialist, Ship's Serviceman, Personnel Specialist, Yeoman and Aviation Maintenance Administrationman. NTTC Meridian trains 100 percent of the Navy's Administrative and Supply "A" School personnel.

Additionally, Bownds implemented numerous community service programs to cement strong relations between the Navy and the local area, resulting in receipt of three Navy Region Southeast Community Service Awards and the overall 2009 Navy Community Service Program Award for the Environmental Stewardship Flagship. Under Bownds command, NTTC was awarded the USS Bainbridge Award, the Navy's highest award for community service.

A 1991 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Bownds is a former A-6 Intruder bombardier/navigator. When the A-6 was decommissioned, Bownds transferred to the Human Resources Community. Prior to arriving at NTTC, he served as the embedded trainer for the Afghan National Army Darulaman Garrison, Kabul, Afghanistan.

Bownds' next duty assignment will be on the staff of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Manpower and Reserve Affairs. Assuming command of NTTC is Cmdr. Shane G. Harris whose most recent assignment was as executive assistant to the Assistant Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education).

"I am extremely blessed and honored to be given the chance to lead the NTTC team," Harris said. "This is an awesome responsibility – when I joined the Navy 25 years ago my goal was to become a commanding officer. This is a tremendous opportunity."

Before graduating from Purdue University and receiving his commission through the NROTC program, Harris enlisted in the Navy as an undesignated Seaman in the Seaman Apprentice Program.

Harris's previous staff assignments ashore include Echelon I Manpower Requirements Officers on the staff of the Chief of Naval Personnel; Administrative Department Head, Naval District Washington; and administrative officer, Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility, Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico.

Operational assignments include G1 ARSIC-West, Combined Joint Task Force PHOENIX V1 and Embedded Training Team S1, FOB APACHE, Qalat, Afghanistan. Cmdr. Harris has been deployed to South American, the eastern Mediterranean and the Arabian Gulf.

He holds a master's degree in Human Resource Business Management from Marymount University and a master's degree in military studies from USMC Command and General Staff College. Capt. Bernard Dunn Jr., commanding officer, Center for Service Support, was the guest speaker during the ceremony.

He congratulated Bownds on a job well done as commanding officer and challenged Harris to continue the superb work at NTTC.

"I've always enjoyed the opportunity to spend time in Meridian and it's a pleasure to be here today," Dunn said. "Clearly this is a special day for both Cmdr. Bownds and Cmdr. Harris – it's the culmination of a successful command for Bownds and for Harris, the beginning of a leadership experience."

Capt. Dunn told the audience that Cmdr. Bownds created a successful environment for Sailors to be trained – which is second to none.

"Cmdr. Bownds was brought here to NTTC to lead and that he did," Dunn said. "Cmdr. Harris will have a tough road ahead – our nation is at war and resources are tight, but I know NTTC will continue to thrive under his leadership."