



Master Chief Petty Officer of The Navy



My fellow Chief Petty Officers,

On April 1st, our entire Mess will pause to celebrate the 116th birthday of the United States Navy Chief Petty Officer. Traditionally, this is a time for each of us to look at the honored traditions of our Mess and the heritage associated with it.

In the days leading up to our birthday, I've taken some time to read up on many of my predecessors. One I'd like to discuss with you this year is our fifth Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, MCPON Billy Sanders. Twenty five years ago, MCPON Sanders was leading an enlisted force that was gradually downsizing and he was stressing a need to keep our ranks filled with the best possible people.

He turned his attention to the senior enlisted and said that there was no room for mediocrity. He addressed the entire group and told the Master Chiefs, Senior Chiefs and Chiefs that, "it's clear from your years of service that you have made a career decision to remain in the Navy—that's not enough. It's time to be a professional military man or woman."

"It's time," Sanders wrote, "to be Navy."

What a statement and look at how relevant it is today as we reach the end of a time where our force has grown smaller. Leadership at the CPO level has never been more important and Sanders' words still apply.

I'd recommend each of you take the time to read up on the history of our Mess. I think you'll find, as I did, that the lessons from our past have remained current to this day.

Happy birthday Shipmates. I really appreciate the hard work you do every single day.

Don't forget those who have gone before us and the standards they set for us all. Keeping our heritage alive is a Mess responsibility.

Thank you for your leadership.

Anchor Up and Hooyah Navy Chiefs!!

Rick D. West
Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy