

RUSSELL EGNOR NAVY MEDIA AWARD WINNING NEWSPAPER

FIVE STAR



APRIL 4, 2019 WWW.EISENHOWER.NAVY.MIL



WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHIEF

BY MC3 GIAN PRABHUDAS



USS Dwight D. Eisenhower's (CVN 69) newest chief petty officers are pinned at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott in front of friends, family and shipmates. Photo by MC3 Trey Fowler.

The title of chief carries with it over a century of history. Informally, the first known use of the title dates back to 1776. Jacob Wasbie, a cook's mate, was pronounced "Chief Cook" aboard USS Alfred to denote him as the foremost cook aboard the ship.

On April 1, 1893, the rank of chief petty officer was officially established. Ever since, chiefs have served as a bridge between officers and junior enlisted. The rank's 126th birthday was celebrated in the fo'c'sle aboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), April 1.

"Being a chief means that you are the role model and example for both the officers and the enlisted within your division, department or anywhere else in the fleet," said Chief Information Systems Technician Brian Forrester.

Though the Navy has undergone many changes, adapting itself to the nation's needs throughout the century, the expectations of Navy chiefs have not wavered.

"The Navy has definitely changed, the country has changed, the world has changed, and so have the chief petty officers," said Senior Chief Information Systems Technician Gene Crozier. "But at the end of the day, we're expected to be visible, confident deckplate leaders."

Despite the challenges that accompany the rank, many Sailors view chiefs as the pinnacle of an enlisted career and strive to attain that level of responsibility.

"I always wanted to be a chief," said Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) Jamorn Driver. "Now that I'm here, I don't want to be anything else. I love the camaraderie, the brotherhood, the sisterhood. There's nothing like it."

Once selected, new CPOs go through a six-week training phase known as initiation. After the initial training is complete, the fresh batch of CPOs will officially be accepted into the mess. Proudly sporting their gold-fouled anchors, a new chief's first act is to recite the CPO creed.

"When you hear the creed, it speaks to the challenges that you'll face," said Crozier. "I think it's important to understand that those challenges are not always brought to you. The more valuable and more rewarding challenges are the challenges that you bring to yourself and the challenges you give to your Sailors."

Chief Information Systems Technician Star Sherry said she is grateful to be in a position where she can help Sailors improve both personally and

professionally through these challenges.

"I love my job," said Sherry. "I love watching Sailors grow, develop and come to their true potential. I think it takes great work ethic and leadership skills. It takes a kindness, but a strength."

Challenging Sailors is only one aspect of being a chief, said Driver. In order to truly be effective, a chief must inspire their Sailors to go the extra mile and excel in the workplace.

"You have to put yourself in a position where they want to follow you, and they want to do what they see you do," said Driver.

To Driver and others, being a chief means many things. It means doing right by the Sailors who work both above and below you in rank. It means leading Sailors by example, while inspiring them to become leaders themselves. It means showing support for a Sailor who is struggling and challenging a Sailor to raise their own standards of success. But the rewards of the rank are as wide-ranging as the responsibilities—to lead efforts in accomplishing the Navy's mission from the deckplates, to see young men and women develop into accomplished Sailors, and to be part of a network of brothers and sisters who will be there through their career and life.

IKE ACKNOWLEDGES MEDAL OF HONOR CHIEFS

BY MCSA DARTEZ WILLIAMS

The Navy and Marine Corps' Medal of Honor has been awarded to only 50 chiefs since 1898. Though its appearance and award criteria have changed since it was created for enlisted men by Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles on Dec. 16, 1861, it remains our country's oldest decoration still awarded today.

Senior Chief Special Warfare Operator Edward C. Byers Jr and Senior Chief Special Warfare Operator Britt K. Slabinski both earned their decoration for actions in Afghanistan.



