



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER OF THE NAVY  
2000 NAVY PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON DC 20350-2000

4 September 2018

Chief,

*First and foremost, congratulations! This is quite an accomplishment and you should be incredibly proud of what you've done to put yourself in this position. Take a knee and contemplate that for a moment – all the experiences that have brought you to this milestone. Never forget where you came from and stay grounded in your beginnings. You've worked hard to demonstrate that you have the skills, talent, and abilities. Now you will contribute to the Navy in an even more meaningful way.*

*That said, this selection is not a reward for what you've done throughout your extraordinary career. With your every act as a junior Sailor, you prepared yourself for this moment, and we are now calling on that talent and demanding – through your acceptance of this advancement – more from you. You will be expected to work longer hours, solve far more difficult problems and challenges, do more to empower your junior Sailors, and provide better and more seasoned advice to your Officers. You must now work within the network of Chief Petty Officers, without desire for personal accolades, but rather a singular focus on building winning teams. In doing so, you will help the Mess do more together than we would otherwise be capable of based on the sum of our individual Chiefs alone.*

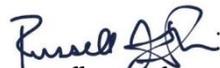
*You stand ready to don your anchors entirely as a result of the culmination of every letter, phone call, mentoring session, sacrifice of time and resources, faith and goodwill of both supervisors and junior Sailors... everyone who has ever advocated for you, empowered you, helped fine-tune your eval, submitted an award for you, gave you a duty, listened to your opinion, called someone on your behalf, took a burden off your back, or put an arm around you and reassured you when you were frustrated. You have thousands of people standing behind you. Your Sailors, family, and your friends – many you know, but probably even some you don't – have all given you something, and you are \*only here because of them.\* Because of this, you have a special obligation as result: to "earn this" every day. Be worthy of the sacrifice and love of the many who gave you this exalted opportunity. This is now your job, your sacred duty, to represent the best of yourself in everything you do, to be worthy of the benevolence that has given you this opportunity to be "The Chief."*

*Confront your destiny head-on. Be the leader that you are and continue to grow by giving more and more to our Sailors every day. Humility is key – regardless of how much you feel you've earned your salt and proven your own. Accept your failures and grow from them - "when you lose, don't lose the lesson." Share the credit for your successes, and strive every day to "earn this" by charging forward on creating a better, stronger Navy at every opportunity.*

*You are now part of a longstanding and exceptional tradition. Lean on the vast network you are now a part of. Together, as unified Mess, we will relentlessly pursue excellence and build winning teams for our Navy, in order to achieve peak operational readiness as a combat ready force able to compete and win the high-end fight at sea.*

*Congratulations, and Welcome to the Mess!*

*All My Best,*

  
Russell L. Smith  
MCPON 15