For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as a Hostage Rescue Force Team Member in Afghanistan in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM from 8 to 9 December 2012. As the rescue force approached the target building, an enemy sentry detected them and darted inside to alert his fellow captors. The sentry quickly reemerged, and the lead assaulter attempted to neutralize him. Chief Byers with his team sprinted to the door of the target building. As the primary breacher, Chief Byers stood in the doorway fully exposed to enemy fire while ripping down six layers of heavy blankets fastened to the inside ceiling and walls to clear a path for the rescue force. The first assaulter pushed his way through the blankets, and was mortally wounded by enemy small arms fire from within. Chief Byers, completely aware of the imminent threat, fearlessly rushed into the room and engaged an enemy guard aiming an AK-47 at him. He then tackled another adult male who had darted towards the corner of the room. During the ensuing hand-to-hand struggle, Chief Byers confirmed the man was not the hostage and engaged him. As other rescue team members called out to the hostage, Chief Byers heard a voice respond in English and raced toward it. He jumped atop the American hostage and shielded him from the high volume of fire within the small room. While covering the hostage with his body, Chief Byers immobilized another guard with his bare hands, and restrained the guard until a teammate could eliminate him. His bold and decisive actions under fire saved the lives of the hostage and several of his teammates. By his undaunted courage, intrepid fighting spirit, and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of near certain death, Chief Petty Officer Byers reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while assigned to a Joint Task Force in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. In the early morning of 4 March 2002, Senior Chief Special Warfare Operator Slabinski led a reconnaissance team to its assigned area atop a 10,000-foot snow-covered mountain. Their insertion helicopter was suddenly riddled with rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire from previously undetected enemy positions. The crippled helicopter lurched violently and ejected one teammate onto the mountain before the pilots were forced to crash land in the valley far below. Senior Chief Slabinski boldly rallied his five remaining team members and marshalled supporting assets for an assault to rescue their stranded teammate. During reinsertion the team came under fire from three directions, and one teammate started moving uphill toward an enemy stronghold. Without regard for his own safety, Senior Chief Slabinski charged directly toward enemy fire to join his teammate. Together, they fearlessly assaulted and cleared the first bunker they encountered. The enemy then unleashed a hail of machine gun fire from a second hardened position only twenty meters away. Senior Chief Slabinski repeatedly exposed himself to deadly fire to personally engage the second enemy bunker and orient his team's fires in the furious, close-quarters firefight. Proximity made air support impossible, and after several teammates became casualties, the situation became untenable. Senior Chief Slabinski maneuvered his team to a more defensible position, directed air strikes in very close proximity to his team's position, and requested reinforcements. As daylight approached, accurate enemy mortar fire forced the team further down the sheer mountainside. Senior Chief Slabinski carried a seriously wounded teammate through deep snow and led a difficult trek across precipitous terrain while calling in fire on the enemy, which was engaging the team from the surrounding ridges. Throughout the next 14 hours, Senior Chief Slabinski stabilized the casualties and continued the fight against the enemy until the hill was secured and his team was extracted. By his undaunted courage, bold initiative, leadership, and devotion to duty, Senior Chief Slabinski reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.



HAPPY 126TH BIRTHDAY CHIEFS

HAPPY 126TH BIRTHDAY CHIEFS

BY MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER OF THE NAVY (MCPON) RUSSEL SMITH



Photo by MCSA Brianna Thompson

In the beginning there was no birthday, no Mess, no initiation process. There were only Sailors, salty with experience and a deep conviction to bridge the gap between the vision their officers had and the Sailors who executed the mission. Recognizing a seam, Chief Petty Officers were created to provide the kind of pragmatic leadership and guidance that enlisted Sailors could understand and relate to, enabling our Navy to move forward as the operating environment began to evolve beyond the simple age of sail and traditional Sailor skills.

Over the years our Mess has grown and adapted to both the operating environment of our vessels and the Sailors who choose our way of life. Over successive generations, our Sailors have become smarter, more fit and a better demographic representation of the Nation we serve. We began as the sole purveyors of experience, the ones you needed to hear from before tackling any complex deckplate evolution — the lessons of sweat and blood were “our” currency, our relevance, and we taught many a junior Sailor and many a junior Officer how to avoid the worst mistakes and safely navigate to mission success.

In turn, Chief Petty Officers have found greater opportunity, and a corresponding desire by the Navy to fold Chief Petty Officers into more complex roles of leadership and management. In 1958, the pay grades of E8 and E9 were created to specifically retain the talent and expertise that was deemed crucial to the future success of our Navy; less than a decade later, Master Chief Gunner’s Mate Del Black would become the first Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, signaling a level of leadership and Navy-wide involvement that just 30 years before could not possibly have been conceived of. Chief Petty Officers raised the bar, elevated the game and catapulted our Navy towards new and greater success.

Shortly before the USS Cole was attacked, she got underway for deployment with an entirely enlisted Bridge Watch Team — proving that crew’s mettle and ultimately enabling those who survived the initial attack to save their ship and their shipmates.

We have enlisted performing in a myriad of ways that those “old salts” sitting around and sharing information in those famous photos from the late 1800s could never have imagined. And yet, as a Mess, our mission remains the same — bound genetically to our core responsibility within the Navy to primarily represent the equity of experience. Technical experts, knowledgeable and learned in the nuances of our trade, operators who guide both the young Sailors we are charged with preparing for combat, as well as those young Officers whose lead we will follow in combat.

A special faith and trust has been reposed in us as we occupy this unique and unparalleled strata of leadership — other services and other nations have senior enlisted leaders, but the United States Navy Chief Petty Officers are cut from a different cloth, raised to perform in collegial fashion to stitch the disparate parts of our Navy together, to leverage the power of our Mess to make the Navy greater than the sum of our parts.

We should take the opportunity to reflect on where this latest year of growth and development has taken us, and as a Mess decide how to best calibrate and align ourselves to the true north of our forebearers — making those who sailed before us proud of the legacy of selfless, uncelebrating service they entrusted to us. Every day we walk aboard our ship, squadron, station or unit we should feel an unabated sense of urgency to prove our value and serve our Sailors, to realize our strengths, and then humbly yet confidently wield that influence and knowledge to prepare our Sailors for combat — and lead them to victory once it begins.

At the end of today, and at the end of every day, I would ask each of you — as I ask of myself — to spend a few moments in quiet contemplation on those expectations levied upon us. To ask, as in that penultimate moment of “Saving Private Ryan” — did I “earn this?”

Happy 126th Birthday Chiefs – Chief On!

IKE COMPLETES SEA TRIALS

BY USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER PUBLIC AFFAIRS



Photo by MC1 Tony D. Curtis

USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) successfully completed its Sea Trials April 1.

“Sea Trials was successful well beyond expectations,” said Capt. Kyle Higgins, Ike’s commanding officer. “Our investment in our ship paid off and now the real work begins: getting the flight deck certified so we start doing what this warship was built to do - launch and recover aircraft.”

Ike departed Naval Station Norfolk March 28, returning to sea for the first time since August 2017. The ship conducted the Sea Trials off the Virginia coast alongside engineers and shipyard employees from Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY), running through a checklist of evolutions, including conducting small-boat operations, testing countermeasure wash-down systems, executing high-speed turns, and testing catapults.

While shipyard workers tested out systems, Sailors evaluated their readiness to become an operational crew, conducting numerous drills to test their

mettle in various areas such as damage control, deck seamanship and flight deck operations.

Additionally, Sea Trials allowed the crew to encounter real-life scenarios while navigating the open ocean, something that is hard to replicate while in port.

“These five days made our bridge teams much more proficient and allowed us to carefully evaluate our strengths and weaknesses so we can continue to improve,” said Lt. Cmdr. Benjamin Sanders, Ike’s assistant navigator.

The five-day event required coordination from the entire ship, with maintenance-heavy departments like engineering taking on an increased workload in order to ensure the ship’s systems were operational.

“I think a successful Sea Trials had a lot to do with coordination from all of engineering department and its divisions,” said Machinist Mate 1st Class Robert Howard, from San Diego. “We spent our availability

period planning, training and working day in and day out for this moment and when it came, we executed.”

With Sea Trials complete, Ike begins the basic phase of the Optimized Fleet Response Plan (OFRP). From there the training becomes more focused and intense, Higgins said.

“We still have a long way to go, but with sea trials behind us, we are motivated to charge forward,” he said. “We will continue to train and strive to be better, to be ‘greater each day.’”

Carrier Strike Group 10, also known as the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group, includes the Nimitz-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruisers USS Monterey (CG 61), USS San Jacinto (CG 56), and USS Vella Gulf (CG 72); the ships and staff of Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 26; and the squadrons and staff of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 3.

The Department of Defense's policy on transgender servicemember changes April 12.

Under the new policy, Sailors will not be separated based on a diagnosis of gender identity alone. An individual diagnosed with gender dysphoria on or after April 12 will be retained if a military medical provider determines gender transition is not medically necessary to protect the health of the individual, and the member is willing and able to adhere to all standards associated with their biological sex and meet all deployability standards.

No otherwise qualified service members shall be involuntarily separated, discharged or denied reenlistment or continuation of service solely on the basis of gender identity.

Appropriate civilian attire, as outlined in the Navy Uniform Regulations, will not be determined based on gender. This means service members are permitted to live socially in their preferred gender while off duty.

Regional commanders can make more policy on this based on local conditions.

Treating all members of the IKE 5-Star Team with dignity and respect is something expected at all times. There is zero tolerance for harassment, hazing or bullying of any service Member in any form.

**ALL HANDS ARE INVITED TO
RECOGNIZE **SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH**
APRIL 4TH AT 1000 IN THE FIVE STAR CLASSROOM.**

PROTECTING OUR PEOPLE PROTECTS OUR MISSION

**TOGETHER WE CAN WORK TO ELIMINATE SEXUAL
ASSAULT FROM THE ARMED FORCES.**



IKE SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE
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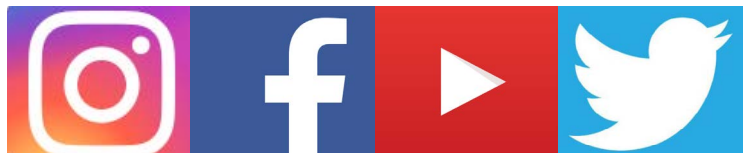
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